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First Committee

2nd meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Introductory statements

The Chair: I wish to welcome everyone this morning for this first substantive meeting. I can easily imagine that Committee members all expect, or will bet on, some new something that will contradict the pessimism that has slowly but surely embedded itself when we think of multilateral negotiations for disarmament. I will simply do my utmost to be able to share something positive in early November, when we conclude our work.

In January 1946, the General Assembly held its first session in London. In its first resolution (resolution 1 (I)) the General Assembly established the Atomic Energy Commission with a mandate to make specific proposals for the control of nuclear energy and the elimination of atomic weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. That was a truly historic act. It also represented swift, concerted action on the part of a brand new international Organization just five months after the world had witnessed the horror of the atomic bomb, a weapon whose terrible effects no one foresaw when the Charter of the United Nations was signed.

We mark the seventieth anniversary of that first resolution of the General Assembly this year. But that first act of the General Assembly should inspire and challenge all of us who are engaged in soul-searching in this time of stasis in disarmament. That first resolution represents the finest act of international cooperation in the face of a new challenge threatening international peace and security. It embodied the very vision of the

founding fathers of the United Nations. However, it is also the first in a lengthy list of resolutions that still await full implementation. Seventy years later, more than 15,000 nuclear weapons remain. More than half of the world's population still lives in countries that either have such weapons or are members of nuclear alliances. That fact is, unfortunately, an enduring aspect of the legacy of the General Assembly.

In the field of conventional weapons, the vision of the founding fathers of the United Nations has also fallen into oblivion. How many of us here at the United Nations remember that Article 26 entrusts the Security Council with formulating plans for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments, with the goal of minimizing the diversion of the world's economic and human resources into armaments? The early efforts of the Commission for Conventional Armaments and the United Nations Disarmament Commission faded away under the shadow of the Cold War.

Nonetheless, some could say that we have also achieved much in disarmament. We have come a long way towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We have seen dramatic reductions in nuclear arsenals since the end of the Cold War. We have established nuclear-weapon-free zones in Antarctica, Latin America, the Caribbean, the South Pacific, South-East Asia, Africa, Central Asia and Mongolia, and we obviously all aspire to create other zones in the world, in particular in the Middle East.

We have prohibited nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, and made great strides towards a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests

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in any place, at any time. Non-nuclear-weapon States have pledged to forgo nuclear weapons, and nuclear-weapon States have the duty to adhere to their nuclear-disarmament obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). States parties extended that Treaty indefinitely in 1995, agreed on practical steps to achieve nuclear disarmament in 2000, when my country had the privilege of serving as President of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and agreed on a 64-point Action Plan to implement all three pillars of the Treaty in 2010.

We have made remarkable progress towards the elimination of other types of weapons of mass destruction. We have established a legally binding prohibition on entire categories of chemical and biological weapons. We have made significant progress in the field of conventional arms. We have established reporting instruments for military expenditures and international arms transfers, namely, the United Nations reports on military expenditures and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We have prohibited and restricted the use of particularly injurious and indiscriminate weapons. For the past 15 years, we have regularly reviewed 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. Other instruments have been set as new landmarks, instruments such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty.

But there are also a number of troubling signs in the current disarmament landscape. Developments in the field of nuclear weapons show more setbacks than successes, as exemplified by the unsuccessful 2015 NPT Review Conference. Nuclear disarmament appears to be stalled. The development and modernization of nuclear weapons continues unabated. The nuclear arms race is still under way, and nuclear tests continue.

The recent use of chemical weapons is also a source of dismay, as it indicates an erosion in the global norm established by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. The threat of bioterrorism looms larger, as non-State actors exploit loopholes in the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and

Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which still lacks a verification mechanism. The fact remains that the goal of eliminating weapons of mass destruction, enshrined in the first resolution of the General Assembly, is still unfulfilled.

In the area of conventional weapons, global military expenditures remain at the highest level in history. The illicit trade in small arms, mainly by non-State actors, remains the greatest threat to many societies in both developed and developing countries and continues to kill hundreds of thousands of people, undermining law and order and exacerbating armed conflicts throughout the world.

In other areas there have also been achievements, setbacks and challenges. We have prohibited the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in outer space and on the Moon, but we still live with the possibility of a real *Star Wars*, since the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, is silent about the deployment of conventional weapons in space. In the meantime, the space environment has rapidly grown increasingly congested, which threatens its peaceful use and sustainability. In addition, we are confronted by new, pressing issues such as cybersecurity, lethal autonomous weapon systems, also known as killer robots, and the nexus between weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, to name just a few.

There is no shortage of issues that warrant consideration by this Committee. This year, there are great expectations for the First Committee to make tangible progress, as many delegations are frustrated by the extended deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission and are eager to see fresh momentum in disarmament. In particular, many States are determined to take forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations by approving a proposal for the General Assembly to commence negotiations in 2017 on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. That prompted other States to focus their efforts on the better implementation of the NPT, including the verification of nuclear disarmament. Although that development provided fresh impetus to nuclear disarmament, it also created greater divisions between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States and strained the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, particularly the NPT.

Building on the success of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we should redouble our efforts to eradicate that illicit trade in advance of the third Review Conference in 2018.

The successful outcome of the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (see A/71/259) will provide the Committee with an opportunity to revisit the question of transparency, particularly with regard to the transfer of small arms and light weapons, and the declining level of participation in the Register. The report of the Secretary-General on improvised explosive devices (A/71/187) will also shed light on that pressing issue and also supports urgent action by the First Committee.

The state of the disarmament machinery warrants urgent action, attention and remedial measures. The Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission are great assets for the international community. Their continued stagnation not only impedes global disarmament efforts, but also undermines international peace and security. On a less negative note, a series of Ministerial Meetings on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and nuclear disarmament held in recent weeks seemed to set the stage for constructive, forward-looking debates in the First Committee. The adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2310 (2016) in support of the CTBT may be seen as further evidence of the Security Council's support for that landmark Treaty and provides an indispensable step towards a world without nuclear weapons.

In that context, the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, established by the General Assembly, should provide an opportunity for review, bearing in mind the heightened international situation and the most critical aspects of the disarmament process. Such a special session would serve as a crucible for international efforts aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

At those high-level meetings, political leaders and experts have all reaffirmed their commitment to disarmament. They have also highlighted the need to find common ground for moving towards our

shared goal of disarmament. Now it is our turn at this gathering to continue their efforts by engaging in a constructive dialogue, reconciling differences and coalescing agreements on concerted action with a view to advancing the disarmament agenda and thus enhancing international peace and security.

I now have the pleasure of inviting the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, to make a statement.

Mr. Kim Won-soo (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): It is always a great privilege and honour for me to address the Committee. First, I thank you, Mr. Chair, for this opportunity and assure you and the Bureau of the full support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. I also want to pay tribute to Ambassador Karel van Oosterom, the outgoing Chair, for his outstanding stewardship of and contribution to the work of the Committee.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the very first General Assembly resolution (resolution 1(I)), concerning the elimination of atomic weapons from national armaments. One year ago, the historic adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also recognized the crucial link between development and disarmament. The SDGs have led to greater interest in and attention to the disarmament agenda on the part of the international community. Civil-society participation in disarmament processes is increasing, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the Conference on Disarmament, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

The world's young people are also increasingly involved in the disarmament discourse. The younger generations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are conscious of taking the torch from their parents and grandparents, the Hibakusha, victims of the atomic bombings, to spread their message of peace in a world free of nuclear weapons. The Posters for Peace competition was launched by our Office to commemorate the first General Assembly resolution. It received 4,000 entries from 123 countries and sparked global enthusiasm among the world's young people. We have been able to use it on multiple continents as a year-round tool for disarmament education and awareness.

This year also marks 20 years since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature. That was an opportunity to shine the spotlight on nuclear disarmament, leading recently to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), the first ever on the CTBT. That was a significant step. But, it can in no way substitute for a CTBT that is in force, and I once again call on the eight remaining annex 2 countries not to wait for others, but to act first.

Unfortunately, 2016 also saw the divisions over nuclear disarmament deepen between non-nuclear-weapon States, on the one hand, and nuclear-weapon States and like-minded States, on the other, and also among the nuclear-weapon States themselves. That led to yet another disappointing failure by the Conference on Disarmament to adopt a programme of work. There is growing frustration over the stalemates at the plurilateral and multilateral levels and the seeming halt to new bilateral reductions.

If we are to reach our shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, all States need to recognize that there can be no more business as usual, and they should step up their efforts to listen more attentively to different views. Breaking with business as usual requires all States to show greater flexibility and creativity, so as to narrow differences and find common ground. Over the coming weeks in the First Committee, we hope that all States will be actively engaged in finding an inclusive path forward, so as to resuscitate nuclear disarmament.

We have all looked on in horror as toxic chemicals continue to be used as weapons in the Middle East. The United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Investigative Mechanism has found that those horrific weapons have been used in the Syrian Arab Republic by both State and non-State actors. The taboo against the use of chemical weapons must be upheld again, and those who have used those weapons must be held accountable. The use of chemical weapons should not be allowed to become the new normal. We need to strengthen efforts to prevent vicious non-State actors from acquiring chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.

Both the comprehensive review of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction present opportunities to take such action. However, the international

community also needs to ask, what if prevention fails? The possibility of a biological incident is especially worrying. The deliberate release of a pathogen such as Ebola, designed to cause maximum damage, would be a global health nightmare. The risk is growing, and so is the preparedness gap. The consequences of not acting now far outweigh the costs of taking action now.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through Goal 16, target 4, seek significant reductions in illicit arms flows. In 2016 the successful sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects strengthened the relationship between the SDGs and the Programme of Action. It also took important steps to incorporate ammunition into the Programme. The Office for Disarmament Affairs pledges to work with Member States to sharpen its indicators and build capacity, including through its Regional Centres.

I am pleased to note that this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific. In the past decade alone, the Regional Centres have trained more than 20,000 personnel in arms control, helped destroy more than 176,000 small arms and light weapons and 132 tons of ammunition, and have marked more than 13,000 weapons. More than 500 seminars, workshops and conferences have been organized. Through disarmament education the Centres have reached more than 400,000 children and adolescents. Again, I repeat, those achievements were accomplished in the past decade alone. So, if we accumulate the numbers, the work that has been done over the past 30 years would be much higher, and I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to donors for their generous contributions so that we can help those countries in need.

We also welcomed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, one of our most important transparency instruments. The Group of Governmental Experts on the Register, which met this year, made significant progress by recommending that armed drones be included in its categories (see A/71/259).

The threats that I have highlighted are compounded by a global technological revolution. As we become increasingly networked and connected, we must be mindful of emerging vulnerabilities and risks.

The number of daily cyberattacks is spiking, and there have been repeated attempts to hack critical infrastructure, including nuclear-power plants. The international community needs to ensure the peaceful use of cyberspace. In this cyber age the international community must identify the international laws, norms and principles governing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. The fifth meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on the topic recently started its deliberations. I look forward to its substantive report to the General Assembly next year.

Likewise, growing dependence on space-based assets is creating new vulnerabilities and increasing the risk that any conflict in space could have catastrophic consequences. The international community must strive for common ground so as to build the norms that will ensure the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of all.

I should like to address, as a matter of urgency, the issue of timely payment by Member States of their financial obligations under the treaties to which they are party and for the meetings in which they participate as non-State parties. Late payment jeopardizes the functioning of those treaties. New financial accountability initiatives endorsed by the General Assembly and implemented by the Secretariat, such as Umoja and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, in order to ensure transparency and accountability, will no longer allow the Secretariat to support a meeting unless the necessary cash has been received in advance and previous arrears are also paid in full. States parties have been repeatedly warned of that problem. Every State party receives a reminder or confirmation of the receipt of their contributions once every year.

The first casualty of such stricter enforcement could be the fifteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In order to avoid postponement, a minimum of \$406,500 is required by 26 October this year. We should not let that important meeting be pushed aside simply because of outstanding debt. It would send the wrong signal to the world. That is why the Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, Michael Møller, and I decided to join Foreign Minister Heraldo Muñoz of Chile, the host country, in sending an urgent letter to the indebted States. I should like to thank those States that have so far responded

positively to our appeal. But we are still short of the money that would give us the green light to go ahead with the meeting, which is now less than two months away. I am sure the same appeal will be repeated by the Ambassador of Chile soon.

The same problem is envisaged for a number of other treaties, including the Biological Weapons Convention and 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. I appeal to those States that owe money in that connection to settle as promptly as possible. The dues are not that high. In the case of the Biological Weapons Convention, some are even lower than \$20 — not \$200 or \$2,000, but \$20.

Collectively, we need to seek a longer-term solution. We need to devise a more effective means to ensure implementation support and conference servicing. It is time for a hard look at the multitude of practices and structures that began as temporary or seemingly cheaper fixes. Unfortunately, those cheaper fixes are no longer available to us. The shake-up in accountability and transparency that the General Assembly has endorsed should go hand in hand with an overhaul of how we plan, manage and conduct our business. For the purposes of transparency, I have asked the Secretariat to circulate a summary of outstanding dues. I look forward to working with members to find practical, sustainable solutions.

The pursuit of peace is symbiotic with the pursuit of prosperity and justice. In the words of the Secretary-General, peace, sustainable development and human rights — the three pillars of the United Nations — are mutually reinforcing. They are three sides of the same triangle. Succeeding in our ambitions requires the jettisoning of old mindsets and the willingness to get out of business as usual. As I have laid out, this year marks a number of important anniversaries for various milestone achievements in the disarmament agenda, spanning from 70 years ago to 20 years ago. They were made possible by the collective commitment of all States to the cause of complete and irreversible disarmament. I hope that the same spirit will guide us through the deliberations of this year's session of the First Committee.

The Chair: I thank the High Representative for his statement.

Before opening the floor for statements, I should like to remind delegations that, although the practice has been to limit statements to 10 minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations, I count on your cooperation today to limit statements to 8 minutes and 13 minutes, respectively, for this meeting.

In order to assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, we will use a timing mechanism by which the red light on the speaker's microphone will begin to blink when the time limit has been reached. As necessary, I will remind speakers to conclude their statements in our collective interest.

As mentioned during our organizational meeting last Friday, I encourage representatives who have longer statements to deliver a summarized version and provide their full statement to be posted on the First Committee web portal QuickFirst. I also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed so as to allow for adequate interpretation.

I would further remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close tomorrow, Tuesday, 4 October, at 6 p.m. Therefore, all delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate that have not yet inscribed their names on the list are encouraged to do so before that deadline.

Let me also use this opportunity to remind delegations to submit the names of their respective members to the Secretariat as soon as possible for inclusion in the official list of participants, which should be issued shortly. The deadline for submitting that information is in eight days, Tuesday, 11 October, at 6 p.m. The names of participants submitted after that deadline will be included in an addendum to be issued after the conclusion of the Committee's work.

Delegations are further reminded that the Department of Public Information will issue press releases with daily coverage of our proceedings in English and in French, which will be posted on the United Nations website a few hours after each meeting.

Agenda items 89 to 105

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

Ms. Krisnamurthi (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). I should like first to

congratulate you, Sir, and the other Bureau members on your election and assure you of our full cooperation.

The Movement reiterates its positions on the entire range of disarmament and international security issues as contained in the final document of the seventeenth NAM Summit, held in Venezuela in September. I will now read out the shortened version of NAM's statement, the full text of which is available on the First Committee web portal.

The Movement reaffirms its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which is its highest priority, and remains extremely concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. The situation in the field of nuclear disarmament continues to be characterized by an impasse. The nuclear-weapon States have made no progress in eliminating their nuclear weapons, and the role of nuclear weapons in the security policies of the nuclear-weapon States has not diminished.

The international community has waited too long for the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It has become obvious that the existing approach adopted by nuclear-weapon States, the so-called step-by-step approach, has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is time to take a new and comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament.

The Movement underlines that resolution 70/34, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", provides a concrete road map for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament; in particular, it calls for the urgent commencement of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that would prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and provide for their destruction.

The Movement reiterates that the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened no later than 2018, as decided in various General Assembly resolutions, would indeed provide the General Assembly with an opportunity to review the progress made in nuclear disarmament and to make concrete recommendations in order to maintain the momentum created by the 2013 high-level meeting and to intensify international efforts

towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. NAM proposes the establishment of a preparatory committee for the United Nations high-level international conference in New York.

NAM stresses the importance of enhancing public awareness about the threat posed to humankind by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination, including through the observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. NAM renews its strong call upon the nuclear-weapon States to fully and urgently comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons without further delay, in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner.

NAM reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure all non-nuclear-weapon States that there will be no use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, as a matter of high priority pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

NAM affirms the importance of humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons and in promoting the goal of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, NAM welcomes the growing focus on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, as discussed at the three conferences in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna. In that context, we reaffirm the need for all States to comply at all times with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. As reaffirmed by the General Assembly over decades, any use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the United Nations Charter and a crime against humanity. NAM also reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again provide the only absolute guarantee against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their use.

The Movement reaffirms its principled positions on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. Pursuing non-proliferation alone, while ignoring nuclear disarmament obligations, is both counterproductive and

unsustainable. NAM States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regret the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite the efforts made by NAM delegations. That failure should serve as a stimulus to work harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament, which is the ultimate objective of the NPT.

Recalling the opposition expressed by the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada at the concluding session of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, NAM States parties to the NPT express their disappointment that, as the result of such opposition, consensus on new measures regarding the process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was not reached. NAM is concerned that the persistent failure to implement the 1995 Review Conference resolution on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, despite the decisions taken at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, undermines the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance between its three pillars.

NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of each State to develop research, produce and use nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop full national nuclear-fuel cycles for peaceful purposes without discrimination. In that connection, NAM recalls the successful conclusion of nuclear negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3/EU+3, resulting in the finalization of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on 14 July 2015. NAM underlines that that agreement showed once again that dialogue and diplomacy are the most appropriate means to resolve such issues, as the Movement has always advocated.

NAM strongly rejects and calls for the immediate removal of any limitations and restrictions on exports to developing countries of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, consistent with the provisions of the relevant multilateral treaties. NAM once again reaffirms the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities and stresses that any attack or threat of attack, including using information and communication technologies against peaceful nuclear facilities, operational or under construction, poses a great danger to human beings and the environment and constitutes a grave violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and the resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA) General Conference. NAM recognizes that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with individual States. Any multilateral norms, guidelines or rules in nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the IAEA.

NAM believes that the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are positive steps and important measures towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. NAM calls upon all nuclear-weapon States to ratify the related protocols to all treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations that are incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaties, and respect the denuclearized status of those zones. NAM strongly supports the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. As a priority step to that end, members reaffirmed the need for the speedy establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Pending its establishment, NAM demands that Israel, the only State in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so, renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay, and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards.

The Movement also calls for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material and facilities, resources or devices and extension of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel. NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their serious concern over the two decades of delay in the implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution on the Middle East, and urge the sponsors of the resolution to take all necessary measures to fully implement it without any further delay.

NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their profound disappointment that the 2010 Action Plan on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has not been implemented. They strongly reject the alleged impediments to the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan on the Middle East and the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. That runs contrary to the letter and spirit

of the 1995 resolution, which constitutes the original terms of reference for establishing that zone. It also violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

NAM also stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which should, *inter alia*, contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. In that context, NAM welcomes the recent ratification of the CTBT by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) note with satisfaction the effective operation of the CWC as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) consider that the Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture related to weapons of mass destruction. They call for the resumption of the multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol dealing with all of the articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner, so as to sustainably strengthen the Convention, including through verification measures.

In the context of resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011), adopted by the Security Council in the areas covered by multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction, the Movement underlines the need to ensure that any action by the Security Council does not undermine the United Nations Charter, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction and international organizations established in this regard, or the functions, power and role of the General Assembly. It continues to affirm the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs.

The Movement remains deeply concerned about a wide range of security, humanitarian and

socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. It calls on all States, in particular major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited to Governments or to entities duly authorized by them. The Movement also underlines the need for the balanced, full and effective 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 and, in this regard, stresses the urgent need to intensify efforts to promote international cooperation and assistance.

NAM stresses the importance of the reduction of military expenditures by major arms-producing countries, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and urges those countries to devote these resources to global economic and social development, in particular in the fight against poverty. It remains concerned about developments related to anti-ballistic-missile systems and the threat of the weaponization and militarization of outer space, and reiterates its call for the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a universal legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which remains a priority.

I recall NAM's position that the elaboration of any code of conduct for outer-space activities should be consistent with the respective mandate of all relevant United Nations bodies and should be held in the format of inclusive, transparent and consensus-based multilateral negotiations within the framework of the United Nations. NAM continues to call for a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral approach to the issue of missiles in all its aspects, negotiated multilaterally within the United Nations. Any initiative on this subject should take into account the security concerns of all States and their inherent right to the peaceful uses of space technologies.

The Movement highlights the important socioeconomic opportunities, in particular for developing countries, provided by information and communications technology, and underscores the need to prevent all discriminatory practices and policies that hinder access by developing countries to the benefits of information and communications technology. It notes with concern cases of the illegal use of new

information and communications technology, including social networks, to the detriment of States members of the Movement, and expresses its strongest rejection of those violations. The Movement stresses the importance of ensuring that the use of such technology is fully in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and, especially, the principles of sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and internationally recognized rules of peaceful coexistence among States.

NAM calls for transparency and the strict application of the principle of equitable geographical representation, including, in particular, in the composition of the groups of governmental experts established in the field of disarmament and international security. In this regard, it highlights the keen interest expressed by many developing countries in contributing meaningfully to the subject of information and communication technologies in the context of international security.

I shall stop at this stage. The full text of the statement is available on the First Committee web portal.

The Chair: I thank the representative of Indonesia for shortening her statement. I wish to remind delegations to kindly limit their interventions to no more than 13 minutes, rather than 15 minutes, when speaking on behalf of groups.

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN congratulates you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and assures you of its full support and cooperation.

We are gathered once again in this important Committee to renew our commitment to upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. To that end, ASEAN will take collective measures to achieve nuclear disarmament because we are determined to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. It has been more than 70 years since the atomic bomb was first used, and it has been clearly demonstrated that these weapons are not only the most dangerous weapons that exist on Earth but also the most likely to wipe out humankind. In the effort to achieve general and complete disarmament, the United Nations has since then put in place important disarmament treaties and held numerous meetings to ease tension and strengthen trust between States. Sadly, nuclear

weapons still exist in large numbers, and we are not yet in a position to claim that we are close to achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

It is equally disturbing to even think about the danger of a single nuclear weapon falling into the hands of a terrorist. We have all witnessed within the past year the increasing number of terrorist attacks on many cities throughout the world. All those senseless attacks have a single common purpose, that is, to inflict death and fear. So, while we envision achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, we must also strive by all means to ensure that no nuclear weapon falls into the hands of terrorists.

ASEAN welcomes the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit, which was held in Washington, D.C. We also take note of the communiqué of the Summit and are encouraged by the pledges made by the participating parties to continue to make nuclear security an enduring priority.

We welcome the convening on 26 September of the General Assembly's high-level informal plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The meeting reaffirmed that nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons represent the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

We reaffirm our principled position on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, as stated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and underscore the importance of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We believe that a fourth session would offer an opportunity to review — from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation — the most critical aspects of the disarmament process and to mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

ASEAN welcomes the report (see A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which met in August in Geneva. I should like to express ASEAN's appreciation to Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations in Geneva, for successfully chairing

the Open-ended Working Group. The Working Group made substantive recommendations which represent an unprecedented opportunity to advance multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. In this context, ASEAN would like to echo the recommendation in the report on the convening of a conference in 2017, open to all States, with the participation and contribution of international organizations and civil society, to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

ASEAN also reaffirms its commitments to the principles and objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which has been and remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. We look forward to continuing the work to strengthen the NPT that will begin next year in preparation for the next review cycle, when we will address the outstanding issues to advance our collective efforts towards global zero.

ASEAN takes note of the humanitarian pledge and supports the substantive discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, which contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons on both humankind and the environment. The discussions reflect new aspects of the deliberations on nuclear disarmament by taking into account the human and collective security of all. We welcome the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 70/48 on 7 December last. We also welcome the endorsement of the Humanitarian Pledge by 127 States, which has inspired renewed political will and created the impetus to take forward nuclear-disarmament negotiations.

ASEAN strongly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world. They have contributed significantly to strengthening global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. However, nuclear-weapon-free zones should not become a substitute for the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We would like to stress that it is necessary for nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States in the aforementioned zones, as well as to reduce and eliminate the risk of an unintentional or accidental use of such weapons, pending the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In our region, ASEAN works hard to ensure that South-East Asia and the surrounding areas remain peaceful, stable and secure. We reiterate our commitment to preserving the region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter. We therefore stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, including through the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty 2013-2017. We wish to reiterate that the Treaty is important not only for strengthening regional security but also for contributing to international peace and security. We welcome the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which paved the way for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world. In this regard, we reaffirm our commitment to continuously engage the nuclear-weapon States and intensify the ongoing efforts of the States parties to the Treaty and the nuclear-weapon States to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty.

ASEAN stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of its opening for signature. ASEAN welcomes the recent ratification of the Treaty by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland, and urges the remaining annex 2 States to follow suit as soon as possible.

In 2015, the States Members of the United Nations unanimously adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with the aim of transforming our world. Goal 7 underscores the need to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. This Goal can be achieved if resources are redirected from maintaining and investing in nuclear weapons to meeting human needs. ASEAN therefore reaffirms the inalienable right of every State to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, in particular for its economic and social development. ASEAN senior officials will explore ways to formalize relations between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy serving as a focal point of coordination to enable us to promote greater cooperation with the IAEA on issues related to nuclear safety, security and safeguards, including capacity-building.

ASEAN is also concerned about the recent developments on the Korean peninsula. We would

like to reiterate the importance of maintaining peace, stability and security in that region and our support for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner. We urge the parties concerned to exercise self-restraint and exert common efforts to maintain peace and security on the Korean peninsula, and to create an environment conducive to the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks so as to make further progress in denuclearizing the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner.

In April 2004, resolution 1540 (2004) was adopted unanimously as a response to the growing threat that non-State actors might acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the open consultations that were held at the United Nations in June this year, which provided a useful opportunity for Member States to engage on an issue of critical importance. We call for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is aimed at strengthening the international counter-proliferation regime. In this regard, we would like to emphasize the need for increased assistance, capacity-building, technology transfer and unearmarked funding to developing countries, upon their request and in accordance with their needs, and for States in a position to do so to render technical or financial assistance to requesting States. ASEAN looks forward seeing those elements incorporated into the 2016 comprehensive review report of the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In terms of conventional weapons, ASEAN supports 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, with a view to controlling the proliferation of the deadly weapons that continue to claim many lives. We welcome the productive discussions that took place in June at the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, and we take note of the second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva in August. However, we are concerned at the rise in illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. We wish to emphasize the need to build capacity through education and public awareness programmes, as appropriate, and request the Secretariat to explore, within existing resources, ways of assisting

Member States, upon request, to apply best practices in physical stockpile management and security. We look forward to positive outcomes from the third Review Conference in 2018.

ASEAN welcomes the official inauguration of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre headquarters in Phnom Penh, which took place on 25 May. The Centre will serve as a regional centre of excellence in addressing the humanitarian aspects of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war in interested ASEAN member States and will facilitate cooperation with other countries as well as relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

ASEAN takes note of the Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which was held in Geneva from 5 to 7 September to review the progress on and discuss the challenges to the implementation of obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

ASEAN calls on all members of the Assembly to continue to lend support to the two annual resolutions entitled “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons”, submitted by Malaysia, and “Nuclear disarmament”, submitted by Myanmar. Both draft resolutions underscore the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by ASEAN member States.

In concluding, we want to emphasize that the United Nations has made considerable progress on many multilateral initiatives relating to socioeconomic development. Regrettably, however, progress with respect to disarmament has been moving at a frustratingly slow pace within the United Nations framework. In the meantime, existing efforts to maintain peace and security have become increasingly complex. The current international security situation is grave and raises new questions about the safety of our existence. We call upon all Member States to take further practical steps towards achieving general and complete disarmament, including a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Bosah (Nigeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee for the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. As you steer the course of this

Committee, the African Group is confident that your experience will guide our debates, negotiations and decisions at this session. The Group also congratulates other members of the Bureau on their election and assures you and the Bureau of full cooperation as we deliberate on disarmament and security issues. The African Group commends your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Van Oosterom, for his leadership and laudable efforts.

The Group aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier in the meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia and wishes to add the following comments.

The seventieth session of the Assembly witnessed renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of multilateral disarmament and international security issues, including wide-ranging issues on cyberspace and outer-space activities. International security has continued to deteriorate as the world faces immense peace and security challenges. In this regard, the Group underscores the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, and reiterates that there is no substitute for a multilateral approach in addressing global disarmament issues in a sustainable manner, in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

It is in this context that the African Group reiterates its call for effective measures on nuclear disarmament, including the commencement of negotiations on an international instrument or set of instruments to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. The Group therefore welcomes the report (A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/33, and strongly supports its recommendations, including the convening of a United Nations conference in 2017 to commence negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination.

On 26 September, the General Assembly, at its 3rd plenary meeting, commemorated and promoted the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The meeting served as a further reminder of, and underscored, the existential threat posed to humankind as long as nuclear-weapon States continue to possess and keep such weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, the Group

welcomes and further underscores the importance of resolution 70/34 as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort. The full implementation of this resolution undoubtedly provides a concrete road map for achieving nuclear disarmament, particularly in its call to urgently commence negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. This will ensure that real progress is made towards the objective of eliminating these weapons by prohibiting their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

More than 71 years after the use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the time has come for the world to speak with unanimity about ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is also the moment to raise our voices against the slow pace of nuclear disarmament owing to a lack of compliance with legal obligations and commitments on the part of the weapon States. In this context, the African Group welcomes the report of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (see A/71/371) and congratulates Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand on his successful chairship of the Group.

For the African Group, the highest priority remains nuclear disarmament and achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the overall objective of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Group reiterates its regrets that the ninth NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on the final outcome document despite the concerted efforts of non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly from Africa. The threat posed to humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons is real. The setback of the Review Conference last year remains etched in our minds, and we hope that it will serve as a stark reminder of the need to renew commitments to the overall objectives of the Treaty. In that context, the Group reiterates its observation about the slow pace of the progress made towards nuclear disarmament, including the lack of progress by nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings. In this regard, the African Group insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of the Treaty.

The African Group reaffirms the contribution made by nuclear-weapon-free zones to the objectives of the NPT, including nuclear disarmament across all regions of the world. The Treaties of Pelindaba, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok, the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status significantly contribute to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. They enhance global and regional peace and security. The African Group reiterates its commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which entered into force on 15 July 2009. Among other things, the Treaty reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African continent, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those weapons throughout its territory.

The African Group reiterates its deep concern about the fact that commitments and obligations relating to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, including the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, have not been fulfilled. The Group remains deeply disappointed by the failure to convene an agreed-on conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which should have been held four years ago, in 2012. The Group wishes to further stress that the 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package and the basis upon which the NPT was indefinitely extended. The Group wishes to underline that the resolution will continue to be valid until its objectives are achieved.

The African Group underscores the importance of continued respect for the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It stresses the central role that the International Atomic Energy Agency plays in this regard by extending technical assistance and cooperation and maximizing the use of science and technology for socioeconomic development, as well as by continuing to ensure the commitment of States to the implementation of the safeguards agreements.

The African Group wishes to emphasize humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons. In particular, it expresses its serious concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use or detonation of nuclear weapons either by accident or through deliberate action. The Group underscores the importance of resolution 70/47 and calls on all States, particularly

the nuclear-weapon States, to take into consideration the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons for human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among other things, and to take the necessary measures aimed at dismantling and renouncing these weapons. It is in that context that the Group strongly supports the call to ban nuclear weapons, the only weapons of mass destruction not prohibited by an international legal instrument.

The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons does not guarantee security but rather detracts from it. Our world, including outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is in this context that the Group stresses the need for the nuclear-weapon States to cease their further modernization, upgrading, refurbishment or life-extending improvement of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

The African Group also stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), bearing in mind the special responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States in that regard. The CTBT can contribute to halting the further development or proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Group welcomes the convening of the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, held in New York on 21 September. The Group shares the international community's commitment to promoting the CTBT, a treaty that could serve as the threshold for promoting the process of nuclear disarmament, and encourages the remaining annex 2 countries, in particular the nuclear-weapon States and those yet to accede to the NPT, to sign and ratify the CTBT in order to facilitate its early entry into force.

The African Group reaffirms the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament. The Group expresses its concern at the many years of impasse which have prevented the Conference from fulfilling its mandate as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The Group calls on the Conference to resume substantive work, taking into account the security interests of all States without further delay.

The African Group is concerned about the inability of the Disarmament Commission to reach consensus on recommendations since 1999. The Group underscores the significance not only of preserving the Commission

but of seeing it realize its deliberative objectives. The Group looks forward to a successful deliberation on the elements of the agenda items before the Commission in this cycle.

The African Group acknowledges the efforts of the States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its entry into force, as well as the second successful Conference of its States parties held in Geneva two months ago. The Group urges the appropriate implementation of the ATT — the only legally binding instrument on the international transfer of conventional arms — in a balanced and objective manner and one that protects the interests of all States, not just the major international producing and exporting States. The Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import, and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Group acknowledges that unregulated conventional arms transfers fuel the illicit trade, and it urges major arms suppliers to ratify the Treaty and promote its implementation.

The African Group remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly on the continent of Africa. African States have suffered tremendously and disproportionately from the pernicious effects of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons and their destabilizing effects on the socioeconomic stability of the continent. In this context, the Group remains committed to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

While welcoming the successful conclusion and the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons in June, the Group looks forward to the Third Review Conference in 2018 as an important event and urges all States to continue to fulfil their obligations regarding reporting and technological transfer and by ensuring the unhindered flow of international cooperation and assistance, as stipulated by the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which is based in Lomé. Despite various challenges, including a lean purse and limited resources, the Centre has continued to offer technical assistance to States across the African region. In 2015, the Centre succeeded in engaging the help, in a wide range of activities, of more than 1,000 representatives of Governments and regional organizations and more than 2,000 members of civil society. The Centre needs our assistance in furthering its mandate. The Group commends the efforts made by the Centre, led by its management, and takes this opportunity to call for more partnership and further assistance to bolster its efforts and ensure that the Centre continues to deliver on its mandate.

Finally, the African Group wishes to reiterate the critical importance of political will and adherence to transparency, including the application of the principles of verifiability and irreversibility, in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group believes that our deliberations in the coming days should be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and enhance the cause of peace.

The African Group will submit two draft resolutions in the course of our meetings, for which we seek the support of all delegations. They concern the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset, on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this seventy-first session of the General Assembly. We are pleased that a brotherly country from the Arab region occupies this high post, and we are confident that your wide expertise will lead our work to a successful conclusion. We also congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. We will support you in every way possible during our work. I should also like to express our support for the statement made earlier in the meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We emphatically repeat our principled positions on disarmament and international security. The establishment of peace, security and stability cannot be achieved so long as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that threaten international peace

and security exist. We must rid humankind of these weapons and instead devote the resources that we spend on these weapons to development.

We stress that the multilateral agreements drawn up in accordance with the United Nations Charter are the means to strengthen international peace and security. We call upon all Member States to commit themselves to multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We should also like to stress the central role of the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee, in keeping with the mandates specified at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978. At that same session, the Assembly emphasized the paramount importance of nuclear disarmament, and we look forward to a successful outcome of the Open-ended Working Group in preparation for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We welcome the commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. That was stressed at the high-level meeting on this issue last week. We would also like to draw attention to the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the most recent of which, resolution 70/34, calls for the resumption of negotiations on a comprehensive and non-discriminatory treaty on the use, stockpiling or possession of nuclear weapons, and stresses the importance of holding an international conference on nuclear disarmament no later than 2018. We also welcome the recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established in accordance with the terms of resolution 70/33, in Geneva this year.

We continue to make a positive contribution to nuclear disarmament through our participation in all nuclear-disarmament forums and through our accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We place all our nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), something that has not been done by Israel, despite several relevant international resolutions.

We express our concern and disappointment at the continued failure to implement the second decision of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and the 13 steps adopted by the 2000 Review Conference,

in addition to the agenda adopted by the Review Conference of 2010. Nuclear-weapon States should honour their commitments with a view to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We refuse to accept the various pretexts invoked by nuclear-weapon States in justification of their continued possession of these weapons, and we stress that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee of their non-use.

We call for the universalization of the NPT, the cornerstone of the international nuclear-disarmament regime. We emphasize the importance of a balanced commitment to the three pillars of the Treaty and of filling any lacunae that might enable some to avoid their commitments. We also emphasize the indispensable right of all States to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with agreements with the IAEA. Because of the failure of the 2015 Review Conference and the failure of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments, we must redouble our efforts for the total elimination of these weapons.

My Group stresses the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world, including in the Middle East. We underline the need to take immediate measures in this regard, as called for by the annual Arab resolution with respect to the threat of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, and we will make a proposal on this subject that will be in addition to the draft resolution to be adopted by the international community. Once again we condemn the continued threat to peace and security, in particular in the Middle East, in view of Israel's continued possession of a huge nuclear arsenal and its refusal to join the NPT as a nuclear-weapon State. It is the only country in the Middle East that has not acceded to the NPT or placed its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA, and that is therefore in flagrant violation of relevant international resolutions.

We firmly assert that the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is an extremely important pillar of the NPT. However, no progress has been made in this regard since 1995, even though the decision to extend the NPT indefinitely has made such progress feasible. On the contrary, we have witnessed only procrastination and deviation. That situation prompted all Arab countries to begin, on 11 March, a comprehensive review of all aspects of the matter, with a view to developing an Arab strategy for the establishment of a

nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and of a body to conduct an investigation.

Because of the failure to implement the consensus resolutions of 2010, the Arab Group was prompted to make a new proposal to end the stalemate. However, that proposal, made in the context of the final document of the 2015 Review Conference, was not accepted. The decision, sponsored by the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, was extremely disappointing. It shattered the international consensus, prevented the adoption of a final document that pays attention to the Middle East, and raises the serious question of whether the countries concerned are politically and ethically committed to the pledges they made.

We believe that the responsibility for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a collective one. The Arab Group has done its part. Others should play their part as well. The issue is one that tests the validity of the NPT and the disarmament regime as a whole. Twenty years later, we stress the importance of implementing all the commitments contained in the 1995 resolution, including the establishment of a zone in the Middle East that is free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We also stress the importance of political will and flexibility in the implementation of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, which, in our view, is the only forum appropriate for these types of negotiations. We should all do our utmost to preserve that role and enable the Conference to deal with the four main issues on its agenda as a complement to our work in nuclear disarmament.

We strongly believe that outer space must be used only for peaceful purposes. The relevant international legal instruments provide for the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space.

As regards conventional weapons, we believe that illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is extremely dangerous and that we should redouble our efforts to prevent such illicit trade. We also welcome the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States, held in June in New York, and look forward to continued international consensus on this United Nations political mechanism during the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action, to be held in 2018.

With regard to cybersecurity, we stress the importance of intensifying multilateral international cooperation in this field and of safeguarding international information systems and protecting them from any destructive attacks, as was stated in New York at the meetings of the United Nations intergovernmental group on cybersecurity, which will continue its work next year in Geneva.

Let me conclude by stating that my Group has touched on all the priorities that will be discussed during our deliberations on the agenda of the First Committee at this session. We believe that we have a challenging task ahead of us. That should not discourage us but rather should prompt us to make further efforts on a basis of equality and non-selectivity and without double standards to the extent possible, since otherwise we shall not generate the political will necessary to the success of our work. The Arab Group believes that we should all be committed to these principles, and we are prepared to cooperate with all other members with a view to making progress in the field of disarmament and international security.

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on all disarmament and international security agenda items. CARICOM extends its congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this Committee. We also offer our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election. Please be assured of CARICOM's full support as you embark on your chairmanship. We also express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Karel Jan Gustaaf van Oosterom of the Netherlands, for his stewardship during his tenure as Chair of the First Committee during the seventieth session.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier in the meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

According to the World Economic Forum 2016, global instability is the new normal. From CARICOM's perspective the unprecedented scale and reach of international terrorism, the increasing influence of non-State actors, new proliferation threats and the escalation of strife and conflict between States is the new normal. That is a concern for all States, including small States, that rely on the rule of law at the national and international levels in order to guarantee their

right to a secure, sovereign and peaceful existence. CARICOM therefore strongly encourages all States to act consistently within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations on all matters related to disarmament and international security.

The prevalence of gun-related fatalities owing to the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition, illicit drugs, money-laundering, cybercrime and other dimensions of transboundary criminal activities pose the most significant threats to the security of CARICOM. As a demonstration of our commitment to the people of our subregion, States members of CARICOM have pooled their efforts to fight the scourge of small arms and light weapons proliferation and have established a regional mechanism known as the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security. In early 2011 CARICOM Heads of State and Government adopted the CARICOM Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons. CARICOM has also devised a mechanism, provided for in the CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015-2019, to build resilience in the face of these clear and present dangers.

These activities undermine our socioeconomic development, as very valuable financial and other resources in our national budgets have to be set aside to tackle this pernicious menace. Although we have crafted regional solutions to tackle these problems, we are all cognizant of the need for cooperation at the multilateral level, and that is why CARICOM States subscribe fully to the objective and purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and are moving assiduously towards the full implementation of the ATT in our jurisdictions. We remain firm in our conviction that the ATT can contribute significantly to reducing the suffering of many of our citizens and of countless people throughout the world, especially women and children, who live daily under the deadly and devastating impact of the unregulated trade in conventional arms. For that reason we are pleased that all 14 CARICOM member States are parties to the ATT. As the life of the ATT progresses beyond the recently concluded Second Conference of States Parties, CARICOM wishes to underline that, for the ATT to be a success, it must be implemented in good faith by all States parties, including the major manufacturers, exporters and importers of conventional weapons.

CARICOM has found non-binding legal agreements to be of tremendous assistance in our attempts to address the illicit arms trade in our region. We therefore

reiterate the importance we place on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as an important instrument in mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. For this reason, the region demonstrated heightened participation in the recently concluded Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action.

The sixth Biennial Meeting of States was the first such meeting to convene after the entry into force of the ATT and during a time in which ratification of and accession to the Treaty was gaining momentum. CARICOM fully welcomed the consensus outcome document, which included language on the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16, that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security. We applaud the tireless efforts of the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, who chaired the sixth Biennial Meeting of States process to a successful outcome. CARICOM now looks ahead to the 2018 Review Conference to further strengthen the United Nations Programme of Action process.

CARICOM would be remiss if it failed to highlight the continued support it receives from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. That organization has supported and assisted member States of CARICOM in capacity-building measures and technical assistance programmes. We look forward to continued collaboration.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, CARICOM wishes to recall the words spoken by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 26 September 2014 in commemorating the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons: "Nuclear disarmament is therefore not an idealistic dream, but an urgent necessity to meet the genuine security interests of all humanity".

We are proud to be part of the first densely populated region in the world to declare itself a nuclear-weapon-free zone, pursuant to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). The Secretary-General of OPANAL, Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, once pointed out that Latin America and the Caribbean

brought to world peace and security an inestimable and truly innovative contribution. A space equivalent to 20 million square miles, which is home to about 600 million people, has been kept free of nuclear weapons.

Our commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world is in keeping with the special declaration on the commitment to advance multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, which was adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Furthermore, based on the firm conviction that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, a crime against humanity, and would also constitute a violation of international law, including humanitarian law, CARICOM member States therefore join the international community's efforts to advance towards the negotiation of a universal, legally binding instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

CARICOM firmly believes that a global prohibition on nuclear weapons can contribute to attaining and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons and therefore supports the recommendation to the General Assembly by the Open-ended Working Group for States to begin a multilateral process for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons towards their total elimination.

CARICOM countries' long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment to address threats posed by weapons of mass destruction has been underscored by our ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 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. Without question, regional progress in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is inextricably linked to our economic viability.

CARICOM countries benefited from the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency in strengthening their capacity through the sharing of best practices and transfer of technology and from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in receiving

specialized training in emergency response to deliberate or accidental use of chemical agents. We also commend the efforts of the CARICOM Regional Coordinator for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in his continued efforts to sensitize CARICOM on responses to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosive emergencies.

Trinidad and Tobago, with the support of CARICOM, will again sponsor its resolution entitled “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control” during this session of the Committee. This year the wording has been updated to reflect recent developments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and related issues. Once again we welcome the support of the Committee for this draft resolution.

The First Committee has another opportunity to engage in progressive dialogue and to begin meaningful negotiations on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The Caribbean Community is acutely aware that its sustainable development is inextricably linked to the safety and security of its people. Against that backdrop, we renew our pledge to work with the international community in realizing to the fullest extent one of the founding principles as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, that of the maintenance of international peace and security. Let us demonstrate the necessary political will to create a peaceful and secure international environment for future generations.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Bylica (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this year’s First Committee meetings and assure you of our full support.

The European Union remains fully committed to effective multilateralism and the rules-based

international system with the United Nations at its core. The EU will continue to promote universalization and full implementation of the existing multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms-control treaties and regimes. The promotion of gender equality, gender consciousness, the empowerment of women and the prevention of sexual violence is another important horizontal priority for the European Union. The EU continues to be committed to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and all other relevant Security Council resolutions aimed at advancing the agenda for women and peace and security.

The European Union regards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the NPT, and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. A key priority for the EU is to uphold and preserve the NPT as a multilateral instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability.

We emphasize the importance of universalizing the NPT and call on States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay and without conditions. We reiterate the European Union’s strong support for all three pillars of the Treaty. We call for the implementation of all obligations and commitments assumed under the NPT or undertaken during previous Review Conferences.

The European Union calls on all States parties to implement, without delay and in a balanced manner, the 2010 action plan designed to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty. The concrete and mutually reinforcing steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy contained in the action plan will contribute to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We underline the importance of achieving a substantial outcome during the next NPT review cycle and look forward to progress at the first Preparatory Committee meeting in 2017. The EU and its member States will continue to contribute actively to the discussions in various disarmament and non-proliferation forums.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening up for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament

and non-proliferation, and its entry into force and universalization remain top priorities for the EU. All 28 EU member States have ratified the Treaty. We welcome the Vienna Ministerial Meeting and the eighth Friends of the CTBT Ministerial Meeting, which garnered wide political support for the CTBT. We welcome the reaffirmation of the importance of the CTBT expressed in the recently adopted Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the eight remaining States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify it. The EU will continue to promote this objective through our diplomatic and financial engagement. Moreover, the EU continues to support the build-up of the verification regime of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization through significant voluntary contributions.

Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the EU calls on all States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to maintain a moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions, and to refrain from any action that would defeat the objective and purpose of the Treaty. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests and launches using ballistic-missile technology, which constitute a direct threat to international and regional peace and security and further aggravate tensions on the Korean peninsula. We are appalled by the continuing grave violations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its international obligations as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions, and its continuing acts of provocation, including two nuclear tests and multiple ballistic-missile launches.

As a result, the EU and its member States have continuously implemented all relevant Security Council resolutions in a robust manner, reinforcing and implementing United Nations restrictive measures with the EU's own autonomous restrictive measures targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes.

We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations, abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and return to compliance with the NPT and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards at an early date. We furthermore call on the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any action that further increases regional tensions and to re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

The European Union will use every means at its disposal to assist in resolving proliferation crises. The historic agreement between the E3+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is one of the rare successes of diplomacy in the Middle East, also strengthening the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Only its full and sustained implementation can provide the international community with the necessary assurances on the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and contribute to international and regional security.

We welcome Iran's provisional application of the Additional Protocol and the full implementation of the modified Code 3.1 of the subsidiary arrangements to its Safeguards Agreement. We look forward to the early ratification of the Additional Protocol and its sustained implementation. We reiterate the need for Iran to strictly adhere to all its commitments under the JCPOA and to carry on cooperating fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA, which is crucial for the IAEA to reach a broader conclusion on the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme. Furthermore, we call on all parties concerned to fully implement Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), including the call on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

The European Union reaffirms its strong support for the objective of creating in the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons, all other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery. Ratifications by the remaining States of the region of the NPT, the CTBT, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) would be important confidence- and security-building measures that would constitute tangible steps in the direction of the Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The European Union is appalled by the recurring and systematic use of chemical weapons in Syria, as

confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We have noted with dismay the report by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism confirming that the Syrian Armed Forces and Da'esh have carried out such attacks. There can be no impunity, and the perpetrators of these horrific attacks must be held accountable. We stand united in condemning in the strongest possible terms all use of chemical weapons in Syria or anywhere else by anyone and under any circumstances. The use of chemical weapons constitutes a violation of international law, a war crime and a crime against humanity.

The EU and its member States have supported, by significant contributions, the work of the OPCW in verifying the dismantling of the declared Syrian chemical-weapons programme. The EU strongly supports the work of the Declaration Assessment Team and deplores the fact that the OPCW is not in a position to confirm that the Syrian declaration is exact and exhaustive. We urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to extend full cooperation to the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to resolve all outstanding issues and convince the international community that its chemical-weapons programme has been completely and irreversibly dismantled.

The EU welcomes the successful removal of the remaining chemical-weapons precursors from Libya for destruction outside the country. This constitutes a positive and important development for Libya's stability. EU member States have contributed to the success of the international operation through providing personnel, technical expertise, equipment, financial and other resources.

The European Union attaches high priority to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). We have consistently supported the full implementation and further strengthening of these Conventions in order to prevent chemical and biological agents and toxins from being developed and used as weapons. Over the past decade many countries have benefited from EU assistance in support of the CWC and BWC. The EU will continue its efforts aimed at building and sustaining confidence in compliance, assisting national implementation, supporting the Secretary-General's mechanism for investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons and agents, and in promoting universality.

The upcoming eighth Review Conference of the BWC has a responsibility to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of the Convention in a fast-changing world of unprecedented scientific and technological developments. The EU's objective at the Review Conference is to contribute to a full review of the operations of the Convention and to support a new substantive work programme and a ninth Review Conference, to be held no later than 2021. In this context, we are supporting all efforts that would lead to a much more effective intersessional programme and enable a better functioning of the Convention, including the ability of States parties to formally take collective action between Review Conferences.

The European Union and its member States remain gravely concerned about the risk and the continued use of chemical weapons by Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. We underline the importance of further national, regional and international efforts to prevent non-State actors from acquiring and using chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, their means of delivery, related materials or radioactive sources.

Improving nuclear and radiological security is a key priority for the EU and its member States. We support the central role of the IAEA in this area and continue to provide significant support for assistance projects in third countries. We underline the importance of countries adhering to the relevant international conventions and recognize the work carried out under the auspices of other initiatives to combat nuclear terrorism. We welcome the international conference on nuclear security to be held in Vienna in December 2016 and encourage all IAEA member States to participate in it at the ministerial level.

From the outset, the EU and its member States have been staunch supporters of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), calling for its practical, effective and robust implementation with the objective of strengthening global efforts in this regard. All 28 EU member States have submitted at least one report on the implementation of this resolution to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), and several of them have drawn up national action plans that are updated periodically. We are ready to offer further assistance to third countries to help them meet their obligations.

In June this year, the EU submitted its report entitled "EU support to the full and universal

implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540". As a result of the comprehensive review, we expect the Security Council to restate its strong support for the resolution's full implementation through a further resolution.

The fifth Review Conference on 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 (CCW) in December this year will provide a renewed opportunity to take important decisions for the next review cycle and continue discussions on issues such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), lethal autonomous weapons systems and mines other than anti-personnel mines. The EU welcomes the adoption of the political declaration on IEDs in the framework of Amended Protocol II, and takes note of the recommendations of the 2016 informal group of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The EU and its member States have a long-standing commitment to the CCW and its Protocols. It is a unique international forum gathering diplomatic, legal and military expertise. It offers a flexible way to respond to new developments in the field of weapons technologies and above all to support the implementation of an essential part of international humanitarian law, which contributes to preventing and reducing the suffering of both civilians and combatants.

The universalization of the CCW remains an important objective for the European Union. The EU has long supported the process leading to the Arms Trade Treaty and its entry into force in 2014. All 28 EU member States are party to the Treaty, which provides for robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, making for greater responsibility and transparency and preventing illicit trade and diversion.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is currently fuelling crime, conflicts and terrorism in many parts of the world. The European Union supports 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 provides assistance to various countries and regions to curb the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

The EU will continue to support the implementation and universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, to which all 28 EU member States are parties. We support the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and call upon all actors to fully observe the principles of international humanitarian law.

It is ever more urgent that the international community work together to preserve the long-term safety, security and sustainability of the space environment. The Hague Code of Conduct is the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument on the spread of ballistic technology. We warmly welcome India's accession to the Hague Code of Conduct and encourage others to follow its example. We strongly support the candidacy of nine EU member States willing to join the Missile Technology Control Regime. The EU and its member States support the further development of norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, as well as the promotion of confidence-building measures, international cooperation and capacity-building to improve cybersecurity. We will elaborate in more detail on EU positions in contributions during the thematic debate.

Allow me to inform you, Sir, that an even longer version of the EU statement will be distributed electronically.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt): Mr. Chair, I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), namely, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Egypt. At the outset NAC would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee for this year. We would also like to assure you of NAC's full cooperation and support with a view to the successful conclusion of this year's deliberations.

As we have regularly done, the New Agenda Coalition will present a draft resolution to the Committee, which will be introduced during the thematic debate on nuclear disarmament.

In founding NAC in 1998, the Foreign Ministers of our respective countries were motivated by the continued threat to humankind represented by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of the use or threat of use of these weapons. The threat continues to guide NAC efforts to accelerate nuclear

disarmament for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

It is the view of NAC that accelerating and achieving the fulfilment of nuclear-disarmament obligations is the only appropriate response to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and risks associated with the very existence of nuclear weapons, awareness of which has been growing since 2010. These risks and consequences, which respect no national borders and have a strongly gendered impact, will remain as long as nuclear weapons exist. NAC firmly believes that our deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and risk of a nuclear-weapon detonation should underpin our endeavours towards nuclear disarmament and the urgency of achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world.

NAC deeply regrets that, while the threat posed to the international community by nuclear weapons has not abated, progress in nuclear disarmament remains elusive. Notwithstanding the exhortations of the very first resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)), the specific legal obligations contained in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the countless additional obligations and commitments made by the nuclear-weapon States through the NPT review process, implementation has fallen far short of expectations.

We remain deeply concerned by the unacceptably slow pace of nuclear disarmament, at both the regional and global levels, despite successive undertakings from the nuclear-weapon States since 1995. While significant reductions have been made since the peak of the Cold War years, bilateral reductions are no substitute for multilateral nuclear-disarmament measures implemented in accordance with the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency. Our concern at the slow pace of disarmament is compounded by ongoing modernization programmes that contradict the unequivocal undertaking given by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

NAC is also deeply concerned that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to fulfil its mandate nor has it been able, for 20 years, to agree upon and implement a programme of work. We believe that the Conference should, without delay, commence substantive work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament, particularly through multilateral negotiations. Further, we strongly support efforts to

strengthen women's empowerment and their leadership and participation in nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation debates.

NAC wishes to reiterate its disappointment and deep concern that the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has yet to be implemented. We therefore call upon all States parties to the NPT to work towards its full implementation, which is inextricably linked to the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The 1995 resolution remains valid until its ultimate goals and objectives are achieved.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The failure to agree on an outcome document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference was a missed opportunity to advance the implementation of existing nuclear-disarmament commitments towards the fulfilment of article VI. The next review cycle of the Treaty, which begins in May 2017, presents an opportunity for the States parties to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the current status of the Treaty, the implementation of previous obligations and commitments within its framework, and the challenges facing its full implementation.

It is now time for the international community to translate words into concrete action backed by clear and agreed-upon benchmarks and timelines. NAC believes that the nuclear-weapon States should not only implement their prior commitments and obligations, but should strive to build further on them, as that would contribute to pushing forward the aims and purposes of the Treaty.

Given that more than 45 years have passed since the entry into force of the NPT, the status quo on nuclear disarmament is no longer acceptable or sustainable. NAC believes that it is now time for States to deliver upon their commitments in line with their obligations under article VI, together with the subsequent unequivocal undertaking made by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. As such, there is an urgent need for the commencement of negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, unless options for the negotiations of effective measures are pursued, the present and unacceptably slow pace of multilateral nuclear disarmament will continue. In the light of this, the NAC urges all States parties to seize the opportunity

of the First Committee to make a difference on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election to chair the First Committee at its seventy-first session. We endorse the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

The seventy-first session of the General Assembly is taking place at a very important time for the Organization, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and increasing recognition of the need to prevent conflicts and the effects of conflicts, and the increasing focus on the benefits of development. The negotiation of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are examples of the value of diplomacy and multilateralism.

These examples of progress contrast with the situation prevailing in the United Nations disarmament machinery. The first resolution of the General Assembly in 1946 (resolution 1 (I)) called for nuclear disarmament, and 70 years later that task remains pending. The United Nations Disarmament Commission continues to fail to issue recommendations, and the Conference on Disarmament has not fulfilled its mandate for more than 20 years. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has yet to enter into force, 20 years after its opening for signature, while the ninth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concluded without adopting a final document, because of political factors external to the Treaty.

Just a few weeks ago, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test, for which Mexico reiterated its most energetic condemnation. These types of tests are a violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and the provisions of the NPT. Further, we are commemorating the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice 20 years ago, on 8 July 1996 (A/51/218, annex), which indicated that the unique characteristics of nuclear weapons make them incompatible with international humanitarian law. As unanimously determined by the Court in that advisory opinion, there is an obligation on all parties to the NPT to negotiate in good faith effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament on the basis of article VI of the Treaty. Given that the responsibility for nuclear disarmament rests with nuclear-weapon States, Mexico reiterates its call to nuclear-weapon

States to fulfil their commitments and obligations under the NPT, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Fifteen thousand nuclear weapons remain in existence, possessed by just a few States that believe them to be essential for their security. Yet there is a real possibility that these weapons could harm the environment, ecosystems, development, global public health and food security. These are real concerns and possibilities, as was borne out by the data presented at the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons that were held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna in 2013 and 2014. That is why these weapons should not be used again under any circumstances, and that is why we continue to advocate their complete elimination.

For these reasons, we welcome the work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We hope that the General Assembly will address all the recommendations made by the Open-ended Working Group in a substantive, constructive and decisive manner. My delegation remains open to hearing all opinions and all proposals to move forward with multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament through discussion and consideration of all positions that are expressed in the Working Group, and in particular we would focus here on the beginning of negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. This collaboration of the entire membership is part of the commitment undertaken by the 127 States that endorsed the humanitarian pledge in order to fill the existing gap with respect to nuclear weapons and to stigmatize and prohibit such weapons with a view to their elimination.

It is a source of great satisfaction to Mexico that the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in February 2017. My region is very proud of having been the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a populated region of the world. Today 115 countries throughout the world have inhabitants who live in the five nuclear-weapon-free zones, and we hope that the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco will serve as a framework for new efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons at the global level.

We call on those countries that have not yet ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction to do so as soon as possible. We call on the parties to the Convention to continue contributing to the physical destruction of chemical weapons and to promoting the peaceful use of chemicals. We commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its support to Libya in the destruction of remnants of chemical components outside Libyan territory. We recognize the considerable efforts of the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The perverse and inhumane effects of the use of chemical weapons are unacceptable, as is the use of other indiscriminate weapons which continue to cause damage and devastation to the innocent population.

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 this year gives us an opportunity to continue moving forward with the implementation of the Convention, even in the absence of verification mechanisms, in the light of the scientific and technical progress made in the natural sciences as well as the challenges of pandemics and the manipulation of biological materials and their implications for global public health. We call on all members to continue complying with legally valid legal instruments and with the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). We must continue to strengthen existing norms, since by doing so we will be able to avoid risks, including the use of weapons by non-State actors.

Mexico welcomes the progress made to strengthen the institutional and procedural framework for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Similarly, we welcomed the Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, at which participants agreed on a forceful final document which, among other positive aspects, recognized that effective control of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons contributes to sustainable development, to eliminating armed violence and to promoting international peace and security.

The Organization should analyse the complex problem of conventional weapons, taking a broad-based approach that addresses the myriad instruments and the

many challenges, particularly the illicit trade in such weapons. These efforts will help to achieve Goal 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Mexico has therefore proposed that the Secretary-General establish a group of experts which, two years after the entry into force of the ATT, would present a report containing recommendations on the consequences of global conventional-weapons transfers.

In addition, we hope that the fifth Review Conference of 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 will address the ethical and technical dilemmas of new conventional-weapons technologies, with the end goal being to contribute to the progressive development of international human rights law.

My delegation will continue to provide details of its position in the thematic debates, which is why we urge the First Committee to let its work be guided by the Secretary-General's statement that there are no right hands for the wrong weapons.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee and to wish you every success in this year's work. We would also like to extend those congratulations to the members of the Bureau and to express our firm commitment to contributing actively and positively to our deliberations.

In recent years, my country has devoted a substantial portion of its interventions to exposing and denouncing the existence today of some 15,000 nuclear weapons in the world, of which approximately 2,000 are on hair-trigger alert, or the 20 years that have elapsed without the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty entering into force. Similarly, we have lamented the paralysis of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the existence of multimillion-dollar modernization programmes of nuclear arsenals by some nuclear Powers.

It is not that these problems are no longer important or that they have lost their urgency, or that there is no longer a pressing need to resolve them; on the contrary, they are very much present and pressing. However, this year and despite this dismal overview of nuclear disarmament, I should like to identify some positive elements that have emerged in recent years. In looking at the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, therefore, I think that we can highlight the broad adherence to the Austrian pledge and the commitment of a significant number of countries to filling the unacceptable legal gap that allows the most destructive weapons created by humankind not to be explicitly prohibited. That pledge is a powerful guide in what is a complicated disarmament picture.

We also highlight and celebrate the opening of a promising path towards the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. I am referring now to the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which recently completed its work in Geneva and recommended, by an overwhelming majority, the start of negotiations on a legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons, with a view to their elimination, thereby complementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We hope that this process moves forward and that a ban is established on the only weapons of mass destruction that have not yet been explicitly prohibited. These weapons violate elemental norms of international humanitarian law.

We are aware that the prohibition of nuclear weapons through a legally binding instrument will not result in their automatic elimination. However, such a ban will create a norm that stigmatizes their possession and will lay the groundwork for negotiations for their total, verifiable and irreversible elimination. My country is convinced that coexistence in a world without nuclear weapons is possible and that maintaining international peace and security without resorting to nuclear deterrence, beyond being an ethical imperative, is also an attainable goal and consistent with international human rights protections.

Chile reaffirms that it has been and will always remain a strong supporter and promoter of general and complete disarmament and will always favour debate in a broad, transparent and democratic multilateral arena in line with its foreign policy of adherence to international law, respect for treaties and the strengthening of multilateral forums. In this context, we invite the international community to join the debate. We believe all voices are important, and I would therefore like to highlight the active role and significant contribution of civil society.

Chile reaffirms its commitment to supporting multilateral efforts to promote disarmament,

non-proliferation and the prohibition of the use and possession of all weapons of mass destruction. We condemn the military use of biological and chemical weapons under any circumstances and by any actor. In addition, we call for universal ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction towards the goal of achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

Moreover, we call attention to the danger associated with biological weapons. Today the threat of dual-use biological knowledge, global health emergencies and the possible use of toxin agents by non-State actors increases the need to establish a verification mechanism for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Chile is fully prepared to work and make progress in this direction during the next Review Conference.

We reiterate our commitment to the objectives and purposes of resolution 1540 (2004) and our support and backing for the comprehensive review of this instrument. We emphasize that Chile, together with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, will organize a training course for the national points of contact in Latin America and the Caribbean who are responsible for the resolution's implementation. This seminar will be held in Santiago, Chile, from 24 to 28 October. We invite member States of our region to participate in this event through their focal points.

We support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We urge all States to continue implementing the Programme of Action by adopting legally binding instruments on marking and tracing and on the illicit trade in such weapons. We recognize that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is a blight, the destructive effects of which are immeasurable. The effects go beyond the sphere of international security, have a direct impact on socioeconomic development and human rights and exacerbate sexual violence and gender violence, affecting millions of people. We call for the international community to urgently address this problem.

In that context, we would like to particularly mention the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which entered into force in December 2014, and for which the second Conference of States Parties was held in Geneva last August. The Treaty fulfils the international community's desire to have a legally binding instrument that contributes to transparency in the trade in conventional weapons. The ATT will help to prevent and combat the diversion of those weapons to illicit trade in various parts of the world and will also help to fight the resulting unacceptable human suffering that such weapons cause.

Chile has actively promoted the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction as part of the constant search for the best ways to protect the human population and its rights and dignity. For my country, this Convention represents one of the highest synergies between international humanitarian law and disarmament. The Chilean presidency is promoting the strengthening of that virtuous relationship from the perspective of human security. This effort reflects our political desire to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. My country therefore joins the call made this morning by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, to request those States that have not yet fulfilled their financial obligations to the Convention to do so as soon as possible, bearing in mind that Chile is making a significant financial effort to cover about two thirds of the costs involved in holding this conference.

Mr. Rose (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and your country, Algeria, on your election to lead the First Committee at its seventy-first session. We pledge our full support as you ably guide the important work of this body.

In 2009, President Obama spoke in Prague about his vision to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, a goal that the President reiterated during his historic visit to Hiroshima earlier this year. Towards that end, we have steadily reduced the role and number of nuclear weapons in a way that maintains strategic stability and creates the conditions and opportunities for further progress.

One need not look further than the numbers to see that we have produced results. The United States has reduced its total stockpile of active and inactive nuclear warheads by 85 per cent from its cold war peak, from

31,255 nuclear weapons in 1967 to 4,571 as of 2015. The work of disarmament continues steadily without headlines or fanfare. More work needs to be done, but these results speak louder than any words. We have made significant progress.

The successful implementation of the New START Treaty continues to dismantle Russian and United States nuclear weapons every day. The United States and Russia are building confidence through the verification regime and are expected to meet the central limits of the Treaty when they take effect in February 2018, capping United States and Russian strategic nuclear forces at their lowest level since the 1950s. The President has made clear his willingness to seek further reductions of up to one third below the New START levels. We have also made clear that progress in that direction requires a willing partner and a strategic environment conducive to further reductions. Those conditions do not currently exist.

While we understand and share the disappointment of others with the pace of progress, frustration is not a compelling reason to abandon an approach to reductions that builds upon decades of pragmatic steps to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons. There is now a proposal to abandon this proven course in favour of a nuclear-weapons ban. Such a path is polarizing and forsakes long-standing principles of credible nuclear disarmament, such as verifiability. This is not a recipe for success when dealing with nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament will be achieved only through an approach that takes into account the views and the security interests of all States. Consensus is the only practical way forward. That is why the United States rejects the final report (see A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, and calls on other States to do the same.

Additionally, it is critical to note that one cannot separate nuclear disarmament from the overarching security environment. Indeed, the most significant progress on nuclear disarmament has occurred when the underlying security circumstances have allowed for it. For example, it was the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s that allowed us to negotiate and conclude the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles, in 1987, the first Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms,

in 1991, and the second Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, in 1993. Furthermore, those who say that a nuclear-weapon ban is favoured by the majority of countries of the world overlook the billions of people who reside in countries that count on nuclear weapons as a deterrent or who are protected by an extended deterrent.

The proponents of a ban treaty have painted the issue as a false choice between the view that nuclear weapons are either a humanitarian or a security issue — in fact, they are both. Our pursuit of nuclear disarmament takes that into account. President Obama made clear in Prague that even as we work toward the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, so long as such weapons exist the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary and guarantee the defence of our allies. In the course of reducing our nuclear arsenal, the weapons that remain will continue to serve their fundamental role of deterring the use of nuclear weapons against us or our allies and partners.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to play a critical role in global security and provides the foundation for our efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. While we recognize that more needs to be done, we do not accept the notion that there is a “legal gap” in our fulfilment of these undertakings.

In addition to proven approaches to disarmament, the United States is committed to creating new ones that will help us reach our goals. That is why we are proud to partner with other nations through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Effective verification is a key feature of any successful arms-control agreement. The requirements for verification have and will continue to become more demanding as the number of parties increases and the number of weapons and the size of the accountable objects decreases. Now in its second year, the Partnership has made significant progress on these challenges. More than 25 countries have participated so far, bringing to bear a wide range of expertise working to create an effective foundation for nuclear-disarmament verification.

We are also working together with other NPT nuclear-weapon States to strengthen the Treaty and make progress on our article VI commitments. Since the P-5 process was launched in 2009, we have taken

steps to enhance multilateral transparency, dialogue, confidence-building and mutual understanding to pave the way for future progress towards the verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. Just three weeks ago the P-5 met in Washington for the seventh P-5 conference, at which we agreed to convene a P-5 discussion of nuclear doctrine and policy here in New York, on 6 October, and to undertake further activities on the glossary of key terms. We also released a parallel P-5 statement expressing support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and worked with our partners in New York to adopt Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) supporting the CTBT and its verification system.

Turning to outer-space matters, the United States will continue to use this year’s First Committee session to advance space security and sustainability. The United States continues to pursue a range of bilateral and multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) to encourage responsible behaviour and strengthen stability in outer space. One promising area is the continued implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 United Nations Group of Governmental Experts study on space transparency and confidence-building measures. In October 2014, we submitted our views on implementing the Group of Governmental Experts’ recommendations to the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We urge Governments to submit their views on outer-space TCBMs to the Secretary-General by next year.

In conclusion, the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons will not be easily achieved. The challenges we face are technical and political in nature, and none can be separated from the broader international security environment. While progress may be slower than we would like, we cannot lose sight of the very real successes we have had and will continue to have.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): In the interests of time, I will set aside protocol and go immediately to the substance of my statement.

The First Committee knows quite well that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are the main priorities of my country’s foreign policy. We would like to point out the unfair parity existing among Member States, namely, that while non-nuclear-weapon States fulfil their commitments under the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the nuclear-weapon States are not fully fulfilling their obligations under article VI of that Treaty. We also call for the universalization of the NPT and draw attention to the fact that the failure of its 2015 Review Conference must be turned into positive action and increased political will at the forthcoming 2017 first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2020 Review Conference. Because the international community cannot afford another setback, Kazakhstan will do its utmost to work as a neutral mediator and bridge-builder.

It is well known that almost all of the southern hemisphere is a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and we are proud to say that the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone that we established by the Semipalatinsk Treaty, together with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is the only one in the northern hemisphere. In this regard we would like to thank the Governments of France, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation and China for completing the process for the ratification of the Protocol on negative security assurances. We hope that the United States Congress will do the same at its earliest convenience, and even before the country's presidential elections. The gains derived from the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone compel us to strongly urge all parties concerned to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery.

Based on what we learned some moments ago from the previous speaker, the representative of the United States, and what we heard last week from the delegation of the Russian Federation during the commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, we would like to acknowledge that reductions in nuclear arsenals have been made in the past 10 years, though not to the extent desired by others. In other words, the major Powers have indeed made strides in limiting their nuclear arsenals. In this regard, we believe that it is necessary to demonstrate further concrete and bold steps to achieve our noble goal of building a nuclear-weapon-free world as soon as possible. At the same time, we must show prudence so as not to jeopardize international security and stability and thereby expose it to unanticipated threats.

It is therefore necessary to strike a common chord and find common ground among the various stances. Remarkably, in this direction we achieved an important milestone on 7 December 2015, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/57, entitled "Universal

Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", which is an important and balanced step towards a convention on the reduction of nuclear weapons. Such an instrument will in turn lead towards a convention on a total ban on and elimination of them.

We note the great significance of resolution 68/32 declaring 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which we celebrated last week. Likewise, we see that the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/35 in December 2009 — a resolution that was introduced by my country and was supported by many others — declaring 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

We appreciate the work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which holds its sessions in Geneva, and hope to see coordinated efforts with the Conference on Disarmament. My country continues its function as Chair for the 2015-2017 cycle of Working Group I on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, within the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In the intersessional period, we conducted two informal consultations of the Group to further elaborate the text of the Chair's outcome document for 2017. A third such meeting is planned for next month.

This year we are also organizing two sessions of the Nuclear Discussion Forum on nuclear security in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Russian Federation, the United States, the United Kingdom and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). A third session is being organized for this December. As Committee members know, next year we will host on the territory of Kazakhstan the IAEA's first-ever international low-enriched uranium bank, and we thank the Agency and sponsor States for their support. We also stress the importance of the movement of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons that began in Oslo, and was carried on in Nayarit and Vienna, which is increasingly being recognized.

We are seriously concerned that the eight annex 2 countries have not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As a Chair, together with Japan, of the Conference on Article XIV, we will make the utmost effort to ensure that the Treaty enters into force.

We strongly condemn the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and consider them to be totally unacceptable, since they are blatant violations of relevant Security Council resolutions. We are part of the international monitoring system and work closely with the CTBT Organization in Central Asia. With the assistance of Norway and a number of other countries, we established the Kazakhstan National Data Centre in Almaty. We will also host and support the Abolish Testing: Our Mission project, which is an electronic global-advocacy campaign calling on world leaders to ban nuclear tests and weapons. I call on Committee members to join this project online and add their voices.

We will again chair The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and introduce a draft General Assembly resolution this month to stress the importance of the universal application of the Hague Code.

In conclusion, without putting too much emphasis on the various initiatives put forward by my country in the field of disarmament, let me remind Committee members of our plea to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons by 2045, the year of the United Nations centenary. Further, since security and development are closely interconnected, the leadership of my country has also called for a transfer of 1 per cent of the defence budgets of member States to the special United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

Finally, when my country takes its seat on the Security Council in 2017, we will strive to work even more robustly for disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Chair: I shall now call on those delegations wishing to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs mentioned my country in his statement. I regret that he did so, as he is well aware that information he cited is not contained in the final report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. It is mentioned only in the third report (S/2016/738).

In that regard, we have numerous comments on the third report of the Mechanism. I should like to mention here, as a non-exhaustive example, that the

report does not provide tangible proof. All medical reports had been certified on the events mentioned in the report. That is one of the main shortcomings of the report. My country submitted numerous requests to the verification mechanism for follow-up to the events. Indeed, there have been more than 17 such events where armed militant groups used chemical weapons, yet the verification mechanism refused to investigate those particular events. As a pretext, it claimed that its mandate did not allow it to do so.

Furthermore, the representative of the European Union mentioned my country regarding the same issue. I should like to remind members that we have always condemned any use of chemical and toxic materials as chemical weapons in any part of the world. What was mentioned in the European Union representative's statement is clear, because the European Union is well aware that the European Union provided those groups — in particular Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front, as well as other groups that work there — with chemical weapons to be used in Syria. The groups have all sorts of weapons available to them, and the European Union is well aware of the direct links between those groups and countries in the European Union and other countries that are trying to join the European Union. They have thereby facilitated the transfer of terrorists from Europe to Syria and provided them with chemical weapons and chemical materials.

There is also the fact that the airports of European Union States are being used to transfer and transport weapons and munitions to countries that border Syria in order to transfer them to Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front. That is proof that member States of the European Union — and they are aware of this — are participating in and assisting terrorist groups by providing them with conventional weapons and chemical weapons, including cluster munitions.

Mr. Ulyanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall be very brief. I should just like to inform my colleagues that this morning, Moscow time, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, signed a decree to suspend action on the agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States on the disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defence purposes. That decision was taken because of the unfriendly steps taken by the United States with regard to our country.

The decision of the President of the Russian Federation pertains only to bilateral agreements between our countries and does not bear any relation to the international disarmament agenda. Nonetheless, in order to avoid any unreliable interpretation or direct speculation regarding the matter, we would like to explain it. Unfortunately, our time has run out in this meeting, so we will put the full text of our statement on the website of the First Committee. The text will also be accessible on the table in this room.

The only point I should like to make in conclusion is to quote what was said just a few days ago by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergei Lavrov. He said:

“The necessary step that was taken by Russia does not seek to exacerbate the situation with the United States of America. We want to get Washington back to an understanding that imposing sanctions on us in areas where it is painless for the United States, on the one hand, while seeking selective cooperation in other areas where it suits them, on the other, will not work.”

I reiterate that the full text of my statement will be put on the website and will also be on the table at the back of the room.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor, but I need to reply to the statement that was just made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

The United States has been fully committed to cooperating under the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement. We regret Russia's decision to suspend that Agreement unilaterally. The United States believes that the Agreement is in the interests of both the United States and Russia. We believe cooperation on securing nuclear materials and combating nuclear terrorism are in the interests of all nations, including Russia.

This is the latest in a series of steps taken by Russia to end long-standing cooperation on nuclear security and disarmament, including its decision not to participate in the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit, and its unwillingness to continue strategic arms-control reductions. It is also disingenuous of Russia to cite the United States threat to strategic stability as the reason for that decision. The United States seeks a constructive dialogue with Russia on strategic issues, but Russia

continues to engage in destabilizing activities and to suspend cooperation under existing agreements, like the one in question, that promote international security.

The United States has not violated the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement, and any suggestion to the contrary is simply inaccurate. The Agreement allows both sides to hold consultations on alternate methods of disposition. We regret that Russia has rejected offers from the United States to hold consultations on the matter. The United States remains fully committed to meeting its obligations under the Agreement.

Mr. Ulyanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I had wanted to save time, and that is why I did not read out my text in full. I should now like to do so, because my American colleague has rather crudely distorted the facts, not just the assessment of the facts, but the facts themselves.

The situation is that there were two reasons why our President took the aforementioned decision. The main one was because of the unfriendly policies of the United States in imposing economic and political sanctions against us, and so forth. But there was also a second reason, the clear inability and lack of will on the part of the United States to comply fully with its obligations under the Agreement on time.

We agreed with the United States in 2010 that the surplus plutonium would be disposed of by irradiating it in nuclear reactors. That method was chosen to secure the irreversibility of the disposition process, and my country took all of the measures called for under the Agreement. The reactor was built and reached full-power production to burn the surplus weapons-grade plutonium, and the construction of the MOX fuel production facility has also been completed. The United States failed, however, to fulfil its obligations, and the Savannah River MOX fuel production facility is only two-thirds complete. Now the financing for its completion has been stopped. As a result, according to assessments by United States experts, the United States will require an additional 20 to 30 years to begin to implement the Agreement — I reiterate, 20 to 30 years — and Washington was supposed to start implementing the process in 2018.

Under those circumstances, the United States decided, without consulting us and contrary to the Agreement, to unilaterally change the method of plutonium disposition by putting it in salt shafts. That

disposition method is not irreversible. It was rejected by both parties a number of years ago. We will not agree to that method, because, I reiterate, it does not guarantee the irreversibility of the disposition process.

No contacts came through official channels in the United States regarding the desire for consultation. We found out about the unilateral change in the situation from the mass media. One-sided compliance with the Agreement is something that Russia will not agree to. It will not comply unilaterally. We therefore took the decision to suspend the Agreement. If the United States corrects the situation and ensures that the Agreement will be implemented on time by 2018, and not in 2050, then it is possible that we will come back to implementing the Agreement, since we have not withdrawn from it but have only suspended its operational action.

I should just like to add — especially for my colleagues, and so that everybody understands very clearly — that as long ago as a quarter of a century Russia introduced a national moratorium on producing plutonium for weapons production, and that moratorium

is still in force. Furthermore, today's decision by our President is particularly focused on ensuring that surplus weapons-grade plutonium in the Russian Federation will not be used for any weapons purpose. Now the ball is in the American court, and the United States of America needs to prepare to implement the Agreement in the form in which it was concluded and avoid any further unilateral actions.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I shall be very brief on this, as I do not want to waste everyone's time here by getting into the specifics of the various charges that were levied here. Let me just say again that Russia has rejected offers to have consultations on this issue and, if it is very serious about this issue, it knows where to address its concerns. This seems to me to be more like a publicity stunt on behalf of the Russian Federation. Again, I appeal to my Russian colleagues that, if they have serious problems with the United States implementation, they should address them directly to the United States delegation.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.