



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

First Committee

4th meeting

Wednesday, 4 October 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Agenda 89 to 105 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: Before I open the floor for statements, I should like to remind all delegations that the rolling list of speakers for this phase of our work closed yesterday at 6 p.m., in accordance with our programme of work and timetable. I hope all delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate were able to inscribe their names on the list before the deadline.

Delegations are also reminded that the list of speakers will open tomorrow for the thematic discussion segment. I may also have to remind members of this at the end of this meeting. That will start next week on Thursday, 13 October. For the convenience of members, Secretariat staff are present in the Conference Room to assist members with inscription directly or by e-speaker. Those wishing to inscribe their names under each of those clusters should do so as soon as possible.

The Committee will now turn to our list of speakers for today. I urge all delegations taking the floor kindly to keep in mind the suggested time limits for statements.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to begin my statement by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that your diplomatic skills and extensive experience will undoubtedly contribute to the success

of the Committee's work and the achievement of its objectives. Let me stress that my delegation is determined to cooperate with you fully in order to ensure the success of your mandate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/71/C.1/PV.2).

International and regional efforts aimed at disarmament give us hope and optimism about raising global awareness of the need to eliminate all types of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as they pose a primary threat to international peace and security. On the basis of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's commitment to the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international legitimacy as fundamental pillars of the Kingdom's foreign policy, we attach special importance to strengthening the role of the United Nations in all areas, in particular in relation to issues of international peace and security and disarmament. That is because the Kingdom believes that these issues represent a wholesome environment without which the world cannot live in peace and stability.

The strengthening of the international peace and security environment requires genuine political will and strong determination by all countries, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to stop relying on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as instruments of national security. In that context, my country welcomes the observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of

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Nuclear Weapons as a concrete step towards the pursuit of this noble goal.

Despite the fact that many regions have been successful in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, thanks to the cooperation of the countries of those regions and their recognition that coexistence is inevitable, we find that the Middle East region thwarts international and regional efforts to make it a zone free of nuclear weapons. That is because Israel rejects any endeavour towards that goal. It is really unfortunate that, although there is international consensus and an urgent regional desire to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons, all such efforts are frustrated by Israel, which impedes the fulfilment of the aspirations of the peoples of the region to live in a zone free of nuclear terror.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regrets the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach agreement on an outcome document, which disrupted efforts aimed at establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. That casts doubts on the credibility of the Treaty and encourages the countries of the region to join in a race to acquire nuclear weapons. In that regard, my country reaffirms the inherent right of the States of the region to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the International Atomic Energy Agency and under its supervision.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses the importance of implementing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. It is worth noting that the Kingdom was one of the first countries to join the international conventions relating to the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the reports issued by the Security Council concerning the Joint Investigative Mechanism and demands that the perpetrators responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria be held accountable.

I would be remiss if I did not express our appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Security Council, in particular the efforts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), to control and prevent the provision of any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their

means of delivery. I should like to stress the importance of implementing that resolution in order to limit access to weapons of mass destruction and to intensify supervision of nuclear service-providers to ensure that they are not providing any illegitimate entities with nuclear materials or technology.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses the importance of activating the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Programme has highlighted the many issues harmful to the stabilization of countries that also affect security and social peace at national and regional levels. That has prompted the Kingdom to take a series of precautionary administrative measures and to adopt policies aimed at promoting and strengthening confidence-building measures and cooperation mechanisms to confront this devastating crisis at all levels. In that context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the final outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, which was held recently in New York. We hope that this international consensus will continue during the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action, in 2018.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia underlines the importance of safeguarding the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The international legal agreements in that regard have played a positive role in the promotion of the peaceful use of outer space and the regulation of activities therein. It must be taken into account that outer space is the common property of all humankind. Therefore, any efforts to regulate its use should not affect the inherent right of all States to the peaceful use of outer space. Moreover, the Kingdom stresses the importance of international cooperation within the multilateral framework to strengthen information security and to secure national interests on the worldwide web, the Internet.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is of the firm belief that the international community is capable of mustering the will necessary to reach rational solutions to the problems that are preventing us from reaching agreement on many of the issues and other related matters brought before the First Committee.

Ms. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First

Committee. You may be assured of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

The past year has been marked by the two nuclear tests and numerous ballistic-missile trials conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They represent a threat to both the nuclear non-proliferation regime and international security. Switzerland strongly condemns those tests, which violate multiple Security Council resolutions. We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect those resolutions and to return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The challenges posed by nuclear weapons are not, however, limited to the Korean peninsula. The way in which the security situation between certain States and alliances that possess nuclear weapons is developing is also worrying, as are programmes to modernize nuclear arsenals and the lack of progress in a number of key areas, for example, that of nuclear doctrines. Those aspects serve once again highlight how important it is to move as quickly as possible towards a world free of nuclear weapons by implementing the provisions of the NPT in full.

The Working Group mandated to advance multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, which met this year, provided a major opportunity to consider the various measures that must be taken to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. While Switzerland abstained in the voting on the Group's report (see A/71/371), we nonetheless agree with many of its elements and believe that it is particularly rich in terms of substance.

Switzerland fully supports the idea that action is required on a number of fronts to establish and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world. We will need new legally binding instruments as well as the implementation of practical measures. Nuclear weapons are the only category of weapons of mass destruction that is not prohibited. Switzerland believes that several promising ways exist to fill that legal gap. We remain convinced that the scope and effectiveness of any new instrument will be all the greater if it is supported by as many States as possible, especially by States whose security strategies rely on nuclear weapons. With that in mind, we believe that any future negotiating processes must be based on an approach that is as inclusive as possible.

The Working Group identified a large number of practical measures that are fundamental to progress.

They relate especially to transparency and risk reduction and, in particular, to reducing the alert levels of nuclear weapons. The new NPT review cycle, which begins in 2017, offers a major opportunity to advance the implementation of those measures.

A number of events in recent years have demonstrated that major challenges for international security are also posed by other weapons of mass destruction. Despite Syria's accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), and the destruction of its declared stockpiles, there have been numerous reports of the repeated use of chlorine gas and other chemical weapons in the conflict affecting the country. The Joint Investigative Mechanism of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons concluded that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces had used chlorine gas in two of the six cases examined, while the self-proclaimed Islamic State group had used sulphur mustard on one occasion. Switzerland condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons in Syria by all parties at all times and under all circumstances. Furthermore, it calls upon the Security Council once again to refer those cases to the International Criminal Court.

The Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), which will meet next month, offers an opportunity to address the challenges of the Convention's implementation. Strengthening the intersessional process established under the Convention must be a central element of the review. In that context, it will be important to establish an expert body to review scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention. Developments in this area are advancing rapidly, with potentially significant consequences for the BWC.

The challenges posed by the speed and scope of technological development are not limited to biological weapons. Advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing and nanotechnology raise important questions for the disarmament community. In many ways those developments open up positive opportunities for our societies. At the same time, however, certain military applications of those developments may result in considerable challenges with regard to the application of current norms, especially those related

to international humanitarian law. The potential dual use of those new technologies also raises questions with regard to proliferation.

We believe that it is important for the disarmament community to pay particular attention to this issue. We welcome the fact that the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects has actively taken up the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems, and we hope that its next Review Conference will set up a group of governmental experts with a robust mandate to advance work in this area.

We also deem it vital that the monitoring or review of scientific developments be taken up by the various disarmament processes, as is already the case for the CWC. To examine the impact of new technologies on international security and disarmament in greater detail, Switzerland will hold a side event tomorrow, together with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for having drawn our attention to the late payments for several disarmament treaties and have taken note of the potential consequences that this could have for the next meeting, in Santiago de Chile, of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. From our standpoint, it is inconceivable that a meeting of such importance could be postponed. We call upon the States concerned and the United Nations to take all the necessary measures so that the meeting in Santiago can take place as planned.

The conflicts that are taking place throughout the world have highlighted the humanitarian impact of certain conventional weapons and the challenges that they pose with respect to international humanitarian law. This is an issue of key importance that we will come back to in detail in the debate dedicated to that category of weapons.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Let me assure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's full support. The United Nations was established because leaders across the world knew that they could deliver security for their citizens at home only if they could cooperate,

as a community of nations, to deliver security across the globe.

Security is a particular focus for the First Committee and deserves more attention, not less. Four particular challenges are likely to drive United Kingdom security priorities for the coming decade: the increasing threat posed by terrorism, extremism and instability; the resurgence of State-based threats, and intensifying wider State competition; the impact of technology, especially cyberthreats, and wider technological developments; and the erosion of the rules-based international order, making it harder to build consensus and tackle global threats. I want to touch on each and the United Kingdom's contribution to addressing those challenges.

The United Kingdom has the will and ability to work in the most fragile places. We can bring substantial resources and expertise to bear, and we are home to world-leading civil-society organizations. We established ourselves as a global leader through our comprehensive 2011 Building Stability Overseas Strategy, which covers early warning, crisis response and prevention.

We will continue to be a steadfast, permanent member of the Security Council, meeting our NATO commitment to spend 2 per cent of gross domestic product on defence and making a leading contribution to United Nations peacekeeping efforts, where we have doubled our commitment, including new deployments to Somalia and South Sudan.

We will continue to honour our commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of our gross national income on development, building on the achievements we have already made to reduce poverty, deal with instability and increase prosperity the world over. And we will drive forward the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Democracy, the rule of law, open, accountable Governments and institutions, human rights, freedom of speech, property rights and equality of opportunity, including the empowerment of women and girls, are the building blocks of successful societies. They are part of the golden thread of conditions that lead to security and prosperity.

The rules-based international order has enabled economic integration and security cooperation to expand, to the benefit of people throughout the world.

It has done much to encourage predictable behaviour by States and the non-violent management of disputes, and has led States to develop political and economic arrangements at home which favour open markets, the rule of law, participation and accountability. The United Kingdom has consistently championed that framework.

The context, however, is changing, driven by developments such as the growing role of non-State actors, the impact of technology and longer-term shifts of economic wealth to the south and east of the world. Such changes create new challenges and opportunities. The rules-based international order has always relied for its effectiveness and legitimacy on the active participation and contribution of all States, in particular major States, and on the ability of institutions and relationships to adapt to reflect new opportunities and challenges. It will therefore be important to reflect the contribution of growing Powers. We will continue to work with partners to adapt the rules-based international order to meet new challenges.

The rules-based international order also relies on enforcement of standards and laws covering a wide range of activities and behaviours, from the Geneva Conventions to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. There have been successes, in particular the work by the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the United States, China and Russia and the European Union to agree and implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran so that it meets its obligations to ensure its nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. We will continue to support the implementation of that Plan.

Some powerful States and non-State actors, however, are increasingly ignoring international norms that they believe run contrary to their interests, or favour the West. Rules and norms to counter the proliferation of illicit arms and weapons of mass destruction play a vital role in our security. The United Kingdom has consistently been at the forefront of international efforts to tackle proliferation. We devote substantial efforts to this and will continue to do so.

We will maintain pressure on Syria to comply fully with its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We will support the mechanisms established by the Security Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to ensure that

all those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria are held to account.

We will continue to insist that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must abide by its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That includes not conducting further nuclear tests, or tests involving ballistic-missile technologies. We condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's two nuclear tests carried out this year and its testing of ballistic missiles. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only nation to have conducted nuclear tests this century.

We are committed to improving the security of nuclear and other radioactive material. At the fourth Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington, D.C., we announced strong new commitments, including undertaking the largest single movement of highly enriched uranium to the United States to lead international efforts to strengthen the cybersecurity of nuclear plants, and to invest more than £10 million during 2016 to improve nuclear-security standards worldwide. We will support the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the international architecture and look forward to the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security in December this year. We will continue to build trust and confidence among the nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States and to take tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world, where countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, we are committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons and we recognize our obligations under all three pillars of the NPT. We will work with our international partners to tackle proliferation and to make progress on multilateral disarmament. We remain committed to the NPT and to the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to campaign for successful negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and universal membership of 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 United Kingdom is committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Given the increasing mix of State and non-State activity in space, we believe the risk of conflict in space could be reduced by establishing non-legally-binding principles of responsible behaviour that apply to all space-faring nations and organizations. We also strongly support transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) as a means to increase the safety and security of space activity. We look forward to next year's report by the Secretary-General on the state of coordination with the United Nations system with regard to space TCBMs. We welcome the consensus reached in June at the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on a first set of 12 guidelines on the long-term sustainability of outer-space activities. We look forward to working constructively with other nations to make progress on the remaining 20 draft guidelines by 2018.

The United Kingdom was a leading architect of the current system of institutions and relations, and has been at the forefront of its expansion since the end of the Cold War. We have helped to shape the norms that govern the use of force, prevent conflict, advance human rights and good governance, promote open and fair international trade relations, and support freedom of navigation.

We will work with allies and partners to strengthen and adapt existing institutions and rules so that they remain representative and effective. We will seek to extend the benefits of the rules-based international order by encouraging and supporting greater cooperation on global challenges. In short, the United Kingdom has always been a proud and proactive member at the very heart of the United Nations. As our new Prime Minister pledged here in New York just last month (see A/71/PV.8), the United Kingdom will be a confident, strong and dependable partner internationally, true to the universal values that we share together.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of this session of the First Committee. I take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's full support for your endeavours.

Brazil associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/71/PV.2) and the one to be

made by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Nuclear disarmament is a long-standing objective of the international community. The realization of the indiscriminate power of nuclear weapons and of the existential threat they pose to humankind has been the motivation for several initiatives and proposals to pursue their elimination. However, far too little has been attained, and the threat posed by nuclear weapons to the very survival of civilization has not abated and may even have increased. The continued reliance on those weapons of mass destruction and the implementation of wide-ranging modernization programmes by the major possessors sit ill with their stated commitments and legal obligations with respect to nuclear disarmament. Such inconsistencies undermine the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, thereby threatening not only future prospects but also past successes, with dire consequences for the international peace and security landscape. Against that backdrop of long-standing, unrealized commitments, it falls upon all Members of the United Nations to step up their efforts and to explore all avenues open to them to take forward nuclear disarmament. While the nuclear-weapon States bear the brunt of the responsibility, non-nuclear-weapon States have the right, and indeed the obligation, to remain engaged.

Concerned about the limited progress made so far, Brazil supported the work of the Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament convened under resolution 70/33 and the adoption of its final report (see A/71/371). In particular, Brazil strongly supports the recommendation to convene, under the auspices of the General Assembly, a conference in 2017 to negotiate a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Brazil is well aware that a prohibition treaty is not an end in itself and that it will have to be complemented by other measures, including elimination and verification. A prohibition treaty would need to be followed by protocols on those various issues, thereby encompassing, over time, all measures required to achieve a world without nuclear weapons in a flexible and pragmatic manner. Nevertheless, a prohibition treaty would send a strong message that nuclear weapons could no longer be considered legitimate. It would strengthen the existing nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and, hopefully, tip

the scale in favour of more ambitious commitments on other aspects of the disarmament agenda.

My country reaffirms the role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and expresses its willingness to continue to work with all countries in the next review cycle, which begins early next year. It is incumbent upon all Treaty members to engage constructively in order to reach a successful outcome, including new and ambitious commitments on nuclear disarmament. A repetition of 2015 is simply unacceptable if the relevance and credibility of the Treaty are to be maintained.

We also reiterate our willingness to start negotiations on any of the items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament under an agreed programme of work. The paralysis plaguing both the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission needs to be addressed with a sense of urgency. In that connection, we support the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in order to update and improve the existing United Nations disarmament machinery.

Brazil has strongly condemned the recent nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Such actions undermine the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and hinder efforts for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We urge all parties to resume as soon as possible the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The entry into force of the CTBT is the only legally binding assurance against the recurrence of nuclear testing and should be the first priority of States concerned with the Treaty. Attempts to impose further obligations on countries that have already done their part and ratified the Treaty, while at the same time condoning the current status quo, can only weaken the prospect of it ever becoming law. In that regard, we consider Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) counterproductive, and we disapprove of the Council's meddling in a matter currently dealt with through a treaty-based mandate by the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization without paying heed to its members' views and concerns.

Half a century ago, the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean took the bold decision through the Treaty of Tlatelolco to collectively renounce nuclear weapons and establish the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area. The Treaty's fiftieth anniversary, to be celebrated next year, is an important milestone on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

The year 2016 marks another important milestone in nuclear diplomacy as Brazil and Argentina celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the bilateral agreement that created the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) and of the quadripartite agreement, between Brazil, Argentina, the ABACC and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Through the creation of ABACC and the Common System for Control of Nuclear Materials, Argentina and Brazil established an arrangement that had previously been considered unthinkable in such a sensitive area.

Brazil supports the strengthening of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the establishment of new ones, including in the Middle East. Brazil urges all stakeholders to engage constructively in the next review cycle of the NPT in order to overcome their differences and fulfil the mandate set by the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which remains valid and cannot be dissociated from the Treaty.

Brazil believes that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) embodies the continuing effort of the international community to promote a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We recognize the Organization's capacity to uphold its necessary neutrality while discharging its mandate on challenging environments. Although it is noteworthy that Syria's declared chemical programme has been dismantled to a great extent, we would like to highlight the importance of continuing cooperation and dialogue among the relevant actors to clarify the outstanding questions related to the Syrian initial declaration. Sadly, disturbing reports of incidents involving the hostile use of chemicals in the Syrian conflict are not confined to the past. Brazil unequivocally condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstance and reiterates its full support for the work performed by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

The eighth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, held in November, will provide us with an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the regime by reaching balanced decisions that promote the implementation of all provisions of the Convention. Last August, Brazil, in cooperation with the European Union and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, gladly hosted a regional workshop in preparation for the Review Conference.

As a developing country with a peaceful space programme, Brazil attaches high priority to the objective of preventing the weaponization of outer space. Since 2004, a growing number of States have adhered to a policy of no-first-placement of weapons in outer space. We perceive that political commitment as a confidence-building measure, as well as a first step towards an international legally binding instrument aimed at preventing the weaponization of outer space. Therefore, understanding the urgency of undertaking further effective steps in that regard, we co-sponsored, with the Russian Federation, a draft resolution entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space". We invite all States that share the objective of preserving a weapons-free outer space to support the draft resolution.

Brazil favours the strengthening of multilateral norms and principles applicable to the conduct of States in the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the context of international security in a manner that safeguards the free flow of information and respects human rights, in particular the right to privacy. The recognition that international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations apply to State behaviour in their uses of ICTs leads the way to a peaceful and stable digital environment. In addition, the international community must examine the need to develop a specific legal framework to deal with the challenges we face in this realm. Among other functions, such a framework will be important to introduce a list of proscribed behaviours, which should include, inter alia: offensive first use; tampering with the supply chain; intentionally introducing vulnerabilities in systems or networks; and compromising the information security of other States. Brazil encourages Member States to consider the adoption of a no-first-use norm with regard to offensive operations using ICTs. Such a norm will reduce the

chances of a global ICT-related arms race and reassure the international community that ICTs will not be used as instruments of aggression.

The universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) remains one of the highest priorities for the international community. The accession of countries, especially the major arms-exporting countries, is paramount to avoid the continuing detrimental effects of an unregulated international arms trade to world peace and stability. Brazil signed the ATT on 3 July 2013, the very first day it was opened for signature. Brazil has long implemented a national export-control system that already complies to a large extent with ATT obligations. Although minor adjustments in our legislation will be required in order to make our system fully compatible with the new obligations, the objective and purpose of the ATT are already part of our daily practice.

The success of the ATT negotiation process sets out a road map for other processes facing political crossroads. Brazil believes that is the case for nuclear disarmament and, specifically, for the negotiation of a prohibition of nuclear weapons. The General Assembly has the legitimacy and capacity to move nuclear disarmament forward, and there is a growing consensus that finally outlawing nuclear weapons, the only weapons of mass destruction that have not yet been banned, is a rational and diplomatically viable way to break the deadlock on nuclear disarmament. For the better part of a century, the nuclear threat has been hanging over humankind as a sword of Damocles. We now have an opportunity to resume our path towards a more peaceful and prosperous world, free from the constant threat of annihilation. Future generations count on us to seize it. We must not disappoint them.

Ms. Nguyen (Viet Nam): At the outset I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his efforts in advancing disarmament.

Viet Nam associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The First Committee is holding this debate as the world continues to face the dire threats posed by

terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The international community has waited too long for the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The very existence of WMDs themselves, especially nuclear weapons, remains a danger for international peace, security and stability. The debate is also opportune as the demand for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear technologies, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes continues to grow as countries strive for sustainable development.

Peace, security, development and human rights are intertwined and inseparable. We believe that peace can be sustained only when, with strong political will, we are committed to putting aside selfish interests, promoting mutual trust and understanding and joining hands for the purpose of establishing a global culture of complying and behaving in accordance with universally recognized standards, including the fundamental principles of international law and the United Nations Charter.

Viet Nam consistently supports efforts to advance towards non-proliferation and general and complete disarmament, with the highest priority being given to WMDs. Viet Nam believes that addressing the proliferation of WMDs must be coupled with substantive progress in WMD disarmament, particularly the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In our view, there is a need for increased international cooperation to raise the awareness and understanding of the threats posed by the proliferation of WMDs and to strengthen the capacity of States, in particular developing countries, to implement their respective obligations and commitments.

In that regard, we welcome the conclusion of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in August 2016 with substantive recommendations, as well as the convening of the General Assembly's high-level informal plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September 2016. We also support all deliberations on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, which help to promote the goal of nuclear disarmament.

We underline the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the need for the nuclear-weapon States to work towards the early

signing and ratification of their respective protocols. At the same time, we are of the firm belief that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the legitimate rights of States to acquire, have access to, import or export chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

Viet Nam is a party to and complies fully with its obligations under all key weapons-of-mass-destruction, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 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, the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreements and additional protocols and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

We are serious about implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1540 (2004). Viet Nam, as a member of the Group of Friends of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), welcomes and looks forward to engaging in the upcoming review of the resolution.

We also participate in related initiatives, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Proliferation Security Initiative, and are fully committed to cooperating with the IAEA and other international partners to ensure nuclear safety and security and promote the peaceful use of energy.

With regard to conventional arms, we reiterate the legitimate right of States to manufacture, trade and retain conventional weapons for national self-defence. We also commit to positively implementing many related international cooperation agreements, including the submission of yearly reports on arms imports and exports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

We welcome the productive discussions held at the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, with effective and practical measures to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands, those of criminals and terrorists.

As one of a number of countries heavily affected by cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance left over from devastating and protracted wars, we support the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, including the establishment of cooperation mechanisms and international assistance to address the aftermath of war. We are implementing effectively, and with utmost determination, a comprehensive national action plan for the 2010-2025 period to improve the livelihood of victims of bombs, mines and other explosive remnants of war, by conducting a wide range of demining activities and by providing assistance for victims and facilitating their early reintegration into socioeconomic life. We thank all international partners that have provided valuable support to us and call on those in a position to do so to join us in this humanitarian endeavour.

We support the enhancement and reinforcement of the disarmament machinery, with special attention being given to the revitalization of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, in order to negotiate primary issues regarding nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we welcome the efforts made during the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament with regard to its programme of work and look forward to the early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In conclusion, I should like to underline that the ultimate goals of disarmament — the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction — can be achieved only when all States renew their political commitments in a more responsible and trustworthy manner, enhance partnerships and step up their cooperation, including with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations. My delegation remains strongly committed and stands ready to fully cooperate with you, Mr. Chairman, and other member States in moving towards a world free from all weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Phiri (Zambia): Zambia has the honour to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairship of this important Committee. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

At the outset, let me state that Zambia remains strongly committed to the notion of general and complete disarmament and reaffirms its support for a world free of nuclear weapons. Given the humanitarian impact and the risks surrounding nuclear weapons, my country continues to be concerned over the lack of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. Thanks to the multiple commitments many States have made to nuclear disarmament throughout the year, we now have a unique opportunity to transform our many diplomatic processes into developing new international standards on nuclear weapons, including adopting a draft resolution that will allow the start of negotiations on a new international legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. We need to identify an appropriate forum to carry out the substantive work.

My country believes that eliminating nuclear weapons via a comprehensive treaty is the only guarantee against their use. These weapons of terror and mass destruction have no legitimate military utility — and I underline that. Moreover, they do not address any of today's real security threats — such as terrorism, climate change, extreme poverty, overpopulation and disease. There is a need to outlaw these weapons, so as to avoid their use either intentionally or accidentally, and the catastrophic consequences.

With regard to nuclear-weapon-free zones, my country acknowledges the contribution that the five regional nuclear-weapon-free zones continue to make towards the strengthening of global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and the consolidation of international efforts to strengthen peace and security. My country is encouraged that African States are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and have agreed to declare the continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Zambia therefore calls upon other regions that have not yet achieved such targets to work towards their realization.

Zambia continues to cooperate with international partners on the safe exploitation of nuclear technology. In this vein, my country has continued to support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency and

the strengthening of the Agency's additional protocols. My country appreciates the achievements of the Agency in the fields of radiation safety and safeguards, which are crucial to consolidating public confidence in the use of nuclear science and technology and to avoiding nuclear catastrophes. My country urges the Agency to remain resolute in its quest to secure a peaceful world.

Despite the successes that have been achieved in the six years since the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force, there still remains an urgent need not only to universalize the treaty, but also to stop the sporadic use of cluster munitions, which can still be seen in some conflict zones. We are all aware of the strong stigma attached to these weapons, given their indiscriminate effects in terms of both the vast area they cover and the long-term dangers of unexploded ordnance. My country implores all States to join the Convention to strengthen the international rejection of cluster munitions. This call extends even to States that do not possess these weapons. It is my country's strong view that, by joining, each State adds its voice in favour of a ban, thus strengthening the body of international humanitarian law and demonstrating solidarity with the affected countries and victims. Zambia urges States that own stockpiles and past users to renounce cluster munitions and thereby help to prevent further civilian suffering.

You can count on Zambia, Mr. Chair, to be a persistent voice that not only speaks out against the use of cluster munitions but also encourages the universalization and implementation of the Convention.

Zambia continues to renew its commitment to reducing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its efforts to that end. As a demonstration of its commitment, my country ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 20 May 2016. Since ratification, Zambia has been taking measures that will lead to the effective implementation of the Treaty. Among other measures being put in place in my country are the enactment of appropriate national legislation, capacity-building in various related institutions dealing with arms, enhancing inter-agency coordination and developing awareness of Treaty obligations and their application.

Zambia is aware that the illicit proliferation and trafficking of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, continue to pose a serious threat to our continent's security. They fuel human

conflict, resulting in significant loss of life, and they hinder post-conflict reconstruction and development. The offshoots of the illicit arms trade mostly affect vulnerable groups, in particular women and children. In that regard, my country welcomes the outcome documents of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the 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, and of the second Conference of States Parties on the Arms Trade Treaty, which provide key areas of potential synergy on dealing with arms transfers. Zambia calls for sustained efforts to ensure that women, who are the ones most affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, are allowed to participate in all phases of the United Nations Programme of Action and the ATT implementation.

Zambia calls for wider international cooperation and capacity-building between capacitated and capacity-deprived States, with a view to strengthening the intrinsic connection between sustainable development and peace and security.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my country's commitment to and solidarity with global efforts to advance towards complete disarmament in all its aspects.

Mr. Thammavongsa (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I wish to join other representatives in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I wish to assure you of our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). However, I should also like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

With today's unpredictable world security environment, the international community needs to see an improvement in the field of disarmament and international security. Obligations that had been agreed upon in the past remain unfulfilled. The lack of political will and of collective efforts continue to be the main challenges to progress in the field of disarmament. Hence the tasks that we must undertake to ensure a safe future for the next generation are

daunting. Disarmament and non-proliferation are at the top of the agenda that all Member States must support in order to maintain and promote international peace and security. Accordingly, the Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the work of the First Committee.

The continued existence of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, remains a matter of serious concern to the international community. In that context, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its view that only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons can the international community ensure an absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Therefore, the Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomed the General Assembly meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held on 26 September 2016. We believe that maintaining that momentum will move us forward to total nuclear disarmament.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is one of the treaties that have played a significant role in the field of nuclear disarmament. The three pillars — nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — are well defined and should serve the best interests of the international community. Those three pillars are meant to be implemented equally; yet there continues to be a discrepancy, as nuclear disarmament is lagging behind.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), to which the Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance, would certainly contribute to moving forward nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, 20 years after it was adopted, the CTBT remains ineffective. It is therefore the duty of the international community to ensure the entry into force of the Treaty, and we have to be optimistic. In that context, we hope that those that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining eight annex 2 States, will sign and ratify the CTBT at an early date.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has made a significant contribution to strengthening the global nuclear-disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and enhancing regional and global peace and security. The Lao People's Democratic Republic again encourages the nuclear-weapon States

to recognize these zones and provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zones. We also wish to re-emphasize the importance of the full operation of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and encourage nuclear-weapon States to accede to its Protocol at the earliest possible date.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic recognizes the significant role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, nuclear safety and nuclear safeguards. In that respect, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has completed the internal process and signed the IAEA Additional Protocol.

While focusing on the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation, we cannot afford to ignore the challenges posed by conventional weapons, in particular cluster munitions. The use of cluster munitions, especially remnants of war such as unexploded ordnance, has created major obstacles to human life and national development in many countries, and in particular in the most heavily bombed country per capita, such as my country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where unexploded ordnance continues to pose serious obstacles to people's lives and national development even though the conflict ended more than four decades ago. The clearance of unexploded ordnance will take a long time and requires huge resources. In that connection, we wish to express our sincere thanks to those countries, international organizations and others that have provided funding and technical support and assistance to my country, including the recent pledge of \$90 million by the United States of America for the next three years. Once again, we call on them to provide increased funding and technical assistance to support our efforts to clear the unexploded ordnance in our country.

To address these challenges, the Lao Government launched "Sustainable Development Goal 18, Lives Saved from Unexploded Ordnance", as a national goal on 7 September 2016. In furtherance of our efforts to be rid of the danger from explosive remnants of war, we hope that support and assistance from the international community will be forthcoming to help us realize this specific sustainable development goal in the years ahead.

We welcome the successful outcome of the sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held from 5 to 7 September 2016 in Geneva to review the progress made and address the challenges in implementing the obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and we look forward to the seventh Meeting of States Parties to that Convention, to be held in September 2017. We would like once again to take this opportunity to call upon those countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions to do so in order to achieve a world free from those weapons.

To date, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have progressed at a snail's pace. In that regard, the Lao People's Democratic Republic stresses the need for strong political will and collective efforts aimed at overcoming this difficult impasse and at re-engaging in a multilateral approach in order to achieve the ultimate goal of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Although ours is a small country with limited resources, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a State party to a number of international instruments on disarmament and is committed to fulfilling its international obligations under those treaties. The Lao People's Democratic Republic strongly believes that political will and flexibility on the part of Member States are essential in order to make progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to overcome the challenges posed to the international community by nuclear weapons.

It requires more effort from each and every country in terms of working together to achieve common goals so that the world will be free from fear and the threats posed by every kind of weapons. My delegation will therefore continue to contribute constructively to the work of the First Committee.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation sincerely congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-first session and wishes you every success in this important task.

France aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2) and would like to present the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

As our work begins, France considers it essential to restore a shared understanding of the goals that we have the responsibility to pursue together. Those goals are closely intertwined: they involve strengthening international peace, stability and security and, to that end, establishing a substantial and realistic disarmament agenda for the benefit of all.

Yet as everyone here knows, the world around us is striking in its complex, threatening and uncertain nature. The fact that the international environment has become more unpredictable and less cooperative means that, in our view, efforts are all the more necessary to address, in a coherent and comprehensive approach, the issues of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. As such, we are under no illusions. These different issues cannot be treated in isolation. Together, these issues contribute to the vital foundation of any progress towards a safer world, namely, the seeking of better mutual understanding and confidence, progress on the road to reciprocity of measures taken and their effective verification, and full acknowledgement of the fact that the need for effort in one area must not lead to an arms race in another.

The current situation also requires us to be clear-sighted. Any attempt to move forward while ignoring strategic balances and their factors, or which dismisses regional and national interests, is bound to fail. That means simply that nothing concrete can be effectively achieved if we deny or ignore reality. It also means that only the demanding avenue of seeking consensus, as well as the universalization of the measures adopted, can bring about effective results. That approach is at the core of the multilateralism that France remains determined to promote, as recently demonstrated by its bringing together the international community in Paris to agree on substantial commitments during the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Proliferation risks remain serious and require a firm response from the international community. The increasing number of irresponsible, unjustifiable and destabilizing acts by North Korea, particularly the nuclear tests on 6 January and 9 September this year, is particularly worrying. Above all, they demonstrate Pyongyang's determination to obtain a nuclear and ballistic arsenal, in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions. That threat is a problem for us all. We must respond firmly, particularly through

United Nations sanctions. Sanctions are not an end in themselves, but they are an essential means of achieving our collective goal of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula, a prerequisite for resuming the Six-Party Talks. North Korea has chosen isolation and must bear the consequences.

The case of Iran shows that the determination of the international community can help bring about solutions to the proliferation crises. The international community, and the E3/EU+3 group in particular, will continue to monitor over the long term Iran's implementation of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Furthermore, the acceleration of the ballistic-missile programme, and particularly the short- and medium-range missile launches, remains a subject of acute concern for my country.

The Joint Investigative Mechanism report has helped to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The Mechanism's conclusions are alarming. Out of the nine cases studied, two are attributable with certainty to the Syrian authorities, and a third to Da'esh. This new information comes on top of the many difficulties that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is encountering with respect to the Syrian authorities' lack of transparency on their chemical-weapons programme. These weapons are banned by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, which Syria ratified in 2013. The use of these inhumane weapons is unacceptable and cannot be justified. A State's questioning of an international non-proliferation regime must be sanctioned. The use of these same weapons by Da'esh is equally unacceptable and must be the subject of major mobilization by our institutions, particularly the OPCW.

On another level, France intends once again this year to submit, along with Germany, a draft resolution on preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources. We need to remain mobilized to prevent the serious radiological consequences that misuse of certain radioactive sources for terrorist purposes could have.

To tackle these threats and to address the more general security challenges that we are facing today, the various international regimes that we have patiently built together over the past few decades have to be preserved and fully implemented. The integrity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

(NPT) across its three pillars must be guaranteed. The obligations and safeguards pursuant to the NPT are irreplaceable, and it would be a mistake from our point of view to read reasons for doubt as to its credibility or effectiveness into the inconclusive outcome of the 2015 Review Conference. France will therefore vigorously oppose any attempt to weaken the non-proliferation regime through the promotion of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

Let us be clear: such a treaty, designed without the nuclear-weapon States, will not have the slightest concrete impact, in particular on the reduction of arsenals. Indeed, we will not achieve a safer world by ignoring the role of deterrence policies and the security context in which they play their part. Nor will spreading doubt as to the scope of the obligations already incumbent upon the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the NPT, or seeking in vain to substitute the humanitarian approach for security concerns, effectively bring about the next steps in the nuclear disarmament process, as agreed by consensus under the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

As such, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was opened for signature 20 years ago this year, is a priority for France in the field of nuclear disarmament. On 23 September, the Security Council adopted resolution 2310 (2016), which calls on all States to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay, to abstain from carrying out any nuclear explosions and to maintain their moratorium until the entry into force of the Treaty.

Furthermore, the launch of negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty is also a priority and the next logical step in nuclear disarmament. Similarly, and because nuclear disarmament is first and foremost measured by actions, my country will continue to encourage its partners to follow its example, both in terms of transparency with regard to its forces and facilities and in terms of concrete disarmament measures. France, whose deterrence policy is strictly defensive, applies the principle of strict sufficiency compatible with the strategic context and currently maintains its arsenal at its lowest level.

It is also important to strengthen the United States-Russia arms-control agreement. In that respect, we are counting on the United States and on Russia to renew their commitments aimed at reducing their strategic arsenals after 2021 and following the expiry of the

2010 Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

My country also calls today on all countries to fully participate in the preparation of the next NPT review cycle, which will begin next year. France is committed to contributing actively. We will therefore host the next P-5 conference in Paris in the spring of 2017, with the aim of deepening collaboration among the nuclear-weapon States and opening the P-5 group up further to dialogue with non-nuclear-weapon States, whose expectations must be heard. That is one of the reasons why France has decided to participate actively in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

I should like to stress the point that only constructive, open dialogue can help us to move forward. Nothing positive can be expected from the growing trend towards circumventing the disarmament machinery and hardening divisions, as observed this year in the course of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament. France therefore intends to devote itself to encouraging all parties to make a sincere effort to recommit to the traditional and legitimate disarmament forums, whose impasses have lasted too long.

In this second half of 2016, we will have an opportunity to work together to enhance the effectiveness of several important international instruments. With regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, France considers that work in several areas offers reasonable prospects for progress. The practical proposals put forward by my country have been designed to advance debate and build confidence among States parties. We hope they will be appreciated in that light.

With regard to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, the lively debates on the main related topics are encouraging. It is particularly positive to see that the question of lethal autonomous weapons systems, raised by France in 2013, is gradually reaching maturity.

Finally, the goal of preventing an arms race in space remains essential. The huge number of peaceful applications of space and the need to guarantee

universal access to it means that we have to establish targeted confidence-building and transparency measures to create the conditions for the sustainability of space activities.

At a time when terrorist threats and the inherent dangers of the illicit spread of weapons weigh on the security of peoples in all regions of the world, France considers it essential to renew the priority devoted to issues of conventional arms control. My country has accordingly stepped up its engagement in the implementation of several major areas of work, first of which is the universalization and full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. The success of the second Conference of States Parties in August 2016 has to be an encouragement to take up certain substantive issues in greater depth, including with civil-society support. More generally, greater political mobilization from the whole international community to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons appears crucial to us, and I will come back to this issue later. Similarly, the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions must be continue to be carefully implemented. Finally, an effort to better structure and coordinate the international response to the serious threats posed by improvised explosive devices is desirable.

I will conclude briefly by stressing once again the three priorities of France's involvement in our debate this year: anchoring our efforts in the real world, consolidating existing legal regimes by seeking practical, tangible and pragmatic progress, and restoring effective multilateral practices, especially through dialogue and consensus-seeking.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly and by assuring you of my delegation's full support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2), and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Italy attaches great importance to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as essential components of our foreign policy. We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in those areas. We have seen some positive developments over the

past year, as well as negative trends that are matters of deep concern.

Italy remains convinced that the universalization of existing legally binding instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction and of the main conventional arms treaties is a crucial objective to be pursued by the international community. These instruments and their universal implementation are crucial for building a political and legal environment conducive to concrete progress in our domains.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and remains the only legal framework for achieving a world without nuclear weapons. In that respect, we recognize the central role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its safeguards system in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We welcome the work done by the Agency to monitor the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme and the cooperative approach undertaken by the parties involved. We encourage them to remain fully committed to the implementation of the JCPOA and of resolution 2231 (2015).

We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States, without delay or conditions. We also call on all States parties to the Treaty to implement without delay and in a balanced manner all its provisions as well as the commitments agreed by subsequent Review Conferences.

Our utmost concern for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament. Italy is committed to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the NPT in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. Relevant actions should focus on practical and effective measures as steps in a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a top priority. We welcome the joint ministerial statement adopted by the Friends of the CTBT ministerial meeting on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty. We also welcome resolution

2310 (2016). We urge all States, in particular those whose ratification is essential for the entry into force of the CTBT, to sign and/or ratify it without delay and without conditions. Pending the CTBT's entry into force, Italy calls upon all States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to respect the moratorium on nuclear-test explosions and to refrain from any action that would undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

We also attach great importance to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). Italy values the Secretary-General's recent appeal for investing more resources in the international architecture dealing with biological weapons and recognizes the need for improving capacity to prevent or respond to a biological attack. With that in mind, we look forward to the upcoming eighth BWC Review Conference as a valuable opportunity to strengthen this fundamental instrument. In particular we support a stronger intersessional work programme, which should be endowed with the tools necessary to respond more rapidly to emerging needs and challenges.

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We fully cooperate with the Organization when it comes to inspections on our territory. We have also actively contributed jointly with other States to the successful removal of the remaining chemical-weapons precursors in Libya, in an operation facilitated and coordinated by the OPCW, and we support the OPCW's investigative activities into the alleged uses of chemical weapons.

On the other hand, we observe with grave concern continuous violations of international law regarding the use of weapons of mass destruction. Italy strongly condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests and launches using ballistic-missile technology as clear violations of relevant Security Council resolutions and as a serious threat to peace and to regional and international security.

We reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon the development of all its existing nuclear- and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We urge

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the NPT and the IAEA safeguards at an early date and to sign and ratify the CTBT.

We strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons in Syria, which has been confirmed by the OPCW. We support the work of the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, as well as of the Fact-Finding Mission and the Declaration Assessment Team for Syria. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its obligations under the CWC and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We are also deeply concerned about the allegations of the manufacture and use of chemical weapons by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and express our commitment to working with international partners to mitigate the serious threat to international security posed by the use of chemical weapons by terrorists.

Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. In this regard, we reiterate our support for the full implementation of all relevant international instruments, starting with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We hope that the review of the 1540 regime, which is currently under way, will have a successful outcome. More generally, we are open to discussing any initiatives aimed at strengthening the ability of the international community to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist acts and to combat all related activities.

In the field of conventional weapons, we look forward to the Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects to take stock of the work conducted in the past five years and to lay the basis for our efforts in the next intersessional cycle, particularly as that relates to the issues of improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Another priority of our Government is the continued implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions. For this reason, Italy continues to devote material, technical and financial resources to the implementation of comprehensive mine-action programmes, focusing

on such goals as clearance and stockpile destruction, risk education, victim physical and psychological rehabilitation and socioeconomic reintegration. We will continue to make our positive contribution to mine action through our role as Chair of the Mine Action Support Group for the current biennium and as a coordinator on victim assistance in the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We welcome the decision taken by the second Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which completed the establishment of the Treaty's institutional architecture, and look forward to focusing our efforts now on the related aspects of effective implementation and universalization. We also continue to place great importance on the full 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 and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. In this spirit, we have joined the declaration on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to be delivered by France on behalf of a broad group of countries.

On outer space, we welcome the agreement reached in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in June 2016 on a first set of long-term sustainability guidelines and look forward to further work on this issue. Nevertheless, we believe that a constructive discussion among international partners on principles of responsible behaviour in outer space should be a useful complement to these efforts.

Italy supports developing norms and principles of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, as well as the promotion of confidence-building measures, international cooperation and capacity-building to improve cybersecurity and decrease the risk of disputes among States in this field.

Italy supported from the very beginning the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and has developed a national action plan for its implementation. We are keenly aware of the importance of including gender-based approaches in disarmament processes and of ensuring the equal participation of women and men in peace and security decision-making and action.

Before concluding, let me reaffirm the importance that we attach to strengthening dialogue on disarmament

topics with all relevant actors from civil society. We note the fundamental contribution they provide and look forward to their increased involvement in the disarmament machinery's activities.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I should like to assure you that Qatar is ready to cooperate with you and with other delegations to ensure the success of our proceedings. My country associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Disarmament and international security are instrumental to the international community. The dimension of the challenges posed to collective security in the world today underlines the need to expedite our efforts to reach international consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation. Relevant international initiatives and instruments need to be designed to avoid a number of risks, especially as we strive to establish a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Yet the road ahead remains longer and more hazardous than ever, particularly against the backdrop of growing conflicts, terrorism and the spread of weapons, not to mention the risk of having weapons of mass destruction fall into the hands of terrorist groups.

This reality imposes a higher responsibility on us to strengthen cooperation and redouble our efforts to address those challenges. In this respect, my delegation would like to support all international statements and measures that will contribute to reaching and achieving United Nations goals, especially the observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and of 29 August as an International Day against Nuclear Tests. We look forward to the outcome of the disarmament review conference in 2018.

Nuclear proliferation is a source of concern for everyone. Four decades after the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), nuclear risks continue to loom over us, especially with the emergence of new parties in the conflicts we are witnessing today. Nuclear-weapon States continue to keep this lethal weapon at the heart of their military ideologies and strategies, which highlights the urgent need for a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

We would like to stress the importance of the fact that four decades after the adoption of the NPT, which is the cornerstone of non-proliferation and disarmament, it remains crucial that nuclear-weapon States work seriously to remove this major danger, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty. We appreciate the results of bilateral agreements — SALT I, SALT II, START I, START II and New START — as they have considerably reduced the world's stocks of nuclear warheads. Yet we see that the current stocks still pose a threat to humanity. It is therefore very important to reinforce article VI and other relevant measures in line with the outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference.

My delegation reaffirms the right of countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as an inalienable right, while underlining that it is very important to develop peaceful energy programmes in a very responsible way. We must abide by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and other relevant international obligations. We have to cooperate with the IAEA in its inspections so that they are carried out fully.

The international disarmament instruments have helped to achieve peace and security in a number of regions in the world, yet the Middle East region is still lacking security and stability. My delegation would again like to voice its concern at the lack of progress towards making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We are concerned that various obligations have not been met, including those under the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the measures taken during the 2000 Review Conference and the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The State of Qatar has always adamantly supported adopting a clear policy on disarmament and non-proliferation, as it firmly believes that achieving international peace and security is a joint responsibility for Member States and that multilateralism is the only way to address these issues. In this respect, Qatar reiterates its willingness to cooperate under the Charter of the United Nations to uphold international peace and security and specifically to eliminate all risks for humankind associated with weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons.

We support international efforts seeking to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, my country has sought to abide by all its disarmament obligations under the NPT; 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 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and other agreements.

Qatar is hosting and financing numerous events and meetings in order to implement those treaties. For instance, we organize six annual events together with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We have also held a number of events, including a workshop on nuclear radiation in cooperation with NATO. We have hosted a workshop organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In cooperation with the United States, in December 2013 we organized a conference on the financing of weapons of mass destruction. In March 2015, we hosted the eleventh NATO Conference on Weapons of Mass Destruction, Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation.

At the national level, since its establishment in 2004 the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons has provided guidance to different Government entities in line with the goals that have been enshrined in the different international treaties to which Qatar is a party. Qatar is also organizing different awareness programmes for high-school and university students on the risks of weapons of mass destruction. Two annual contests have been organized in the areas of research and outreach in relation to weapons of mass destruction. In 2012, Qatar established the Doha Regional Centre for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Training, which offers training services at the regional, national and international levels.

Qatar reaffirms the need to stress that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum to address issues of disarmament. The Conference must show leadership by establishing subcommittees that will work to eliminate nuclear weapons pursuant to a binding, specific and unconditional timetable. Unconditional and binding negotiations must be undertaken so as to ensure that countries have safeguards and guarantees that nuclear weapons will not be used against them. We must also reach an agreement about the arms race in outer space.

The spread of small arms and light weapons is also of major concern to us, especially in the light of the

potential use of those weapons in conflicts. We call on all concerned parties to abide by their obligations, especially manufacturing countries, so that they adopt strict restrictions to prevent the spread of those weapons. My delegation commends the efforts made to achieve the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We look forward to the outcomes of such meetings.

At the end of the day, achieving world peace and security is a joint responsibility of all Member States and cannot be accomplished unless we abide by our obligations in terms of disarmament, especially nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Qatar will pursue its efforts to abide by its obligations as a party to international instruments and as a State Member of the United Nations.

Ms. Dagher (Lebanon): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of my delegation's full support and engagement throughout this session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Nuclear weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited by an international treaty. From the overwhelming international support for the humanitarian pledge to the successful outcome of the second Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and its recommendation for a conference in 2017, this session has been convened against a background of a unique opportunity to move forward towards prohibiting the most destructive and inhumane weapon ever created. While reaffirming the right of each State to development, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Lebanon strongly supports the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Despite the regrettable failure of the latest Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to reach a consensual outcome,

mainly on a concrete road map for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, Lebanon believes that the goals and commitments enshrined in the NPT remain as pertinent as ever and calls on all parties to implement their engagements, particularly to implement without further delay of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, Lebanon wishes to recall that, in the Middle East, Israel is the only non-party to the Treaty and continues to threaten peace and security in the region by continuing to amass nuclear weapons, not to mention refusing to place its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

Fifteen years after the adoption 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, Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to its implementation and welcomes the particular attention in the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to the link between sustainable development and peace and security, mainly the importance of Goal 16, target 4, of the Sustainable Development Agenda to significantly reduce by 2030 illicit financial and arms flows and combat all forms of organized crime.

In this context, the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty is also a positive development, and Lebanon looks forward to its universal, strong and effective implementation. Lebanon also welcomes the inclusion of the gender perspective in the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States and takes this opportunity to reaffirm the necessity of continuing to mainstream gender issues in all aspects of the work of the First Committee. Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and, based on its continuous painful experience as a victim of these weapons since 2006, Lebanon condemns any use of cluster munitions and calls for the universalization of the Convention.

With regard to new challenges such as armed drones, autonomous weapons, cybersecurity and outer-space activities, Lebanon reaffirms the need to regulate the use of such technologies in a universal and inclusive manner based on the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Finally, this year has been described by many as the year when the world has awakened to the need to

restore our humanity. Not only should we stress here that technology should not overwhelm our humanity, but more than any time before, we need to remember the noble *raison d'être* of this Committee. The establishment and maintenance of international peace and security should be made "with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources", as stated in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. And only when justice, democracy, human rights and the rule of law prevail will international peace and security be sustainable.

With thanks to the Chair, I look forward to the positive outcome of this session. I wish you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau every success in your work.

Mr. Propper (Israel): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairship and assure you of the cooperation and support of my delegation.

Israel supports a vision of the Middle East free from war and hostility, and from weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. This is a vision to which all of the inhabitants of the region should aspire, based on the hope for peace, mutual recognition, reconciliation and the cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostility. At the same time, Israel believes that arms-control and disarmament processes are inseparable from the context in which they exist and must be formulated in a way that addresses the prevailing circumstances, challenges and threats. Any initiative pertaining to a regional dialogue on arms control and disarmament must emanate from the region, be firmly rooted in reality, address all relevant aspects of regional security, and enhance the individual and collective security of all regional partners.

The Middle East has become a hub for radicalization and violent extremism. Political upheavals and failing States have created fruitful ground for the spread of terrorist organizations. These terrorist groups have not only taken firm root in the region, but in some cases even form or participate in Governments. The extent to which regional States fail to exercise the fundamental functions required of States by international law is a serious matter that needs close and constant examination. The consequences of this situation are not limited to the region alone; they pose a grave threat well beyond the Middle East's geographic boundaries.

Iran's pursuit of further developing its ballistic-missile capabilities is a troubling development for the

region, as well as for the international community and international security. Since the implementation day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on 16 January, Iran has conducted 10 ballistic-missile tests, with missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The missiles tested by the Iranian regime have been of various ranges, including one with a range of 2,500 kilometres — well beyond the region of the Middle East.

During the month of March, Iran tested a missile with a threat to annihilate Israel inscribed on the surface of the missile's body. In his July report on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2016/589), the Secretary-General expressed his concern over Iran's ballistic-missile launches, which have the potential to increase tensions in the region and are not consistent with the spirit of the JCPOA. The Secretary-General called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to refrain from conducting such launches. Israel calls upon the international community to unequivocally condemn these tests and show zero tolerance for Iran's behaviour.

It should be emphasized that Iran's activities aimed at undermining the region are not limited to ballistic-missile tests. Tehran continues to promote subversive activities throughout the region through its support for terror organizations, which includes supplying weapons, financial and political support and military training. These activities contradict numerous resolutions of the Security Council.

We have been concerned for many years about the unremitting use of chemical weapons in the Middle East. The use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, which has acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and vowed to forgo its entire chemical-weapons programme, has been clearly documented, including in the August report (see S/2016/738) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). This is a source of concern that must be addressed clearly and unequivocally by the international community in order to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons. There should be no gaps, inconsistencies or discrepancies in Syria's disclosures in relation to its residual chemical-weapon capabilities, and it should be clear to Syria that the international community will not close the Syrian file while fundamental question marks remain.

The use of chemical weapons by terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State has also been clearly recognized by the aforementioned JIM report. This use, taken together with the erosion of regional borders, is a deeply concerning development, especially in the light of the ambitions of other terrorist organizations to acquire and use such capabilities in future. The Middle East, as a laboratory of terrorist activities, has shown that chemical weapons unfortunately can also be used by non-State actors that do not possess large or advanced platforms.

Against this troubling backdrop, it is evident that any arms-control or disarmament process cannot be detached from reality. Israel believes that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional States to engage in a process of direct and sustained dialogue to address the broad range of security challenges in the region, which include all those challenges and threats that States of the region face individually as well as collectively. Such a dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, must address in an inclusive manner the threat perceptions of all regional parties in order to enhance and improve their security, rather than detract from it. Direct engagement, combined with trust and confidence-building, is an essential basis for the creation of a new security paradigm in a region fraught with wars, conflicts, disintegration of nation States and human suffering.

Accordingly, in 2011, Israel agreed to enter a process of consultation with the former Under-Secretary of State of Finland, Jaakko Laajava, with respect to the regional security challenges in the Middle East. Between October 2013 and June 2014, five rounds of multilateral consultations were held in Switzerland between Israel and several of its Arab neighbours. The central purpose of the meetings was to seek regional consensus on all the essential aspects of a conference in Helsinki. Israel attended all these meetings, engaged in good faith with the other participants and agreed to a sixth meeting which did not take place due to the other side's reluctance to continue these talks.

Israel continues to believe that direct dialogue addressing the broad range of security challenges between the regional parties is fundamental to any meaningful consensual discussion on this matter. Israel, for its part, will continue to seek a meaningful regional discussion of this type that could eventually lead to a more peaceful and secure Middle East. In the meantime, Israel will continue its policy of

adopting, wherever possible, arms- and export-control agreements and arrangements. Among other steps, Israel signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 and is actively engaged in the fleshing out of the verification regime. In this very spirit, Israel co-sponsored resolution 2310 (2016) that supported the CTBT.

Israel is a party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and, in 1993, signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We are actively engaged and maintain a close dialogue with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Israel adopted a policy of adherence to all suppliers' regimes and incorporates their control lists in its domestic legislation. In this regard, Israel's signature on the Arms Trade Treaty reflects Israel's ongoing commitment to a robust and responsible export-control system.

In conclusion, on the issue of cybersecurity, as a member of the former Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, Israel wishes to express its support for the work of the new group and its hope that further consensus can be reached on the applicability of international law and on the voluntary and non-binding nature of new norms.

Mr. Vukašinović (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time with this statement, let me begin by extending my congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session and to other members of the Bureau on their respective elections. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of our delegation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2), and I now wish to make some remarks in my national capacity.

Weapons of mass destruction, as the most destructive weapons ever created, constitute an enormous challenge to global peace and stability. A growing threat from terrorist groups, criminals and other non-State actors — together with their intention to use weapons of mass destruction — seriously challenges the non-proliferation regime. Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to disarmament in all its aspects, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms

the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The international community should be more united around the idea of building a safe and more secure world. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The NPT remains the most important legal instrument in the field of nuclear control and the cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is concerned at the fact that the CTBT has not yet entered into force. We encourage progress in the Treaty's entry into force through the signatures and ratifications of new States parties thereto. The entry into force and full implementation of the CTBT will bring us closer to the most important global security goal, a nuclear-weapon-free world. Until the CTBT enters into force a de facto moratorium on nuclear tests should be continued. It is essential that all States work on realistic activities that promote dialogue on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency for the period 2013-2015. Our delegation has supported all decisions that contribute to strengthening the nuclear security and stability in the region and globally, and consolidating the technical, financial and human resources of the Agency. Bosnia and Herzegovina appreciates the efforts of the Agency aimed at assisting countries to implement their national programmes and meet their national goals. We will continue with activities that strengthen nuclear safety and fulfil our international obligations in this area.

The illicit trade in conventional arms affects regional and international security and stability. Millions of people are suffering from the direct and indirect consequences of an irresponsible arms trade that fuels conflicts and contributes to human rights abuses. The globalization of the arms trade has allowed for conventional weapons to be produced and assembled all over the world with little control. We support a well-regulated and transparent trade in conventional arms.

We welcome the progress made with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as the first legally binding treaty to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons. By ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty, Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed its commitment to strengthening global and regional peace, security and stability. In accordance with article 13 of the Treaty, we

have submitted an initial annual report. Furthermore, we established a national control mechanism and harmonized domestic legislation with the provisions of the ATT. We continue to encourage the universalization of the Treaty and its effective implementation.

As a post-conflict society, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces a number of challenges related to the control of small arms and light weapons. In line with the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects Bosnia and Herzegovina formed the National Coordination Committee for Small Arms and Light Weapons, aimed at ensuring the control of small arms and light weapons throughout the country. We implemented our strategy for the control of small arms and light weapons in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2013-2016 and have created a new strategy for the period 2016-2020. With the new strategy, we continue to improve efforts to decrease the security risks for all aspects of small arms and light weapons in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Zeleny (Czech Republic), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The primary objectives of the implementation of the strategy are improvements in the domestic legal framework and full harmonization with relevant international standards. Furthermore, the strategy reduces the presence of illicit small arms and light weapons in the country, thereby reducing the number of incidents involving them, and improves control over the foreign trade in small arms and light weapons. Bosnia and Herzegovina meets the challenges of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by strengthening the capacity of the police and judicial structures in the country and through cooperation with relevant international and regional organizations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We welcome the upcoming fifteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention, scheduled to take place from 28 November to 2 December in Santiago. We see that meeting as an important step towards the full implementation and achievement of the target date of 2025 for the global elimination of anti-personnel mines. We also welcome the results of the sixth Meeting of States Parties to the

Convention on Cluster Munitions, which took place from 5 to 7 September this year in Geneva.

As a result of the 1992-1995 war, Bosnia and Herzegovina is, unfortunately, still facing the problem of landmine fields. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the National Mine Action Strategy, but limited funds delay the implementation of the Strategy. Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to completing mine action activity by 2019, as set out in the national strategy. However, success will largely depend on the availability of donor funding, and this continues to be reduced. We are making additional efforts to further develop our relations with the donors.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that the problem of proliferation and arming are global issues. Nuclear-test explosions are a subject of great concern, as is increasing global military spending. We need more cooperation in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and better coordination between various initiatives, as well as better resource mobilization to strengthen international peace and security.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (spoke in Spanish): I should like to begin by congratulating the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their election to lead the work of the First Committee.

We endorse the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and that delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). Nevertheless, we would like to make a few comments pertaining to the work of the First Committee in our national capacity.

On 26 September, we commemorated the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and, based on the statements that were made, I think many of us feel that the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament is unfortunate. The outlook is undoubtedly discouraging, as demonstrated by the political dysfunction that is paralysing the disarmament machinery and the failure of the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is of course the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, as well as the fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is still not yet in force 20 years after its opening for

signature. In addition, we see a lack of real quantitative progress in the reduction of arsenals, while qualitative improvements are being made to weapons that allow the number of warheads to be reduced without any loss of their potential to cause damage.

In recent years, however, the international community has renewed its optimism and regained its interest in moving towards a world free of nuclear weapons. We are very encouraged by this and wish to make our position quite clear. We do not want a small group of nuclear-weapon States to be able to determine when or if nuclear disarmament is achieved. The humanitarian pledge, which was endorsed by 127 Member States, is the product of the humanitarian impact of a nuclear-weapon initiative and demonstrates that renewed commitment. The Conferences held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna have been very helpful in launching this debate and giving it a place in the multilateral disarmament agenda.

The voices that have been raised against the dangers that these lethal weapons represent have become ever louder, as was apparent in the meetings and the final report (A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. That report, issued on 19 August, called for the holding of a conference in 2017, open to all States and with the participation of international organizations and civil society, to negotiate a legally binding, universal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons with a view to their full elimination. Our Committee has the task of translating that recommendation into a specific mandate.

For the first time in many years, the objective of prohibiting nuclear weapons is within our grasp. This is a necessary aspiration in a fragile world where there are struggles for supremacy and in which an eventual nuclear confrontation is a latent threat. Some of us have described these efforts as naïve or counterproductive, but we are fully aware that prohibition is not synonymous with elimination. We are, however, convinced that it is a key element in the process of achieving a world that is safer and free of the danger of a nuclear catastrophe.

Although the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons are a priority, in the interim we need to ensure that all initiatives taken to mitigate the risk are fully implemented. That is why we need to maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing until such time as the CTBT enters into force. We therefore condemn

categorically the recent nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Those tests serve only to undermine international peace and security, increase regional tensions and block efforts to promote the dialogue, trust and cooperation necessary to make the Korean peninsula a peaceful region and ensure its denuclearization. We call on all parties to return to the negotiating table and to find a peaceful solution based on dialogue, diplomacy and good-neighbourliness.

We reiterate the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a vital element of nuclear-disarmament initiatives. We are very proud of being a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone and served as an example and an inspiration for the creation of other such zones. These nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute to nuclear disarmament and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. They need to be given their rightful place, including in the work of this Committee.

Small arms and light weapons cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people every year throughout the world. They fuel conflict and exacerbate violence, particularly because weapons remaining from prior conflicts are often diverted to the illicit market and then become a threat that lasts for decades. In my country and many others, the illicit trade in such weapons fuels armed violence and insecurity and victimizes society. The fight against this blight is one of the main priorities of my Government because its impact on our society has been immeasurable.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the first legally binding instrument aimed at considerably reducing the human cost of arms proliferation worldwide. It seeks to prevent arms suppliers from taking advantage of the weakest points in the legal weapon-supply chain and the diversion of weapons to the illegal market. To this end, it specifies the responsibilities incumbent on all those participating in the legal weapons supply chain. Guatemala signed the ATT shortly after it was opened for signature, in recognition of its noble and necessary principles, and deposited our instrument of ratification on 12 July. We promoted this important instrument from the very beginning, having actively participated in its negotiation and in the preparatory process in the first Conference of States Parties. We currently hold the post of Vice-President of the third Conference of States Parties to the ATT. We need to continue working towards its full implementation so that it can make

a real difference in the fight against the illegal arms trade and ensure that exporting, importing and transit countries work according to the same norms.

My delegation reiterates its commitment to the full 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 and its follow-up mechanisms. We are concerned at the lack of progress, even though we continue to adopt outcome documents, as for example at the Review Conference and the fifth and sixth Biennial Meetings of States. It is unfortunate that some have not allowed the further evolution of this important instrument, which is indispensable if it is to maintain its relevance. On this last point, it is particularly regrettable that it was not possible to make significant progress at the recent sixth Biennial Meeting of States with regard to the inclusion of the issue of ammunition, despite the wishes of a large number of States and the particular emphasis placed on illicit flows of ammunition in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (A/71/438).

Guatemala is committed to the full elimination of weapons of mass destruction and roundly condemns their use. It is imperative that all States ratify 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. We reiterate the importance of full compliance by all States Parties with the provisions and requirements of those two Conventions.

Guatemala firmly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor and under any circumstance. This is a violation of the principles set forth in international humanitarian law. We reaffirm our commitment to the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. My country is very proud of the declaration of Central America as the first zone in the world free of cluster munitions.

We would also like to express our deep concern over the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. As recent events have shown, the humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons are devastating, and their appalling effects are often indiscriminate. We stress the importance of respecting international humanitarian law and the responsibility of States to

protect their civilian populations. This should enjoy greater focus in this Committee's work.

The adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a landmark moment for international diplomacy and a success for multilateralism. The Agenda illustrates the interdependence of and interrelationship among all issues addressed by the United Nations, including the work of this Committee. It fully recognizes and unequivocally supports the link between disarmament and development. The legal or illegal proliferation of conventional weapons fuels armed violence, prolongs wars and conflicts and empowers transnational organized crime. It takes the lives of hundreds of thousands of people every year, undermines the development capacity of States, unravels the social fabric and unquestionably adds to human suffering.

As to nuclear weapons, their very existence is a threat to humankind. That is why we have the responsibility and the obligation to ensure that the agreements achieved in this forum will translate into concrete actions on the ground.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.2) and that to be delivered by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

We take this opportunity to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Algeria on his election as Chair of the First Committee during the seventy-first session and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We also want to recognize Ambassador Van Oosterom of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for his tireless efforts as Chair of the Committee at the previous session.

Once again, we reaffirm that making progress in nuclear disarmament and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is the first priority of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We are very aware of the priority that was voiced during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely, that the most critical and urgent task continues to be the elimination of the threat of nuclear war. Seventy-one years after the unleashing of the atomic bombs that sowed death and destruction in Hiroshima

and Nagasaki, nothing can justify the continued threat to humankind of almost 16,000 nuclear weapons, more than 4,000 of which are ready for immediate use.

On 19 August, Member States took the historic decision of recommending to the General Assembly that negotiations towards a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons with a view to their elimination should begin in 2017. We hope that this instrument can be formally adopted in 2018 on the occasion of the high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened by the General Assembly.

The prohibition of nuclear weapons would be an important step forward, but it is not enough. Venezuela, like many members of the international community, continues to firmly advocate the adoption as soon as possible of a convention to eliminate nuclear weapons in a specific time frame and with strict international verification. Until such time as we achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, we urgently need to adopt a number of measures. These are not preconditions for nuclear disarmament but measures that will tide us over until such a world is attained. These measures are as follows.

First, we must adopt and ratify an international instrument whereby nuclear-weapon States would provide unconditional and legally binding guarantees that they will never use those weapons or threaten to use them against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Secondly, we must put an end to interpretative declarations by nuclear-weapon States pertaining to additional protocols to treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Moreover, there should be no further delay in convening an international conference on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Thirdly, we must eliminate once and for all the role of nuclear weapons in the military doctrines and security policies of all nuclear-weapon States.

Fourthly, we must ensure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. All annex 2 States are encouraged to accelerate the process of signing and ratifying that instrument. We also call on all nuclear-weapon States to refrain from carrying out non-explosive nuclear testing, including subcritical experiments and those carried out by super-computers, with a view to improving or increasing existing arsenals.

Fifthly, we must negotiate and ensure the entry into force of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons purposes, including the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Until such a treaty has entered into force, we need to impose a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes.

Sixthly, nuclear-weapon States must implement the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in particular the comprehensive safeguards agreements under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Model Additional Protocol. Verification capacities also need to be developed in order to ensure compliance with the convention on the complete and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons and the sustainability of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Finally, we need to end the development of anti-missile defence systems. The potential militarization of outer space is of increasing concern and its prevention an ever more urgent task.

At the same time, we recognize that discussions have been held with a view to convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) and on the need to address issues pertaining to disarmament and international security. The essence of the SSOD-IV process as a disarmament and international security forum is specifically to anticipate future security challenges — for example, the role of highly sophisticated conventional weapons with the capacity to cause widespread destruction in a post-nuclear-weapons world. Such weapons are being developed by States with the resources and technological capacity to do so. We need to strengthen norms and institutions to peacefully resolve international disputes. These are not preconditions for nuclear disarmament but rather, as we said earlier, measures that need to be taken pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

Venezuela reiterates its condemnation of the use of chemical and biological weapons, regardless of who uses them or where they are used. We are firmly convinced that their total and complete elimination is necessary. We emphasize the need for all States to accede to and ratify 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. We welcome the holding of the Review Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention in Geneva in November.

We reaffirm the importance 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 and of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. These are both very important multilateral, regional and national initiatives to effectively fight the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which has a negative impact in various regions of the world. We condemn the transfer of small arms and light weapons by some Powers to non-State actors as a means of toppling Governments and destabilizing regions throughout the world.

It is deeply unfortunate that, since the end of the Cold War, insufficient attention has been paid to the risks associated with new destructive technologies. It was entirely predictable that drones would be used in an irresponsible and illegal way if Governments and non-State actors — including terrorists — were given free rein. The same will happen with nanotechnology, robotics, virtual reality and genetic manipulation unless we take urgent measures to control them before they become militarized.

Venezuela firmly believes in the very important role played by confidence-building measures with respect to conventional weapons. However, in parallel with these, we need to make progress on measures to control highly sophisticated conventional weapons that have the capacity to cause widespread destruction. Such measures cannot be focused solely on the false premise, as proposed under the ATT, that controlling weapons flows towards States that are thought by some to be untrustworthy is the way to solve all problems relating to the control and excessive proliferation of conventional weapons.

Venezuela, as a country whose armed forces have not crossed its borders since the pro-independence campaigns of South America two centuries ago, and as a member of a region that not only has been proclaimed a zone of peace but also is the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world, is able to make its contribution from that political, ethical and moral standpoint and will

continue to provide its input to disarmament, security and international peace.

Mr. Sareer (Maldives): The Maldives delegation congratulates the Chair on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee and other members of the Bureau on their election. I assure him of my delegation's full support in the work ahead.

The Maldives does not produce any armaments or weaponry of any type, nor do we have any aspirations to do so in the future. While we lack the resources to contribute to the strengthening and enforcement of a global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, we believe it is our moral obligation to pave the way towards lasting peace and security.

At the inception of the United Nations, our nations resolved to build a world that might one day no longer be haunted by the spectre of war. At the core of that ambition was the promise of full and complete disarmament. Over the past few decades, significant progress has been made towards this goal, but recent actions have threatened to compromise that progress. In this regard, a nuclear test conducted by any country is a considerable step backwards. Not only is it a flagrant violation of international law, but it is also an obstacle to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We must therefore redouble our efforts to prevent further tests and stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

While the progress that has been made must be lauded, it will not be enough until all stockpiles of nuclear weapons are finally and totally eliminated and research into new deadlier warheads, delivery vehicles and other storage systems has been halted. Those States that aspire to use nuclear technology for useful ends must take all necessary measures to prevent proliferation, comply with the requirements of international law, and undertake not to acquire, develop or produce nuclear weapons.

We note with despair that not all signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have reduced their stockpiles in accordance with the Treaty's provisions. In a global security landscape characterized by the increasing prominence of non-State actors, including terrorist groups, that operate outside the structural and normative framework of international law, there is an ever-growing risk that nuclear weapons could fall into the wrong hands. To prevent such an unsettling scenario from ever coming

to pass, all States must redouble their efforts against nuclear proliferation.

Last month, the Security Council adopted resolution 2310 (2016), marking the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). While that was an occasion worth noting, the resolution in many ways called attention to what remains to be done. Twenty years after its adoption, the CTBT is yet to come into force.

On 26 September, we observed the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The Secretary-General, in his address on that International Day, expressed concern at the failure to make progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament despite clear evidence that nuclear weapons hinder rather than enhance national and international peace and security. His plaintive call should inspire serious consideration by us all as to the steps that we have not yet taken. We support the work being conducted by Member States on disarmament and non-proliferation education, and believe that awareness is the key to changing perceptions and paving the path to lasting peace.

Work also remains to be done in stemming the trafficking and proliferation of small arms. The size of small arms does not negate the active and present threat they pose to human life and to global peace and security. In this regard, the Maldives welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and reports to the Committee that domestic procedures to ratify this Treaty are ongoing.

Cognizant of the importance of complying with the commitments made in the context of disarmament, the Maldives would like to reiterate that its stringent domestic laws have ensured that the illicit trade in arms does not occur within Maldivian territory or with other countries. The Maldives continues to advocate for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, as it has done ever since that Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in 1971 to maintain peace and security in our region (resolution 2832 (XXVI)).

The connection between peace and security and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is clear and well established. The objective of Goal 16 is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Disarmament is essential if we are to have truly and permanently peaceful societies. Likewise, just as conflict is the bane

of development, the proliferation of weapons, whether conventional or nuclear, is the progenitor of conflict.

Seventy-one years after the horrors of nuclear bombs were first unleashed upon humankind, and 71 years after the establishment of the United Nations, the goal of total and complete disarmament remains a noble ambition. Despite the many challenges, we remain confident that if we are genuinely committed to this end, our world can move firmly towards a nuclear-free, peaceful future for ourselves and the generations to come.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): Let me start by echoing other speakers and welcoming Ambassador Boukadoum of Algeria as Chair of our deliberations at this year's session of the First Committee.

We are facing critical challenges. Civilians continue to suffer as a result of armed conflict. We have witnessed the use of chemical weapons. The territorial integrity of States Members of the United Nations is violated. Nuclear proliferation remains a threat. The nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a flagrant violation of its international obligations, and they undermine regional security.

Fortunately, there have also been positive developments. The Nuclear Security Summits have contributed substantially to nuclear security and to keeping fissile material out of the reach of terrorists. This year, the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material entered into force. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the E3+3 and Iran demonstrates that diplomacy can overcome profound differences and achieve real results. The JCPOA should serve as an inspiration for our broader disarmament efforts in the time ahead.

Norway welcomes the continued implementation of the 2010 New START Treaty. We urge Russia to respond positively to the United States proposal to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads by an additional one third.

Our overall objective is a world free of nuclear weapons. The Norwegian Parliament unanimously adopted a motion in April in which it called on the Government

“to actively work for a world free of nuclear arms and to promote the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to be a driving force

for non-proliferation and disarmament with a view to the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, and on these grounds to take a long-term perspective in working for a legally binding framework to achieve this goal”.

The Oslo Conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons launched a practical and fact-based approach. The knowledge we have gained motivates us to advance our common quest to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. A legally binding framework will be required at a certain stage. This year, that issue has been discussed in the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. However, there are still divergent views with regard to the content, format, scope and sequencing of legal measures of this kind. Full elimination can be achieved only through the active engagement of those States that possess nuclear weapons.

Credible verification helps to build confidence. That is essential for continued disarmament efforts. This week, a cross-regional group of countries, with which Norway is fully associated, will circulate a draft resolution on nuclear-disarmament verification.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the core pillar of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty contains a clear legal obligation on nuclear disarmament, which has been further strengthened at the NPT Review Conferences. We must make use of the upcoming review cycle to continue to move the nuclear-disarmament agenda forward.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has set a fundamental norm, which was further reinforced by Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) last month. However, one country continues to defy the non-test norm. That underlines the urgency of achieving the formal entry into force of the CTBT. Non-proliferation is an integral part of our endeavour to achieve global zero. Norway considers the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol to be the current verification standard.

All supplier countries have a responsibility to uphold strict conditions of supply and to ensure that transfers are solely for peaceful use in the recipient country. The danger of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction is real. For this reason,

Norway calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We must combat biological and chemical terrorism. Norway expects the forthcoming Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction to result in a realistic and forward-looking outcome document.

We remain deeply concerned about the indiscriminate effects of certain conventional weapons. It is therefore essential to uphold the fundamental norms set by the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Norway is currently funding humanitarian mine action and victim assistance in 20 affected countries. Norway, together with the United States, is proud to be leading a global demining initiative for Colombia. Our goal is a Colombia free of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

We must continue efforts to combat any irresponsible and illegal trade in or use of small arms and light weapons, including ammunition. The Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects are key in this regard. This year, Norway has contributed financially to stockpile management and destruction projects in the Sahel region.

We have noted the call of the Secretary-General to refrain from the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effect, and to engage in ongoing efforts to develop a political declaration addressing the issue. We would like to see many more countries participating in the ongoing discussions on how to enhance the protection of civilians in conflict, and thereby improve compliance with international humanitarian law. There is a clear obligation to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants in conflict.

We have witnessed in Syria, Yemen and Ukraine how the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas has contributed to a degree of civilian loss of life that is clearly disproportionate and in violation of international humanitarian law. The destruction of critical infrastructure, such as housing, schools and hospitals, affects the prospects for post-conflict rehabilitation,

peacebuilding and reconstruction long after the actual fighting is over. In our view, it makes sense to discuss this issue with a focus on actual situations and practical experience. What we are aiming for is to influence practice and set standards for conduct by all parties to conflicts.

Cyberthreats pose serious challenges to almost every nation and constitute a potential risk to international peace and security. A just, stable and peaceful digital order can be achieved only if it is based on international law. It is universally recognized that existing international law also applies to cyberspace. Further international cooperation in this field will benefit us all.

Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are all vital to our security. In order to increase our security, our collective, national and human security concerns must all be taken into consideration so that our efforts to address them are mutually reinforcing.

The Acting Chair: I shall now call on those delegations that have requested the floor to exercise the right of reply. In this connection, I should like to remind all delegations that the first statement is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mrs. Comanescu (Romania): Let me first congratulate Ambassador Boukadoum and the members of the Bureau on their elections and on the way they have conducted the work so far. We wish them success in their future endeavours and assure them of my delegation's full support.

My delegation's general debate views were fully reflected in the European Union statement delivered on Monday (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). We will have some more specific remarks during the thematic debates.

I should like to react now to the written statement by the Russian Federation and its specific comments related to Romania, especially the use of warnings, which is not consistent with the spirit of the General Assembly.

I should also like to recall that last year, in this Hall, we presented our position with respect to the system against ballistic missiles hosted by Romania, emphasizing that it is purely of a defensive nature and is in full accord with international law. It is not directed against the Russian Federation and does not undermine in any way the Russian Federation's strategic capability. This position has been stated on many occasions by my country and is also presented in detail in the final

communiqué of the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July this year.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have taken the floor in order to respond to the baseless accusations that were made by the representative of the Israeli regime against Iran's missile programme. In that regard, I should like to provide the following clarification.

First, there is nothing in international law that prohibits legitimate and conventional military activities. Iran is fully entitled to build a credible conventional capability to deter and defend against any aggression. Iran's ballistic-missile programme and the relevant test launches are part of the ongoing efforts of its armed forces to strengthen their legitimate defence capability, to demonstrate the effectiveness and readiness of missile systems against security threats, and to exercise the right of self-defence in the event of any armed attack. What Iran has always said and done points clearly to the full defensive nature of its military efforts against threats and intimidation. We will not start any war. We aim, however, to defend ourselves. We do not intend to attack any country, but if we come under attack we should be able to retaliate.

It is demagoguery for those who received around \$100 billion of state-of-the-art weaponry in 2015 alone to hype Iran's conventional-missile test launches to such a grotesque level. Iran's entire defence budget in the same year was a small fraction of that amount. The disparity between Iran's defence spending and that of other regional States is less. That fact has been acknowledged even by United States officials at the highest levels. Under such circumstances, it is outrageous that those who see no limit in the military build-up in the region seek to question our legitimate efforts to tap into our own human and material resources to build a necessary conventional military defence and deterrence.

For decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been under threat of the use of force by the Israeli regime, in flagrant violation of paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Israeli regime keeps brandishing its sword of aggression against Iran and continues its sabre-rattling discourse with Iran, including through the infamous expression "all options are on the table".

Last year, the Israeli regime took the military threat against Iran to its extreme. In a speech at a conference on 5 May 2015, Moshe Yaalon, Defence Minister of

this regime, threatened to use a nuclear bomb against Iran. I recommend that delegations refer to document S/2015/353, dated 19 May 2015, regarding this issue. The same regime remains the only one in our region in unlawful possession of nuclear weapons and the only obstacle in the way of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Some delegations at our meeting today mentioned the third report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (see S/2016/738). We note that this report was not the Mechanism's final report. Among our many observations of in that regard is the fact that the report offers no material evidence of the use of chemical weapons or any documented and certified medical data in that respect. Moreover, the report is based on eyewitness testimony provided by armed terrorist groups or communities that host them.

We have sent many messages to the Security Council, the Joint Investigative Mechanism, the Secretary-General and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) about the many incidents in which chemical weapons have been used by terrorist armed groups against civilians and members of the Syrian Armed Forces. Yet, no one wants to investigate those incidents. All members know which terrorist groups used these chemical weapons, but no one wants to disclose the names, as some countries are fully and completely involved in financing and supporting those groups.

We remind the Committee of the Khan al-Asal incident of 2013 and the fact that the Syrian Arab Republic asked the Secretary-General to investigate the use of chemical weapons against civilians and members of the military and to find out who was responsible for that incident. Yet our request was rejected, as some members of the Security Council knew who had used the chemical weapons in that incident.

With respect to the comments made by the representative of France, I should like to ask her to read the book entitled *Les chemins de Damas*, by Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot, in which the authors accuse a former French Foreign Minister of being behind the use of chemical weapons in Al-Ghouta in August 2013.

Some of those who have made statements today are involved in providing terrorist armed groups with nuclear weapons and expertise. In that respect, I would cite various Security Council reports that confirm that sarin has been infiltrated into Syria from Libya on a civilian aeroplane and that terrorists are conducting related tests on animals, which they are photographing and posting on the Internet.

We are very surprised by the false accusations and hypocrisy of the Israeli representative in accusing and blaming other countries. Everyone knows that it was the Israeli entity that introduced terrorism to our region — terrorism waged with weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical, biological and even radiation weapons. Were it not for the support of some influential countries in the Security Council, Israel's chemical, biological and nuclear programmes would have ended a long time ago.

The Israeli entity is providing all kinds of support — including weapons, information and intelligence — to various terrorist organizations and groups in Syria, namely, Da'esh, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, the Al-Nusra Front and other affiliates and groups. As usual, the Israeli entity violates and ignores all Security Council resolutions related to fighting terrorism.

As we have heard in statements made by the representatives of some countries, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of all our efforts. Unfortunately, those representatives, who also mentioned my country, Syria, seem to have forgotten that their own countries — including Germany and Austria — are violating the NPT system by allowing nuclear weapons on their territories or in their territorial waters.

Mr. Alokly (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have requested the floor in order to address some comments about the transfer of chemical materials to Turkey. In this regard, let me stress that the chemical weapons in Libya were under local and international protection, and their destruction was under the control of a Libyan agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The claims involving Libya are therefore totally baseless.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.