



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

First Committee

14th meeting

Tuesday, 18 October 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: This morning we will first hear from speakers remaining on the list for the cluster “Other weapons of mass destruction”. Delegations taking the floor are reminded to kindly observe the speaking limits of five minutes for national statements and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of groups. As I noted during our organizational meeting on 30 September (see A/C.1/71/PV.1), delegations with relatively long statements are urged to deliver a concise summary of their texts and submit their full statements in written form for posting on the First Committee web portal, QuickFirst.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): At the heart of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) is a solemn conviction: for the sake of all humankind to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons through the implementation of the Convention. That commitment is coupled with the equally important pledge not to tolerate the possession and use of such heinous weapons, be it by State or non-State actors. The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, is a threat to all of us and calls for a swift response. Inaction is unacceptable.

In August 2013, the Al-Assad regime in Syria launched a deadly chemical-weapon attack with a nerve agent on the opposition-held suburbs of Damascus, killing more than 1,000 people and injuring thousands more. Despite the overwhelming evidence of its continued use of chemical weapons, the regime continues to deny any involvement. Since Syria’s accession to the CWC following that horrific attack three years ago, the international community has collectively sought a full and accurate declaration by that country of its chemical weapons programme and its complete and verifiable destruction.

This past August, the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations, established by Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), released its report finding that the Syrian military was responsible for two instances of confirmed chemical-weapon use in Syria and that the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) was responsible for one additional instance. The attacks attributed to the Syrian military involved barrel bombs dropped from helicopters that released toxic substances — most likely chlorine — in the opposition-controlled areas of Talmenes and Sarmin. An independent and expert international body, the OPCW-United Nations JIM has drawn the same conclusions that the United States reached long ago: that the Syrian regime has systematically and repeatedly used chemical weapons against its people. It is now impossible to deny that the Syrian regime has repeatedly used toxic industrial chemicals as weapons in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

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Our course of action is clear. The international community must stand together to preserve the integrity and viability of the CWC and the international laws, norms and standards against the use of chemical weapons. We must collectively condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime and ISIL and hold the perpetrators of such heinous attacks to account through all available mechanisms, including appropriate action in the OPCW and in the Security Council. In parallel, we must insist that the Syrian regime address outstanding concerns about its chemical-weapons declaration, which the OPCW has attempted for more than two long years to clarify without success due to the intransigence of the Syrian regime.

Hungarian Ambassador Molnár, the President-designate of the upcoming 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 (BWC), presented a statement on behalf of the Foreign Minister of Hungary and the Foreign Ministers of the three BWC depositaries — the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and my country, the United States. That statement underscores the importance that our Governments attach to the BWC and to taking decisions at the upcoming Review Conference to enhance its effectiveness.

The BWC Review Conference takes place at a sobering time. The continuing use of chemical weapons, the stated intentions of non-State actors to obtain biological weapons and the recent conviction in the United Kingdom of an individual attempting to acquire ricin are grim reminders that weapons already condemned by the international community are still used.

The many benefits derived from advances in the life sciences also place biological-weapon capabilities within reach of more State and non-State actors than ever before. The recent Ebola outbreak reminds us of how destructive disease can be and of the importance of developing national and international capacity to detect and respond to outbreaks. States parties should use the upcoming BWC Review Conference to confront those threats by taking stronger action, including through a more effective intersessional programme focused on practical steps.

The United States believes such steps should be taken in the areas of adopting robust national implementation measures and greater transparency; improving coordination among States parties to respond to a suspicious outbreak or biological-weapon attack; assessing the potential impact on the BWC due to science and technology developments; and promoting and coordinating relevant international cooperation and capacity-building. Strengthening the BWC in those areas depends upon adapting the current intersessional process to include more focused expert work, more oversight of the process and an ability for appropriate decision-making between Review Conferences. That would require more time and resources, but those extra resources would improve the BWC's ability to counter biological threats.

Finally, the United States shares the concerns that have been expressed by other States Members of the United Nations regarding the threat of chemical and biological terrorism. Those threats are real, and the United States is of the firm view that they should be addressed in the context of the existing international frameworks; the BWC Review Conference in November presents an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Varma (India): India associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.13). I shall read out an abridged version of my statement, with the full version to be made available on QuickFirst.

India attaches great importance to the two Conventions on chemical and biological weapons as examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament for the total elimination of a specific type of weapon of mass destruction. The success of those Conventions can be a model for the future elimination of the other types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

India reaffirms that disarmament is a primary goal of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and should remain a priority until the complete destruction of all chemical weapons is achieved. India completed the destruction of its chemical-weapons stockpile in 2009, within the stipulated time frame under the CWC. The remaining possessor States should fulfil their obligations within the shortest possible time. The full and effective

non-discriminatory implementation of article XI is essential for the realization of the objective and purpose of the Convention. Universality is also fundamental to the success of the Convention.

India has a large and growing chemical industry. India has the second-largest number of declared facilities and receives one of the largest numbers of inspections by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The provisions of the Convention should be implemented in a manner that does not hinder legitimate activities, especially in countries with large and growing chemical industries, such as India.

It has been our consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, under any circumstance, cannot be justified, and the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable. India contributed to international efforts under the United Nations and the OPCW for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and production facilities and welcomes the progress made so far in their destruction. We have taken note of the recent reports of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW on Syria. We were encouraged by further consultations between Syria and the OPCW with the aim of fully resolving all the outstanding issues in the spirit of trust and cooperation.

My delegation is deeply concerned by the reports of the acquisition of chemical weapons and their delivery systems by terrorist groups and the continuing use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals in Syria and Iraq by terrorists. We believe that the international community must take urgent measures and decisive action to prevent the possibility of any further future use of chemical weapons. My delegation also welcomes international efforts that pave the way for the successful removal of the remaining category 2 chemical-weapon stockpiles from Libya for their destruction abroad.

India remains committed to improving the effectiveness of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and strengthening its implementation and universalization. We share the widespread interest among State parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention through the negotiation and conclusion of a protocol for that purpose. We believe that is necessary

in view of the new challenges to international peace and security emanating from proliferation trends, including the threat posed by terrorists or other non-State actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins for terrorist purposes.

India is actively participating in the preparatory process of State parties leading to the eighth Review Conference, to be held in November 2016, and has supported a robust consultation process as envisaged by resolution 70/74. We would like to thank the Chair-designate for conducting very good consultations.

Along with France, India has submitted a joint working paper on measures to strengthen assistance in article VII of the Convention. And, with the United States, we introduced a joint working paper on strengthening the implementation of article III of the Convention. As part of a broader outreach, India hosted a regional workshop on the eighth Review Conference, in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the European Union, on 29 and 30 August in New Delhi. Those efforts demonstrate India's contribution of concrete proposals on key aspects of the Convention and our willingness to work with partners to build broad-based understanding and agreement that would be of benefit to all States parties to the Convention.

India has in place strong and law-based national export controls consistent with the highest international standards with reference to the control of nuclear, chemical, biological and toxin weapons and their means of delivery. India has filed its reports in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and provided its latest update in 2015. India has made considerable progress in its engagement with the relevant multilateral export-control regimes with a view to seeking full membership, and this year joined the Missile Technology Control Regime and The Hague Code of Conduct.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery poses a growing threat to international peace and security. Italy remains fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Despite all efforts made so far, the existence of proliferation programmes and networks, the difficulty of securing

sensitive materials, the risk posed by terrorists gaining access to them and the establishment of effective export controls remain major challenges. Those challenges remind us of the importance of achieving the universalization of 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). We call upon all States not yet parties to ratify or accede to them without delay or preconditions.

In the run-up to the fourth Review Conference of the CWC, Italy supports efforts aimed at strengthening the inspections regime and ensuring its uniform implementation across the entire membership. The rapid scientific and technological advances, including the convergence of chemistry and biology, call for an increasing level of adaptability of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We attach great importance to the OPCW's capacity and experience in responding at short notice to emergencies and highly value its lessons learned in the chemical and other domains.

As to recent developments, we are satisfied with the successful removal of all chemical-weapon precursors from Libya in an operation coordinated by the OPCW, to which Italy contributed. That was an excellent example of international cooperation, which must be integrated with adequate assistance, such as effective training and capacity-building programmes.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the international community, chemical weapons have, regrettably, been used in recent years. We condemn the perpetrators of such horrific acts in the strongest terms. We commend the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the OPCW and the United Nations for its work carried out in very difficult circumstances. We express deep concern with regard to its third report's findings of the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian armed forces and urge the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its obligations under the CWC. The JIM's conclusions are even more alarming when we consider the unresolved issues in Syria's initial declaration on its chemical-weapon programme. We are also deeply concerned about the conclusions confirming the use of chemical weapons by Da'esh and express our commitment to working with

our partners to mitigate the serious threat posed by the terrorist use of those weapons.

Italy attaches high priority to the full implementation of the BWC. This year's Review Conference will give us an opportunity to strengthen this fundamental instrument. We believe that the relevant Preparatory Committee meetings were very promising in that regard, and we will strive to translate them into tangible results. In particular, we support an incisive intersessional work programme to allow for a more rapid and effective response to emerging threats, as well as strengthening the mechanism to review science and technology developments. Furthermore, Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing involvement of non-State actors in regional crises and conflicts and their possible access to weapons of mass destruction. While we are open to discussing any initiative aimed at strengthening the ability of the international community to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist acts, we consider Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to be a crucial pillar of the global non-proliferation architecture.

We commend the Spanish Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) for his efforts made to achieve a successful outcome of the comprehensive review of this instrument. In order to enhance its tangible impact, we believe it is essential to multiply capacity-building initiatives in those States that lack the necessary means.

Mr. Sano (Japan): The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) has significantly contributed to international security through the destruction of chemical weapons in an effective and verifiable manner. We praise the continued efforts made by the major chemical-weapon-possessor States for the destruction of their stockpiles. With the verifiable destruction of more than 90 per cent of all declared stockpiles, the destruction of chemical weapons remains the core objective of the Convention pending the full completion of the task.

It is essential to strengthen efforts to accelerate the implementation of national measures for preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons. In particular, the increased threat posed by non-State actors, including terrorists, is becoming an imminent issue. We must definitely prevent chemical weapons and toxic chemicals from falling into the wrong hands.

It is also important to combine our efforts towards the universalization of the Convention. Japan will continue to provide expertise and technical assistance to facilitate the accession to the Convention by States that are not yet parties to it. We encourage the remaining four States that have not joined the Convention to reconsider their positions and overcome their internal barriers with a view to early accession.

The use of chemical weapons is not permissible under any circumstances. After a serious and independent investigation, the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations concluded that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had used chemical weapons in two locations, and that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant had conducted a mustard-gas attack in Aleppo. Japan condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons by any actor, as well as the violation of the CWC by a State party to the Convention. We have repeatedly insisted that holding those responsible to account is crucial. Japan is ready to work in the Security Council to that end and will make the necessary contributions to find a way to prevent any further use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Japan welcomed the successful removal of all category 2 chemical weapons from Libya on 27 August and commends the work of the Libyan authorities and the contribution made by the OPCW and relevant countries.

Japan has invested as many human and financial resources as possible to fulfil its obligations under the CWC, in particular in its project to destroy abandoned chemical weapons in China. Although abandoned-chemical-weapon projects entail various challenges and uncertainties, thanks to Chinese cooperation this project has been making consistent progress. In Haerbaling, the largest burial site of abandoned chemical weapons in Jilin province, for example, testing, destruction and excavation operations are actively proceeding with a view to completing the destruction by 2022. With regard to the destruction plan for abandoned chemical weapons with mobile facilities, set forth in the annex to the decision of the sixty-seventh session of the OPCW Executive Council, approximately 87 per cent of the abandoned chemical weapons declared to the OPCW by Japan in 2012 have been destroyed.

At the same time, the challenging situation compels us to conclude that the completion of the

destruction process of all such declared abandoned chemical weapons may go beyond this time frame. The respective abandoned-chemical-weapons offices in Japan and China have started consultations on a future work plan beyond 2016. Japan reaffirms its commitment to continuing its greatest possible efforts in making progress on its projects with the cooperation of the people and the Government of China. Only through such coordination and cooperation can these unprecedented and extremely challenging projects be carried out.

With regard to 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 (BWC) in November, Japan is determined to align with States parties and commits itself to reaching an agreement to strengthen the BWC based on the deliberations we carried out during the intersessional process. Japan commends Ambassador Molnár of Hungary, the President-designate, for his active engagement in the preparations for the Review Conference.

During the Conference we would like to focus on a few points from our national perspective, such as a review of the intersessional process, improving the scientific and technological development review framework, the strengthening of national implementation and promotion of collaboration with international organizations.

We also stress the importance of universalizing the Convention. We welcome the recent accession of Angola and strongly encourage other non-member States to follow. Japan, together with relevant international organizations, academia and research institutes, is ready to provide any possible cooperation and assistance related to the BWC for the States parties in need.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on

Their Destruction (CWC) form important pillars of the international security architecture. Pakistan remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the BWC. We value its contribution to global security and its potential for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of life sciences. Our priorities include the universalization of the Convention and the effective and balanced implementation of all its articles, in particular article X.

Pakistan has been actively engaged in the preparatory process and the upcoming eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. We appreciate the manner in which the preparations for the Review Conference have been made. We are pleased to assist the President as a friend of the Chair on the future intersessional programme and the Implementation Support Unit, and also as one of the Vice-Chairs of the Review Conference.

The Review Conference provides an opportunity to review the implementation of all articles of the Convention and to strengthen them in a balanced and comprehensive manner. Pakistan believes that a credible and sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a legally binding protocol that also addresses verification and implementation of all articles of the Convention.

The Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons is an important operational tool for investigation. However, neither the Mechanism nor voluntary BWC confidence-building measures can substitute for the need for a dedicated verification mechanism for the Convention. In view of the differences of opinion among State parties about the need for a legally binding protocol, my delegation will continue to participate constructively in all discussions in search of progress where consensus is possible and by focusing at the Review Conference on areas that unite us.

Pakistan is co-sponsoring three Review Conference working papers — two submitted by China on the code of conduct for biological scientists and an export-control regime under the BWC framework, and one joint working paper presented by France and India on an assistance database pursuant to article VII. Pakistan has worked extensively in those areas. We have instituted comprehensive legislative, regulatory and

administrative measures, including codes of conduct, to regulate life sciences in Pakistan, enhance biosafety and biosecurity regulations and strengthen our export controls on biological agents and toxins. Pakistan's robust export-control regime has taken on board the best international standards.

Pakistan remains fully committed to the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention and continues to actively and constructively participate in the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We attach high priority to the Convention's provisions relating to international cooperation and assistance as well as the peaceful uses of chemical technology. We believe that the effective implementation of article XI will result in stronger support in achieving the overall goals of the Convention.

Pakistan continues to conduct basic and advanced regional and international assistance and protection courses. In that regard, the fifth international advanced course on assistance and protection was held in Islamabad in November last year, and the next one will be held in November this year as well.

Pakistan condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere. We welcome the milestones achieved in the destruction of the Libyan and Syrian chemical weapons. We also appreciate the efforts made by the OPCW and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

The importance of unhindered legitimate trade in chemical and biological agents, equipment and technology among State parties to both those Conventions for peaceful purposes cannot be stressed enough. Pakistan shares the concern that, along with the threat of the possible production, acquisition and use of chemical and biological weapons by States, there is also the danger of their acquisition by non-State actors. We have therefore supported the Russian proposal for a biochemical-terrorism convention at the Conference on Disarmament.

In order to realize the full potential of the regulatory regimes, including export-control measures, national physical protection, international assistance and capacity-building are key tools for preventing non-State actors from acquiring, producing or using such weapons. As a mainstream partner in the global non-proliferation regime, Pakistan has elaborated and implemented an export-control regime that is comprehensive and fully harmonized with international standards, including the

Australia Group. Our comprehensive export-control regime and its effective implementation has been recognized and appreciated by our partners.

Mr. Van Der Kwast (Netherlands): The Netherlands is dismayed at the fact that this year we are once again forced to take up the issue of the Syrian chemical-weapons programme. There are several reasons why we must continue to address it.

First there is the question of the Syrian declaration to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Despite two years of intensive consultations, many questions surrounding the accuracy and completeness of that declaration are still outstanding. It is incumbent upon Syria to resolve this issue and convince the international community that it has declared its entire chemical-weapons programme in full and that it has been completely and irreversibly dismantled.

Secondly, during the past three years, there have been many allegations of continued use of chemical weapons in Syria. The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), established by Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), concluded in its third report that Syria was responsible for two attacks with chemical weapons on its own population and that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant was responsible for one attack. We are therefore no longer talking about alleged use; we are talking about confirmed use. Syria is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and has clearly breached its obligations under the Convention and acted in contravention of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Arguments that this is not the JIM's final report are null and void. The fourth JIM report will not revisit its earlier conclusions. It will only finalize its assessment of the three cases it did not have time to finish previously. It is clear that the international community must react firmly to those heinous acts, and we call on all the members of the Security Council to respond decisively to this violation of international law and the Security Council's own resolution 2118 (2013).

In the light of the what I have mentioned, the Netherlands favours the inclusion of firm language on this issue in the draft resolution on the implementation of the CWC (A/C.1/71/L.61). As the host country of the OPCW, the Netherlands looks forward to the celebration

of the twentieth anniversary of the Organization. We call on the four States that remain outside the Convention to accede to it without delay. Universal adherence would be a fitting birthday present.

We look forward to 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 (BWC). Making sure that that Conference achieves ambitious and lasting results is more important than ever. We have seen that State actors and non-State actors no longer abstain from using chemical weapons. With technological advancements going faster and with faster deployment of biological arms, it is becoming more easily achievable than ever before.

The Netherlands attaches great value to further strengthening the BWC. We therefore focus on, first, promoting universal adherence to the BWC by striving to achieve universal membership through effective national implementation and increasing confidence among States parties; secondly, making sure current developments in the field of science and technology have a central place in the deliberations of the BWC; thirdly, strengthening the intersessional process by giving States parties the power to take binding decisions during this process; and, fourthly, expanding the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), as the mere addition of two staff members already greatly enhances its capacity and ability, which is sorely needed.

In conclusion, the Netherlands calls upon the ISU, the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant institutions to increase their cooperation and coordination in order to enhance the global capacity to combat outbreaks of contagious diseases and to prevent the duplication of efforts. The Ebola outbreak illustrated that need, and positive steps to address the need must be encouraged.

The CWC and the BWC are two indispensable tools in the efforts to fight the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Issues surrounding nuclear weapons often command our full attention, and their importance cannot be underestimated. But biological and chemical arms should never be overlooked in our pursuit of a safer world.

This statement is made in addition to the statement made yesterday by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.61.

Mr. Wroblewski (Poland): In the debate on “Other weapons of mass destruction”, Poland has traditionally drawn particular attention to the issues related to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). We remain strongly committed to the idea of a world free of chemical weapons and support the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in that regard. Unfortunately, almost 20 years after the Convention entered into force, the international community is far from fulfilling this ambitious goal.

What is of the utmost concern is that the bedrock of the Convention, the international norms against the use of chemical weapons, has been seriously undermined during the past two years. It affects the whole CWC regime and the credibility of the OPCW today. Taking this into account, Poland welcomed the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) last year, which established the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to identify those who were involved in the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. One year later, the JIM presented its first findings, which are gravely worrisome. Furthermore, non-State actors have obtained access to some toxic chemicals and may employ them for terrorist purposes. The elimination of chemical-weapons stockpiles is unfinished business, despite significant progress this year with regard to Libyan chemical weapons. Finally, CWC universalization has not yet been fully achieved, which hampers achieving the object and purpose of the Convention.

This is the context in which Poland, as in previous years, introduces its draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.61, on the implementation of the CWC. The key objective of this effort is to ensure clear recognition of the exceptional role of the CWC in the areas of international cooperation, disarmament, prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and protection against them.

The draft resolution must ensure overall support from the international community for a world free of chemical weapons and for the universality and implementation of the CWC in its entirety. The message should be strong and united and encourage us to adopt the draft resolution by consensus. That is what

the OPCW needs as it faces numerous challenges and engages in discussions on its future transformation.

Towards that aim, Poland conducted an open and transparent process, starting with early consultations in The Hague, which were followed by two rounds of discussions in New York. We had to take into account the fact that, due to the complicated political context, the OPCW and other international bodies had not thus far been able to address the biggest challenge to the credibility of the Convention, which flow from the JIM findings. However, the General Assembly and its First Committee must not remain silent with regard to those outcomes. The findings demonstrate that the use of chemical weapons is no longer an abstract idea. We have to condemn in the strongest possible terms such use and send a united signal that those responsible will be held accountable.

Poland was confronted again this year with fundamentally divergent — indeed, contradictory and mutually exclusive — views of Member States. Finding the middle ground proved to be more challenging than ever. As the sole sponsor of the draft resolution, Poland has had to take responsibility for reflecting the current status of implementation of the CWC, while building upon the discussions at the OPCW and in New York. Poland has done its utmost to provide an actual fact-based text. We are fully aware of the dynamic and changeable situation and we will not cease in making efforts aimed at addressing it.

In conclusion, I would like to express our gratitude to all the delegations that participated in the extensive consultations on the draft resolution. Those discussions confirmed the existence of overall political support in all regions for the implementation of all pillars of the Convention, as well as concerns related to the use of chemical weapons. Poland hopes that its efforts as the sponsor will be taken into account and that the draft resolution’s compromise text will be accepted by the First Committee at this demanding time.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We really wanted to believe that together here today we could meet to handle the real problems confronting us and not create new ones. There should be no illusions that everything is interconnected in our world, especially if one bridges the discussions we had on nuclear disarmament with the discussion we are having today on “Other weapons of mass destruction”.

With nuclear weapons it is as though everything is clear. After the nuclear bombing by one State in 1945 of two Japanese towns, and following the great efforts that were undertaken in 1949, a priority was established. Now, together, in the seventh decade since then, we are living without world wars, in strategic security and stability. If we could come to agreement on something more constructive, that would of course be excellent, but the key thing here is to agree and not to impose anything on anyone.

The real problems — the real threats — are growing because of other non-nuclear types of weapons of mass destruction. First, they have to do with the use by militants of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other illegal terrorist groups not only of toxic chemicals but of combat toxins. There is evidence that the terrorists have seized chemical plants and received access to documents on the production of chemical weapons.

It is very sad that, instead of fighting this threat together, some Western countries are making attempts to make unjustified claims against the Government of Syria, which is fighting with dedication against international terrorism on its territory. The pending threats of weapons-of-mass-destruction terrorism are becoming more and more tangible, and we need too work together to counteract them.

Members are all aware that on 1 March this year the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Lavrov, announced an extremely important initiative for today on developing an international convention on biochemical terrorism, which would be known as the “Biochemical Terrorism Convention”, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

We would note in particular that the regime of the future counter-terrorist convention in establishing known common principles shared by all States as they counter weapons-of-mass-destruction terrorism does not undermine but fulfils and adds to already existing international instruments. Together we need to call for a prompt commencement of the talks on the convention with as much involvement as possible of all States, international organizations and other interested parties.

We of course also support new initiatives aimed at increasing the effectiveness of joint actions in combating the growing threat of weapons-of-mass-destruction terrorism. In that regard, we should like to note in particular the proposal of our Indian friends on

holding a separate dedicated summit of States in 2018. It is important to pay greater attention to questions of strengthening already existing mechanisms. We actively participate in the conduct of a comprehensive review of the efforts under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In the end, we look forward to decisions that will help to fulfil the mandate of the resolution not to allow weapons of mass destruction to fall into the hands of terrorists and other non-State actors.

The Russian delegation of course joins in the statement in support of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) presented by the Chair of the upcoming BWC Review Conference, Ambassador Molnár (see A/C.1/71/PV.13). In undertaking firm and consistent steps to look for optimal solutions to all the accumulated problems in the Convention, Russia has made a number of concrete proposals. In particular, our draft decision of the Review Conference calls for the establishment of an open-ended working group with a negotiating mandate. The group’s job will be to develop measures and recommendations to strengthen the Convention and improve its implementation, which will be included in the draft of the appropriate legally binding document.

In developing our initiative, Russia submitted a number of additional proposals. First, we are calling for the establishment of mobile biomedical teams, which could be used both to fight against outbreaks of dangerous epidemics and for investigating instances of the use of biological weapons.

Our second proposal calls for the establishment of a scientific advisory committee for an annual review of accomplishments in the area of biotechnology and for the submission of appropriate consultations by States parties. In that regard, we of course need to have proportional regional representation.

We are prepared to discuss and support other initiatives aimed at strengthening the Convention’s regime. In that context, we would note in particular the constructive proposal of our Chinese friends on establishing an export-control mechanism as part of the BWC. We do not accept attempts to bypass the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which, unlike the BWC, includes a direct prohibition on the use of biological weapons. We call on States that still have reservations on this point to quickly withdraw them.

We view the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction as one of the most representative and successfully operating instruments in the area of multilateral disarmament. Russia consistently fulfils its obligations under the Convention. We have destroyed 95 per cent of all arsenals. We call for the full elimination under international control of all remaining supplies of chemical weapons throughout the world as soon as possible.

In that context, we must note our generally successful contribution in chemical disarmament in Syria. With the help of the international community and under the control of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), we have in fact eliminated the military chemical-capability of Syria. Such a very positive result was achieved thanks to the constructive position of the Syrian Government, which has acted in unprecedented conditions, given the onslaught of international terrorism in the country. We must recognize the obvious, namely, that in chemical disarmament not one OPCW member State works with such dedication.

The chemical dossier in Syria has stopped being an emergency situation. The remaining issues should be considered as part of the regular agenda of the OPCW without unnecessary politicization. This approach should be the normal unpoliticized course of work of the Organization.

We have a whole range of serious questions on the justification of the conclusions made by the experts of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. We have stated this on many occasions in informal consultations on draft resolutions of the General Assembly and, as a result, we have circulated a working document. The diversion into national issues draws attention away from other issues that are equally important for OPCW and gives a distorted picture of the true situation in Syria itself. If the draft resolution is not duly rectified, then it is unlikely that Russia will be able to support it.

Once again I call on all responsible States to work together on the real, existing problems and not to create new ones.

Ms. Mancotywa-Kumsha (South Africa): Given the devastating humanitarian consequences associated with the use of weapons of mass destruction, no cause

could ever justify the use of such weapons by any actor under any circumstances. For my delegation, the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction remains one of our key priorities. That includes achieving the universality and full and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) as well as transparent, irreversible and verifiable progress towards nuclear disarmament.

South Africa recognizes the role of the CWC in enhancing regional and international peace and security as set out in the Convention. In that regard, we welcome the significant progress achieved in the destruction of chemical weapons and chemical-weapon-production facilities across the globe. Approximately 93 per cent of more than 70,000 metric tons of deadly chemical-weapon agents have been destroyed.

South Africa commends the work of the international community in supporting the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to achieve a world free of chemical weapons. Notwithstanding the progress made, much work remains to be done. Many old and abandoned chemical weapons continue to present hazards for people and the environment, as well as technical challenges for their elimination. We are further concerned that, parallel to the stated achievements, new and emerging security challenges threaten to undermine the disarmament gains that the OPCW has made. We are especially concerned by reports of alleged use of chemical weapons, including by non-State actors.

We welcome the progress made by major possessor State parties to destroy their remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles, abandoned chemical weapons and old chemical weapons. In the case of chemical-weapon stockpiles, we take note that all possessor States, including the Russian Federation and the United States of America, are on track to meeting the planned completion dates to destroy their remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles.

We also welcome the announcement by the OPCW on the removal of precursor chemicals from Libya. We furthermore welcome the progress made towards the

elimination of Syria's chemical-weapon programme, including the destruction of its chemical weapons and the significant progress made towards the destruction of its chemical-weapon-production facilities in fulfilment of its obligations under the Convention and the relevant Executive Council decisions.

We note with concern the conclusions of the latest report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and look forward to receiving its next report. We expect that the JIM will conduct its mission in a professional, objective and impartial manner.

While being positively disposed to the current debate on the future priorities and role of the OPCW beyond 2025, the role of non-State actors in relation to the CWC, the work of the OPCW Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, as well as discussions around the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons, we believe that in the short term the objectives and primary focus of the OPCW must remain on complete disarmament and the elimination of all declared chemical weapons under strict and effective international control, in accordance with the Convention.

In that context, we welcome the establishment of an open-ended working group on the future priorities of the OPCW as an informal mechanism for receiving, discussing, prioritizing, elaborating and integrating ideas and proposals from State Parties and the Secretariat on the future priorities of the OPCW on any aspect of the Convention or developments relevant to it. South Africa is honoured to be part of the team responsible for developing methods and a programme of work in consultation with State parties.

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

Besides the obvious security benefits of the BWC, the Convention also includes important cooperation and assistance provisions that could strengthen the international community's ability to combat the debilitating impact of disease on the health of people and on the socioeconomic development of countries. South Africa believes that greater international coordination and assistance is required to alleviate the burden of

threat posed by biological weapons. Initiatives such as the exchange in biological sciences and technology, the promotion of capacity-building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis, and the containment of infectious diseases, among many others, could be further explored.

With the upcoming 2016 Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, South Africa will work constructively towards an outcome that will strengthen the Convention and its balanced implementation, including through an enhanced intersessional process and an appropriately resourced Implementation Support Unit. In that regard, South Africa actively contributed to the discussions on article VII of the Convention by submitting a working paper on procedures for assistance under this article, which also suggested possible guidelines for requesting assistance. In addition, South Africa also submitted working papers on the future planning of the Implementation Support Unit and the functional structures for the BWC to contribute to a substantive outcome at the Review Conference.

In conclusion, the universalization of the BWC and the CWC is crucial for the effective eradication of all biological and chemical weapons. We therefore call upon those countries not yet party to the Conventions to join without delay.

Mr. Pollard (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom condemns any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere. The ongoing use of chemical weapons in Syria is appalling. Since the First Committee last met, there have been more than 100 allegations of chemical-weapon use there. The overwhelming majority of those are allegations against the Al-Assad regime. All credible allegations that chemical weapons have been used must be investigated, and any perpetrators who are identified must be held accountable.

After a year of painstaking investigation by the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) into allegations of chemical-weapon use in Syria, the Mechanism has published its clear findings. First, the Syrian Arab Armed Forces used chemical weapons in Talmenes, Syria, on 21 April 2014. Secondly, the Syrian Arab Armed Forces used chemical weapons in Sarmin, Syria, on 16 March 2015. Thirdly, Da'esh used chemical weapons in Marea, Syria, on 21 August 2015. We wait to hear at the end

of the month whether there will be additional findings of responsibility in a further three cases where the OPCW has confirmed chemical weapons were used. Furthermore, the Syrian regime's actions in using barrel bombs containing chlorine, as clearly stated by the JIM, are a clear breach of Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013), 2209 (2015) and 2235 (2015), as well as Syria's obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

Members of the First Committee have long said that those responsible for using chemical weapons must be held to account. Now that the use of chemical weapons has clearly been attributed to a State Member of the United Nations, we have to act on those words. To do otherwise risks normalizing the use of chemical weapons and undermining the credibility of the United Nations, the OPCW and the wider international system. It is therefore essential that we have a robust international response. We must work together to see justice for the victims of these heinous weapons and to ensure that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, stops.

The use by Da'esh of sulfur mustard is also a war crime. Confirmation by the OPCW of chemical-weapons use by non-State actors in Iraq underlines the total disregard by such groups of the rule of international law and norms of behaviour. It serves only to reinforce our commitment to defeating Da'esh and all that it stands for.

Beyond the use of chemical weapons in Syria, we remain concerned about the outstanding issues highlighted by the OPCW in July, namely, that there continue to be serious gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in Syria's Chemical Weapons Convention declaration. The Syrian Government's dishonesty and deliberate obstruction in its dealings with both the JIM and the OPCW lead us to believe that Syria has sought to preserve its chemical-weapons capabilities. Unless the international community responds robustly, we are likely to see the retention of these capabilities and the continued use of toxic chemicals as weapons.

There are also positive aspects with regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention. It has almost achieved universality, and we urge the remaining States Members of the United Nations that have not yet taken the positive action to join the Convention to do so without delay. The United Kingdom supports the strengthening of the Convention, including full and effective national

implementation and maintaining the credibility of its verification regime. In particular, we welcome ongoing efforts to tackle the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors through full implementation and the strengthening of existing mechanisms.

Indeed, the removal of Libya's remaining chemical-weapons precursors earlier this year was an excellent example of how these mechanisms can be successful. The Libyan Government of National Accord, working with the OPCW and the international community, was able to remove the remaining chemicals from Libya for safe and timely destruction in a third country. The United Kingdom was honoured to play a major role both in practical assistance and in encouraging international efforts to assist Libya and the OPCW to achieve this end, including in the Security Council.

We would like to underline our support for the statement made yesterday by the President-designate of the Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), His Excellency Ambassador Molnár, who spoke on behalf of the Foreign Ministers of Hungary, the United States, the Russian Federation and my own country, on the Convention (see A/C.1/71/PV.13). The BWC Review Conference next month provides an important opportunity for us to make changes that the Convention needs to improve its effectiveness and implementation. We will work constructively to realize that goal.

The prevention of the proliferation of ballistic missiles is of the utmost importance to the United Kingdom. Such proliferation in tandem with the illicit development of weapons of mass destruction poses a grave danger to regional and global peace and security. In this regard, we remain deeply concerned by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued development of its ballistic-missile programmes. Most recently, on 5 September, we saw the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conduct launches using ballistic-missile technology and, on 9 September, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea carried out its fifth nuclear test. These actions are in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions. We welcome the strong international condemnation of this launch and test, along with other recent provocations. In particular we welcome the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) on 2 March.

In early March this year, Iran conducted a series of short- and medium-range ballistic-missile launches. These launches are wholly inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015), and the United Kingdom along with partners has written to the Security Council to express our serious concern.

As we know, the ballistic-missile threat is not limited to a particular region and it is growing. A strong multilateral response is required to combat this threat. In this regard, the United Kingdom recognizes and praises the extremely important work of the Missile Technology Control Regime and The Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic-missile proliferation. The United Kingdom welcomes India's recent accession to both these regimes, which will strengthen substantially their effectiveness and objectives.

Finally, I wish to mention Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Twelve years after the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004), the comprehensive review provides an important opportunity to assess and strengthen its implementation. We hope the review will lead to a new Security Council resolution later this year to reaffirm the importance of the resolution and support its full implementation.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement earlier in this thematic discussion (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

We join others in voicing concerns over the resurgence of the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction involving chemical, biological and radioactive materials. While we note progress in disposing of the declared chemical-weapons stockpiles in the Syrian Arab Republic and Libya, it is unsettling that reports of the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations found chemical-weapons use in the Syrian territory. Our concerns are aggravated by the knowledge that terrorist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and others are in possession of and may have resorted to using toxic chemicals or combinations thereof against civilians. We also note that despite the near universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), a handful of countries, widely believed to have

chemical-weapons capacity and stockpiles, have yet to accede to the treaty.

Bangladesh remains committed to the complete cessation of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. The Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention has long been in place. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has already conducted a number of inspections in Bangladesh's declared chemical-industry facilities that use certain dual-use chemicals. Bangladesh hosted the sixteenth Asian Chemical Congress from 18 to 21 November 2015, with a view to promoting safe chemical management and storage for peaceful uses.

The fortieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) last year has given further impetus towards promoting the universalization of the treaty. We welcome the recent accessions by Angola and Côte d'Ivoire and encourage the remaining signatories and non-signatories to follow suit.

We look forward to constructive and forward-looking discussions during the Eighth Review Conference of the Convention scheduled to be held in Geneva next month. We underscore the importance of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article X of the Convention through enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in toxins, biological agents, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. We reaffirm our support for the Non-Aligned Movement proposal for resuming and concluding negotiations on a legally binding instrument for addressing the existing gaps in effective verification of compliance with the Convention provisions.

Bangladesh has advanced work on developing a national implementing legislation for the Convention. Bangladesh recognizes the need for further strengthening the BWC Implementation Support Unit so that it effectively responds to various capacity-building needs of States parties, especially those in resource-constrained settings.

Similarly, we stress that it is important that the ongoing review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and its successor resolutions seriously consider the possibility of enhancing the capacity of the concerned Panel of Experts

to respond to Member States' requests for technical assistance. We see value in the Panel's engagement with national efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials and technologies.

The recent review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy reaffirmed the importance of preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and related materials by terrorists. Accordingly, it has created a basis for enhancing the United Nations inter-agency coordination in this regard through a dedicated working group under the auspices of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. The working group's current initiative of strengthening the United Nations coordinated response to exigencies resulting from a possible bioterrorist attack is a step in the right direction. We also encourage further work by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, inter alia, on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk-mitigation measures, with a focus on emerging technological capabilities such as robotics and artificial intelligence potentially being used as a means of delivery by terrorists and other non-State actors.

In conclusion, we reiterate our interest in further discussions on the recent proposal by the Russian Federation to commence multilateral negotiations on possible international legal instruments on preventing chemical terrorism and bioterrorism.

Mr. Halter (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): For the fifth year in a row, we are witnessing the repeated yet unacceptable use of chemical weapons in the conflict in Syria. It is high time to stop these violations and give effect to international law and uphold the universal norm prohibiting chemical weapons.

Switzerland took note of the third report of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Investigative Mechanism (see S/2016/738), which concludes that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces used chlorine in two of the six investigated cases, while the self-proclaimed Islamic State group used sulfur mustard in one of them. The investigation and its conclusions, which are based on the findings of the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), are factual and impartial. Switzerland was actively involved in both the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Fact-Finding Mission through support provided by the Spiez

Laboratory. We condemn in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons by any party to the conflict in Syria.

Despite the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the destruction of its declared stockpiles, the involvement of the Syrian Arab Armed Forces indicates an unprecedented breach of the country's obligations under the Convention. Likewise, the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors is a disturbing development that the OPCW and its States parties must address. The national implementation of the provisions of the CWC by its States parties and the strengthening of the OPCW's capabilities are essential requirements for tackling the challenges of chemical terrorism.

Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and other serious violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable. To this end, Switzerland reiterates its demand that the Security Council refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court in order to prosecute these crimes and bring all perpetrators to justice.

Switzerland commends the efforts of the OPCW and its States parties in relation to the removal and the commencement of the destruction of Libya's remaining chemical weapons. The Libyan situation shows how important it is for the OPCW to adapt to new threats and challenges and maintain the first-rate expertise it has acquired throughout the years in terms of the destruction of chemical weapons and its verification.

Like the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) is a key pillar of the international security and disarmament architecture. It will be important that the upcoming Eighth Review Conference take the decisions necessary to ensure that the Convention remains relevant in a rapidly changing environment.

The task ahead of us is significant, and we welcome the fact that a number of proposals for improvement have been made in the framework of the Conference's preparatory process. While many issues need to be addressed, that of the BWC intersessional process will certainly have to be an important focus of our attention at the Review Conference. The intersessional

process has been established to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. However, the current set-up has not matched expectations and proven to be unable to meet its mandate of taking effective action. The process could be significantly improved in a way to make the BWC more action-oriented and reinforce its impact. To this end, proposals such as providing the Meeting of States Parties with the authority to take decisions on clearly defined issues or replacing the annual meeting of experts with dedicated meetings on key topics should be seriously considered.

Switzerland is particularly convinced that an undertaking as complex as a thorough examination of developments in science and technology and their impact on the provisions of the Convention is extremely difficult to carry out in the existing intersessional format and the imposed time frame. A dedicated technical process mandated to review advances in science and technology would provide a more robust technical foundation on which to base our policy considerations in order to ensure the continued effective implementation and relevance of the Convention.

We call on all States parties to the BWC to seize the opportunity of the Review Conference in November to take the Convention forward and make it fit for the twenty-first century.

Mr. McConville (Australia): The international community must remain steadfast in countering the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, and we need to remain resolute that there are no circumstances justifying the use of such weapons. Tragically, atrocities still occur. Australia remains deeply concerned about ongoing reports of chemical-weapons use in Syria. The United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Investigative Mechanism found in its third report (see S/2016/738) that the Syrian Government was responsible for using chemical weapons against its own people in 2014 and 2015, and throughout this year further reports of chemical attacks have been brought to the attention of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact-finding Mission.

There is no doubt that the Syrian Government has violated international law, including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and Security Council resolution

2118 (2013). We also note that the Joint Investigative Mechanism report found that Da'esh had used chemical weapons. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by any party to this conflict.

We call on the international community to redouble efforts to eliminate completely remaining chemical-weapons stockpiles and production capabilities, to prevent the acquisition, production and use of chemical weapons, and to hold perpetrators accountable. Australia will continue working with others to ensure the realization of OPCW priorities, in particular preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

We must continue to work collaboratively to adjust policies and regulations to reflect the constantly evolving new threats and technologies in the field of weapons of mass destruction more broadly, including through robust export controls. The Australia Group brings together 42 members committed to harmonizing export controls to prevent rogue States and terrorists from obtaining what they need to build chemical and biological weapons. Through the regular meetings of the Australia Group, which we chair, we collaborate on new ways to curb chemical and biological weapons. But if we are to succeed in this task, we will need the help of all countries. That is why Australia Group members are working closely with non-members, including those in our region, to share best practices and address how to strengthen our efforts aimed at preventing the spread and use of these weapons.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) not only underpins the international norms against biological weapons but also facilitates global efforts to promote the peaceful uses of the life sciences. But rapid advances in biosciences and biotechnology continue to make the pursuit of a biological-weapons programme ever more feasible for a growing number of countries, if they were to decide on such a regrettable course of action.

Against this background Australia, as Chair of the Western Group in the BWC, remains committed to strengthening the Convention. Our immediate challenge is to ensure that the BWC Review Conference starting next month in Geneva will unite us in our common aim of making this world a safer place. In collaboration

with Pakistan, we will be using our good offices as facilitators of a future intersessional programme and in examining the Implementation Support Unit to assist our capable President-designate, Ambassador György Molnár, in achieving a successful outcome. We urge all delegations to work collaboratively towards that end.

Australia is doing its part to help build a response capability to respond to alleged use of a biological-weapons attack by hosting the first skills-training course of the Secretary-General's Mechanism in our region this week. At the high-level panel last week, High Representative Kim Won-soo underlined the importance of this response capability (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

Finally, Australia welcomes the leadership demonstrated by Spain during the current comprehensive review process of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We urge all States Members of the United Nations to fulfil their obligations under resolution 1540 (2004). The resolution remains central in combating the challenge of weapons-of-mass-destruction proliferation, and we look forward to the outcomes of the review process later in the year.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to remind delegations to kindly limit their statements to five minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.13). Speaking in my national capacity, I would like to add the following remarks.

Ireland regards all weapons of mass destruction — biological, chemical and nuclear — as an existential threat to global security and humankind. Equally, we regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC); and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction as key instruments in the international community's efforts to achieve a world free of all weapons of mass destruction. We call strongly on those remaining States that have not yet joined these international instruments to accede to them and to complete their universalization. More than 100 years

from the first use of a weapon of mass destruction, it is beyond time for us to consign these weapons to history.

We need only look at the appalling situation in Syria to see the compelling arguments for action in this respect. The civilian population of Syria is not only suffering from devastating humanitarian harm through the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of conventional weapons, but it has also been the subject of chemical-weapons attacks by both the Syrian Armed Forces and Da'esh, as identified in the third report of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Investigative Mechanism (see S/2016/738).

Ireland welcomed Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013 and was pleased to support, in its national capacity, the international community's efforts to remove and destroy the Syrian Government's declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. However, we are greatly disturbed by the evidence of continued use of such weapons in the country. Ireland reiterates its call to refer possible war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Those responsible for these crimes must be held accountable.

With respect to biological weapons, the upcoming Review Conference provides us with an invaluable opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen our commitment to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Developments since the last Review Conference, such as the outbreak of the Ebola virus, have clearly shown us that biological threats do not discriminate among victims, nor do they respect borders. We must do all that we can as global partners to ensure effective disease-monitoring, detection, control and prevention. A critical step in this regard is the full and effective implementation of the BWC.

We look forward to engaging with experts, non-governmental organizations and scientists at the upcoming Review Conference in line with established practice. We are also committed to ensuring the widest possible representation and have therefore provided sponsorship funding to enable the voices of as many States parties as possible to be heard and to contribute to the Review.

Ireland believes that it is essential for the Review Conference to make real and sustained progress in relation to the intersessional process, reinforcement of the Implementation Support Unit and the science-and-

technology review framework, as well as effective domestic implementation measures. We look forward to the outcome of the Review Conference and a strengthened fit-for-purpose Convention.

As part of our practical contribution to countering weapons of mass destruction, the Irish Defence Forces, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross, has for the past two years delivered training for aid workers in surviving the effects of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attack. We hope to continue with the delivery of similar training courses in the future.

A further compelling reason for working to strengthen and reinforce our weapons-of-mass-destruction conventions are the well-substantiated reports that some non-State actor groups are seeking to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. These developments should reinforce the resolve of the global community to adhere to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and its strong obligations on all States to prevent non-State actors from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction. Ireland fully supports the comprehensive review of resolution 1540 (2004) and favours a strong restatement of the Security Council's support for resolution 1540 (2004), including through a further Security Council resolution.

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime with regard to means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction is another key priority for Ireland. The proliferation of ballistic missiles is a continued threat to peace and security, a threat that has been underscored by the recent tests carried out by North Korea. Ireland reiterates its condemnation of all such tests and the need to strengthen international efforts to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

Ireland is an active supporter of the Missile Technology Control Regime, which, through effective export controls and the sharing of information, contributes strongly to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Ireland is also a strong supporter of The Hague Code of Conduct as the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument in this arena. Ireland welcomes recent adherents to the Code and calls on all non-subscribing States to adhere to this Code of Conduct without further delay.

We maintain the view that dialogue and building confidence among all stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree on arrangements for a

meaningful conference, as decided by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We deeply regret that progress on this crucial issue has stalled, but we want to take this opportunity to call upon all parties to work together towards full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to achieve what is a common commitment and common goal, contributing to peace and stability for future generations.

Ms. Ioualalen (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, Nigeria and Tunisia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

Algeria reiterates its unwavering position that the existence of weapons of mass destruction of all types poses a serious threat to humankind and that one of our priorities is the total elimination of these lethal weapons in order to strengthen peace, security and stability in the world. Securing the universality of the various treaties and conventions on weapons of mass destruction is therefore an extremely important factor towards achieving a world free of such weapons and the threat of their use.

My country once again expresses its satisfaction at the results that have been attained in the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, which is the sole international instrument banning a complete category of weapons of mass destruction while seeking to develop the peaceful use of chemical materials. In this respect, Algeria calls on all parties concerned, including parties to the Convention, to speed up the destruction of their chemical-weapons stockpiles during the mandated periods. We categorically reject any use of chemical weapons by any party and for any reason.

My country also underlines the importance of developing international cooperation in chemical activities for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in particular with regard to lifting restraints and facilitating chemical-technology transfer to developing countries in order to help expand their economies.

With respect to biological weapons, Algeria underlines the importance of the implementation of all articles of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on

Their Destruction (BWC), in order to attain its objectives. We welcome the accession of Angola to the BWC this year. Accordingly, we would like to emphasize once again that it is extremely important for us to conclude a legally binding instrument that addresses all the articles of the Convention without discrimination and in a comprehensive and balanced manner and to strengthen them in particular where it concerns oversight of the implementation of the Convention. We look forward to balanced and satisfactory results during the work of the Review Conference that has been organized for the end of this year.

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

Algeria also stresses the importance of making every effort to stop the emergence of any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction or new systems thereof. This could be done through the revitalization of the role of the Conference on Disarmament and formulating recommendations on negotiations on weapons of mass destruction that have not been determined yet, in particular the known ones, such as radiological and phosphorus-based weapons.

My delegation supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones free of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world as part of efforts aimed at non-proliferation, disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security regionally and internationally. In this context, we voice our concern about the various obstacles that are obstructing the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East despite the fact that 20 years have already elapsed since a resolution on this issue was adopted in 1995 at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We are indeed concerned that no progress has been made on this extremely important issue.

Mr. Fares (Libya) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, my delegation supports the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.13). In addition, I would like to make the following comments on the cluster under discussion.

First, the Libyan agency that oversees the application of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) in

our country is the National Authority for the CWC. Libya has declared its intention to rid itself of all of its chemical weapons in accordance with international rules and regulations. The first stage of our activities, involving the destruction of our sulfur mustard stockpiles, was initiated in October 2010. Although those activities encountered obstacles, they were resumed in 2012. A national programme for the destruction of all stockpiles in Libya was then formulated, followed by a national plan that included the establishment of mechanisms and arrangements for destroying the stockpiles, including the prioritization of category-1 materials and using appropriate technology that respects both the principles of general safety and the environment. The destruction was undertaken under the auspices of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Accordingly, by May 2013 Libya was able to destroy the bulk of its sulfur mustard stockpiles, which were held in mobile containers. This effort was completed with the assistance and under the supervision of inspectors from the OPCW. In 2014, we destroyed munitions and chemical bombs containing mustard gas. To that end, we benefited from the logistical help and technical assistance of various members of the CWC. Today, we can declare that Libyan soil is totally free of all forms of usable chemical weapons. The OPCW confirmed that status in May 2014.

Libya subsequently addressed the issue of precursors, which are included under category 2 because they have the potential for dual use. They have to be destroyed because they are connected to the manufacture of some types of chemical weapons. We were able to make great advances in the destruction of those precursors so as to ensure that they could not be diverted to any use or cause harm to the environment.

Since early 2016, it has not been possible to pursue all elements of the programme. However, in order to prevent any negative consequences for international, regional or local security, our authorities have taken pre-emptive measures to that end. We have called upon the international community and the Security Council to assist us logistically and technically pursuant to our international cooperation framework so that we could transport our remaining stockpiles outside Libya by sea. This was done in accordance with international standards so that these stockpiles could be destroyed abroad. Nevertheless, the effort was carried out in the presence of representatives of Libya.

Finally, on 27 August, we safely and securely transferred approximately 500 tons of chemical precursors outside Libya, following a plan formulated under the supervision of our National Authority and with the assistance of Danish ships, which transported these items to the port of Bremen, Germany.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that all our efforts have been carried out with great professionalism, thanks to the work of local and international technicians.

Mr. Lomonaco Tonda (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. The humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons and their indiscriminate effects primarily affect innocent civilians. That is why achieving general and complete disarmament continues to be the greatest desire and objective of humankind.

Mexico, while reiterating its historic and firm commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, recognizes the progress made by the United Nations in establishing the highest standards in that regard. It is therefore crucial that we enhance the implementation of such international disarmament non-proliferation and international humanitarian law instruments as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Furthermore, we must strengthen the regimes established under those treaties as the best way for States and the international community as a whole in order to contribute to preventing the use and the proliferation of toxic chemical substances or biological materials, and thereby from being used for hostile purposes or for terrorism.

The Biological Weapons Convention, which is the first United Nations treaty negotiated to prohibit an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, is one of the most important pillars of the international disarmament, non-proliferation and global public health regime. This year marks the forty-first anniversary of its entry into force as well as the holding of the eighth BWC Review Conference. We should seize this opportunity to reach at least minimum agreements that will help to create the necessary tools to ensure the

implementation of and compliance with this important disarmament instrument.

Also necessary is greater multisectoral coordination that goes beyond defence and military systems in order to address risks to international security and human security in such areas as global health, biosafety and biosecurity, and that allows us respond to threats of use or the use of biological weapons by any actor in any part of the world. For Mexico, it is crucial that the Biological Weapons Convention create synergies with such other entities as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Organization for Animal Health as well as other regional and international mechanisms relevant to the full and effective implementation of the Convention. It should also help to formulate sustainable public policies, give greater certainty to the international community and keep these technologies and these types of weapons from falling into unauthorized hands.

The international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and international humanitarian law are sustained and reflected in the Chemical Weapons Convention and its monitoring body, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which has brought the contemporary international community to a historic, unprecedented milestone, namely, the near-complete physical elimination of all the chemical weapons in the world. Even if we are not yet close to achieving the ultimate goal, the OPCW has made progress in achieving disarmament and embodying the spirit and central goals of the work of the United Nations since its inception.

Universally implemented international control — whose reach, obligations and verification system represent the highest standard and golden rule of disarmament verification — make the OPCW the best example of how legal instruments and international organizations should function in order to build a peaceful and secure world, sustained by law and reason and not by weapons of mass destruction.

Given the importance of this progress, Mexico has expressed its concern about the report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism's report (see S/2016/738) that there is evidence of at least three incidents in Syria involving the use of chemical weapons that allows for the identification of their perpetrators. It is unacceptable that these incidents of the alleged use of such weapons are proliferating. Mexico reiterates

that the use of chemical weapons by any actor under any circumstance is prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention and under international law and must be condemned without hesitation by the international community.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to highlight our support for the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Tunisia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament identified by consensus the priority of ridding the world of all weapons of mass destruction, while paying particular attention to the attainment of the first and higher objective of nuclear disarmament. The accession by Israel to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear Party would therefore undoubtedly contribute to attaining the universality of the Treaty, build confidence and strengthen regional security and the credibility of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Israel's long-sought accession would be an unprecedented opportunity for us to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Israel is the only State of the region that has not ratified any relevant international treaty on the three types of weapon of mass destruction — chemical, biological and nuclear.

We should also like to remind the international community of its ethical and political responsibilities towards holding the conference that has been postponed since 2012. Accordingly, pursuant to the principle of agreement and consensus among countries of the region, we should be able to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Over the past 12 years and since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is designed to stop non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction of all kinds, the world has become a far more complicated place in the light of frightening new international security challenges. The scope of action of terrorist groups has expanded, including the use of chemical weapons — for example, when the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant used them barbarously in Syria to cause great suffering to the peoples of the region — and the threat they pose to the world and our region is daunting. The most

important thing for us now is to consider how we can counter the horrible crimes associated with the acquisition of such weapons by terrorist groups, leading to catastrophic scenarios.

The year 2012 was decisive in that respect because the priority was to complete the review of 1540 (2004) with a view to implementing it. During that process, the international community expected the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) to consider everything that had occurred since 2004, evaluate where we are now, look forward to developing a comprehensive and effective formula for obtaining a future and a world that is free of nuclear, chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapons, and stop terrorists from acquiring them. It is important for us to implement resolution 1540 (2004) locally, nationally and regionally, by making necessary and practical recommendations as part of the work of the 1540 Committee and its four areas of work.

Finally, I reiterate once again that Egypt will spare no effort to strengthen the methods of work of the Committee and develop its performance as part of our work under the resolution 1540 (2004) or as part of any other mechanism that could be of service to this track and objective, including the Security Council working group on cooperation with international organizations, of which is Egypt currently the coordinator.

Once again we renew our support for and confidence in the Chair as he leads the Committee this year.

Mr. Li Chunjie (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has always attached great importance to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) in all its aspects and made positive contributions to enhance the universality and effectiveness of the Convention by donating to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), providing protective equipment and co-hosting workshops and a seminar.

China has assisted other States parties in building their capacities to implement the Convention. China has always opposed the principle of political settlement on the Syrian issue, actively participated in relevant international efforts, provided experts and facilities for the verification of the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, and taken part in jointly escorting the shipment of Syria's chemical weapons, thus making an important

contribution to resolving the crisis and promoting the destruction of the country's chemical weapons.

Abandoned chemical weapons are much more harmful to people and the environment than chemical-weapons stockpiles. Even today the large quantities of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China continue to pose a grave threat of harm to the lives and property of people and to ecological and environmental safety in China. Chemical weapons abandoned by the Japanese have been discovered on the territory of China at more than 90 locations in 19 provinces. Since the Japanese side has not yet provided information on the abandonment and burial of its abandoned chemical weapons, they can be discovered only when an accident occurs or by pure chance.

The destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan falls within the purview of the Convention, particularly with regard to its core objectives and credibility and in terms of Japan's international legal obligations. Nevertheless, Japan recently officially informed the eighty-second session of the Executive Council of the OPCW that it will not be able to complete the destruction of its abandoned chemical weapons using mobile destruction facilities by the end of 2016, which was the deadline set by a relevant decision of the OPCW Executive Council. This is the third time that Japan has failed to meet its deadline for the destruction of its abandoned chemical weapons, just as it did in 2007 and 2012.

China expresses its deep regret over Japan's failure to provide the necessary information on and complete the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons by the deadline. We also express our serious concern about Japan's repeated delays. China once again strongly urges Japan to complete the destruction as soon as possible so as to return clean land to China at an early date. Under current conditions, we hope Japan will increase its efforts aimed at the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons and put forward some new proposals to speed up the process.

China is committed to the comprehensive and strict implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). China holds that the best way to enhance the effectiveness of the BWC is through the negotiation of a legally binding protocol under the Convention. In our view, efforts should be

focused on strengthening the BWC itself and be aimed at promoting the implementation of all its provisions in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

China has introduced two proposals under the BWC to develop a template for a biological scientists' code of conduct and establish a non-proliferation export-control and international cooperation regime. It is our hope that in-depth discussions endorsed by the eighth Review Conference on the two aforementioned proposals will be conducted during the next review cycle and that concrete results will be achieved in this regard.

To facilitate the preparation of the eighth Review Conference, China held a joint international workshop with Canada and the Implementation Support Unit of the BWC in Wuxi, China, in September. The workshop's theme was "The eighth BWC Review Conference: promoting BWC implementation, enhancing global biosecurity governance". Some 80 participants from more than 40 countries and relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and research institutes held in-depth discussions on such issues as new challenges posed by current biosecurity threats, the aims of the eighth Review Conference and the working modes and focus of the next intersessional process.

The eighth Review Conference of the BWC will be held next month. China stands ready to participate in its discussions in an open and constructive manner. We will work with all parties to make collective efforts towards meeting the goal of enhancing the multilateral process and promoting the implementation of the BWC.

The Acting Chair: I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft decision A/C.1/71/L.59.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

As a party to all major international instruments banning weapons of mass destruction, the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports all genuine and inclusive international efforts for the universalization, full and non-discriminatory implementation, and the upholding of the authority of such instruments. Holding it as its principled position and along with a large majority of States, Iran strongly rejects any attempt by any country, under any pretext, to abuse

these instruments by imposing any sort of limitation or restriction on the transfer to other States parties of technology, know-how, equipment, material and goods for peaceful purposes, and accordingly calls for stopping all such limitations and instead promoting international cooperation and assistance in such areas.

Despite the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq by terrorists in recent years, contemporary history reminds us that Iran remains the main victim of these inhumane weapons. As a result of more than 400 attacks with chemical-warfare agents during the war imposed by Saddam on Iran from 1980 to 1988, more than 100,000 Iranian citizens were either martyred or injured, including more than 7,000 injuries among civilians as a result of nearly 30 chemical attacks on Iranian cities and villages.

On one particular instance, on 28 June 1987, Saddam's warplanes unleashed sulfur mustard gas bombs on four residential areas of Sardasht, a town in the north-west of Iran. As a result, more than 130 unprotected civilians were martyred and almost 5,000 people — who still continue to suffer from long-term complications — were injured. The anniversary of this tragedy is commemorated in Iran as the National Day for the Campaign against Chemical and Biological Weapons.

Needless to say, Saddam's army could not have produced these inhumane weapons without the assistance and support of certain Western countries, including some with permanent seats in the Security Council. According to well-documented evidence, more than 450 companies, mostly from Western countries, including France and the United Kingdom, were involved in the development of Saddam's chemical-weapons programme. Given that all of these companies were under their Governments' scrutiny, it is impossible that they could have transferred chemical-weapons precursors to Saddam without these Governments' blessing. While Saddam and some of his partners, as major perpetrators of such war crimes and crimes of genocide, have been properly punished, those who contributed to the development of his chemical-weapons programme have not.

Iran continues to strongly support the universality of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). We urge all non-parties, in particular the Israeli regime, to accede

to the Convention without any further delay. While the total destruction of all chemical-weapons stockpiles remains the key objective of the CWC, the *raison d'être* of the Convention has been seriously and regrettably challenged, as a result of the obvious non-compliance of certain parties with the provision to complete the total elimination of their chemical weapons before the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012.

We continue to strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. We also continue to assist affected people, as we did in the case of terrorists' use of chemical weapons against Iraqi civilians.

While the use of biological weapons is contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), regrettably its provisions do not explicitly prohibit it. This is a major legal loophole, indeed, and a deficiency that needs to be addressed. Along with other parties that are determined to completely exclude the possibility of the use of biological weapons, Iran strongly calls for ensuring a total ban on the use of biological weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances. In this regard, at the upcoming eighth Review Conference of the Convention in November, Iran will reiterate its proposal for amending the title and article I of the Convention.

Taking into account the various proposals expected to be made during the upcoming BWC Review Conference — including on the BWC Implementation Support Unit, intersessional meetings, science and technology, national implementation and international cooperation and assistance — Iran strongly believes that, first, the most effective approach is a comprehensive one that provides for dealing with all provisions of the Convention in a balanced manner; and, secondly and accordingly, the most pragmatic option to strengthen the Convention is through resuming negotiations on a multilateral legally binding protocol to the Convention. Based on that approach, Iran will participate actively and constructively in the deliberations of the BWC Review Conference and remains hopeful that the parties will be able to come up with a balanced and result-oriented consensus outcome that is capable of improving its operation.

In conclusion, I should like to introduce draft decision A/C.1/71/L.59, entitled “Missiles”, proposed jointly by Egypt and Iran, and hope that, as in previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

The Acting Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to remind delegations to kindly limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mr. Herráiz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation fully endorses the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Spain condemns the use of any chemical substance as a weapon by any actor under any circumstances. We are concerned at the conclusions reached by the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) created by Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), whose latest report (see S/2016/738) assigns responsibility to the Syrian Armed Forces and Da’esh for carrying out chemical-weapons attacks in flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and, most fundamentally, international humanitarian law. The report also indicates that between December 2015 and August 2016, some 131 allegations were received on the use of chemical weapons in Syria. That is a source of great concern, and the Security Council should take measures to respond to this grave threat to international peace and security. Spain calls upon Syria to clarify existing doubts concerning issues that were raised by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and fulfil its obligations as a State party to the Convention.

The success of the operation to remove chemical precursors in Libya for their complete destruction in an incinerator in Münster, Germany, shows to what extent the OPCW works to benefit the international community. Spain is proud to have been able to contribute to this removal operation. The JIM report confirms something that is obvious: that terrorist groups have access to weapons of mass destruction and, in this case, chemical weapons. These conclusions call upon us to urgently engage in a process of reflection as members of the international community. In this context, Spain believes it essential that we continue to work to prevent non-State actors and terrorist groups from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which sets forth a preventive and cooperative approach, is a necessary instrument in this effort.

As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Spain is fully committed to the comprehensive review of the resolution, which is a great opportunity to analyse how to contribute to strengthening States’ capacities to prevent the diversion of materials used in weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. The current comprehensive review has enabled us to promote cooperation and coordination among the various elements of the non-proliferation architecture, for example, between the 1540 Committee and the OPCW. Spain believes it necessary to take advantage of the comprehensive review to present a new Security Council draft resolution that reiterates our political commitment to the fight against non-proliferation and to strengthening the application of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the powers of the 1540 Committee.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) is another key instrument. We must continue to promote the universalization of the Convention and its effective implementation. In this regard, Spain has contributed to capacity-building efforts so that States can meet their commitments under the Convention, particularly States in the Latin American region.

The Convention will be discussed at the upcoming eighth Review Conference in November in Geneva, and Spain will focus its efforts on increasing transparency and cooperation among the States parties. Accordingly, together with Chile, we have proposed through working documents a number of measures to facilitate understanding through the concept of “voluntary visits”.

Spain attaches great importance to the full adherence to and implementation of the Convention at the national level. We believe that biosecurity is one of the Convention’s key elements. For this reason, we will work to improve measures for national biosecurity in all States parties. By the same token, the speed at which scientific and technological progress is being made requires us to a science-and-technology committee to update the Convention by assessing the risk of the possible dual-use by terrorist groups and non-State actors. We believe that it is important that the creation of this committee be one of the measures agreed upon at the Review Conference.

We also recognize the usefulness and validity of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for providing assistance and cooperation to those States parties that have been target of a biological weapon attack. We look forward to the universal acceptance of this Mechanism as well as to its adaptation to current circumstances. Similarly, Spain is aware of the need for cooperation as set forth in article X of the Convention and will continue to provide cooperation under that article, as we have done in the past.

Mr. In-chul Kim (Republic of Korea): Since their entry into force, both the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) have served as core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and have continuously moved towards universalization.

As the first treaty to put a comprehensive ban on a certain type of weapon of mass destruction, the BWC stands as an important landmark in the history of international disarmament efforts. The Republic of Korea firmly believes, as aptly stated in the Convention's preamble, that any use of biological weapons is a matter not only of international law but also a matter of the conscience of humankind.

However, the BWC continues to face unique challenges, with rapid advances in biotechnology and the life sciences as well as their wide availability and inherently dual-use nature. The Republic of Korea has been consistent in its support for strengthening the BWC regime and for thorough preparation for the eighth Review Conference. In the light of the nexus between emerging technology and weapons of mass destruction, we share the view that the establishment of a more structured and sustainable science-and-technology review process is needed to introduce a more current and relevant technical foundation for the Convention.

Given that a large number of working papers have been put forward in this respect, we hope that the Review Conference will come up with a consensual decision to strengthen the science-and-technology review process in the framework of the future intersessional programme. Furthermore, it is our view that each party's robust implementation of the obligations under the Convention is of vital importance for ensuring the effectiveness of

the regime. This should be complemented by strong confidence-building measures (CBMs) among the States parties and international assistance for capacity-building, as envisioned by articles V and VII of the Convention. In this regard, the Republic of Korea has co-sponsored the working paper entitled "Step-by-step approach in CBM participation".

The Republic of Korea is also actively participating in the Global Health Security Agenda as one of the steering group members for the multisectoral rapid-response action package. It is our belief that ensuring such a practice in experience-sharing will facilitate cooperation and assistance for capacity-building.

The BWC underpins our collective effort to counter the weaponization of biological agents by State or non-State actors. We would like to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the Convention and to the success of the 2016 Review Conference.

Since the CWC entered into force, the Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have played a pivotal role in the global community's unwavering efforts to make the world free of chemical weapons. Some 93 per cent of all chemical weapons declared by the States parties have been destroyed. The Republic of Korea commends the intensive efforts by the OPCW to universalize the Convention and destroy the declared chemical weapons.

However, despite these achievements, the OPCW and the international community have many daunting tasks ahead. Four countries, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, are still outside the Convention. There has also been growing concern over the possibility of chemical terrorism by non-State actors. Most of all, the use of chemical weapons by a State party is the most serious problem to be tackled by the international community.

According to the report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (see S/2016/738), submitted to the Security Council on 24 August, there is sufficient information to the effect that the Syrian Armed Forces were responsible for chemical-weapons use in two cases, one in 2014 and one in 2015. There were also allegations that chemical weapons were used as recently as September of this year. The Republic of Korea is gravely concerned over these developments. We strongly urge the Syrian Government, which acceded to the CWC in 2013, to comply with the Convention and with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), refrain from further use of

chemical weapons in future, and fully cooperate with the OPCW and the United Nations in their efforts to get rid of the remaining chemical weapons.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): 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) are important components of the global system against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We call for wider adherence to and strict implementation of these Conventions.

At the upcoming eighth Review Conference of the BWC, we need to work towards consensus outcomes that would ensure the continued relevance, effectiveness and strengthening of the Convention. A stronger intersessional period could also be one area we could look at. We recognize the importance of strengthening international efforts to prevent States and non-State actors alike from acquiring and using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. In that understanding, we see the eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention and the comprehensive review of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) as extremely important opportunities to take such action.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the most valuable instruments of our time. As with many other international instruments, the most important and relevant aspect of the CWC is its implementation. We welcome the successful implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category-2 chemical weapons outside the country. We see this as a positive and important development for Libya's stability and a good example of the implementation of the CWC.

On the other hand, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is stating that despite all its efforts, it is not able to verify the Syrian regime's declaration that there remain gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies. We are seriously concerned and believe that there needs to be accountability for the violation of the CWC by a State party.

Furthermore, in its August report (see S/2016/738), the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) established the liability of the Syrian Armed Forces in at least two cases that have

been under investigation. The report also found Da'esh responsible for the chemical-weapons attacks in Marea in 2015. The JIM's findings confirm what we all knew all along — that the Syrian regime has not fulfilled its obligations and continued to use chemical weapons in the period following its use of sarin gas against the Syrian people in Ghouta in 2013. The JIM's final report, which is due in a few days, is expected to attribute responsibility in three additional cases of the use of chemical weapons. It will come as no surprise to anyone in this room that the regime is again the primary suspect in these cases.

Turkey condemns in the strongest terms all use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere by anyone and under any circumstances. The use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and a war crime. As such, we cannot allow it to become the new normal. To that end, there should be accountability and prosecution. We wish to see measures taken in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015). Those who committed these crimes must be brought to justice. That is our moral responsibility.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba does not possess and has no intention of possessing any type of weapon of mass destruction, and firmly supports their total and complete prohibition and elimination. The sole absolute guarantee to prevent the acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction, including by terrorists, is the total and immediate elimination and prohibition of these weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

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 (BWC), which will be held in Geneva in November, will be an ideal forum in which to resume negotiations on a legally binding multilateral protocol that would strengthen the Convention in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

A stronger Biological Weapons Convention, with an effective verification mechanism, is essential to guarantee the protection of human beings and the environment and to exclude the possibility of the use of biological and toxin agents as weapons. At the eighth Review Conference, Cuba will call for the adoption of decisions necessary to guarantee the full, effective and non-discriminatory application of article X of the Biological Weapons Convention, which refers to

international cooperation for peaceful purposes and which, to date, remains an urgent, pending priority task.

The destruction of all categories of declared chemical weapons under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) must be completed as soon as possible. Promoting the economic and technological development of States parties to the Convention, and particularly of the least developed among them, must be a priority for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). A plan of action must urgently be adopted to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of articles X and XI of the Convention, which pertain to international cooperation and assistance.

The unilateral discriminatory prohibitions and restrictions that continue to be imposed by some States against others with respect to transfers of chemical materials, equipment and technology for peaceful uses are unacceptable and must be revoked. One clear example of that is the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has been imposed on Cuba in overt violation of the letter and spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We reaffirm the central role of the General Assembly and of existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction in issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. No measure adopted by the Security Council can undermine that role. Moreover, far from helping, selective and discriminatory initiatives promoted by groups of countries outside the multilateral framework serve only to weaken the United Nations role in the fight against weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the Chair and members of the Bureau for their efforts at this session. We associate ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.13).

Having recognized the risks posed by weapons of mass destruction and their long-term impacts, the international community attaches special importance to eliminating all these weapons and has therefore adopted international binding instruments to prohibit their possession and use and protect and save humankind from the scourge of their indiscriminate use by certain irresponsible parties.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, is a very important addition to the binding international instruments and serves as a confirmation by the international community that the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their vectors of delivery is very dangerous, especially in the hands of terrorists.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), which has been acceded to by the majority of the world's States, is one of the most important international treaties and has become a symbol of respect for international law, especially the laws of war, guiding the ethical, legal and political pursuit of any conflict. We therefore insist on the importance of the CWC, which has contributed to the understanding that the use and possession of chemical weapons are a flagrant violation of international law. That is why that international instrument serves as the legal basis to condemn, hold accountable and withhold immunity from any party that uses these chemical weapons.

One of the concerns addressed in the August report (see S/2016/738) of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, established under Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), was the investigation and identification of persons, actors, groups or even Governments that have used chemical elements in Syria. The report states that chemical weapons were used in Syria and that testimony and evidence reveal that responsibility in at least two cases where chemical weapons were used can be attributed to helicopters used by the Syrian regime. Only one such attack was attributed to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. As we await the final report of the Mechanism, we reiterate the importance of preserving all the evidence in order to ensure that no impunity is granted to any of the perpetrators of this heinous crime and to put an end to these such crimes in Syria and elsewhere.

Qatar reiterates its unlimited support for international cooperation, even as we take account of the specificities of our region in the light of conflicts, disputes and terrorist groups there, which add a very serious dimension to the possession and use of such weapons. We will therefore continue to eliminate the prospects of the use or threaten of use weapons of mass destruction in order to alleviate the tension in the region.

Finally, we believe that the concept of strategic balance can be achieved not through the existence of weapons of mass destruction, but by working towards the development of our peoples. We cannot achieve lasting peace, security and stability while we still have weapons or mass destruction or threaten their use in an arms race.

Ms. Šorytė (Lithuania): The extensive Lithuanian position on weapons of mass destruction was fully reflected in the joint European Union statement delivered yesterday, and I should just like to highlight a few aspects that are of particular importance to my country.

Lithuania continues to emphasize the need to address the challenges resulting from the waste of sea-dumped chemical munitions. Therefore, at the margins of the Second Committee, Lithuania is submitting an updated draft resolution on cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea. The ultimate goal of the draft resolution remains the facilitation of the voluntary sharing of historic and scientific information, the exchange of best practices, increased voluntary cooperation among member States and a contribution to the global debate on this issue.

My country is extremely concerned by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to States, as well as to non-State actors and terrorist groups. We take note of the declaration of the destruction of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, but we remain concerned over irregularities and discrepancies in the reporting and allegations of the continued use of chemical weapons. These circumstances, including the latest instances of chlorine attacks, call for strong action, and while the attribution of responsibility is an important step, it cannot be the last, and the perpetrators of such atrocious acts must be brought to justice.

Lithuania considers that export-control mechanisms provide effective and viable ways to ensure non-proliferation. In this respect, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime continue to play leading roles in their fields. We are convinced that expanded membership in those mechanisms would further reinforce the efficiency of export control and contribute to the strengthening of the regimes internationally. In this respect, last year Lithuania

resubmitted its application to become a full member of the Missile Technology Control Regime.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.51.

Mr. Ayoko (Nigeria): It is profoundly important that this cluster addresses all issues related to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). I join others who have spoken to commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). My delegation recognizes the efforts of that organization to ensure a total and complete evaluation and on-site inspection of declarations by member States.

The importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the prevention of the proliferation of chemical weapons cannot be overstressed, particularly in the concerted effort towards the total destruction of existing stockpiles of these weapons. I congratulate the OPCW on its giant strides over the 18 years of its existence and the guidance provided by its management, administration and technical experts team, including the wider interaction between the Scientific Advisory Board and the policymaking organs.

My delegation recalls the successful completion and the apparent closure of the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria in 2014 as a strong reflection and recognition of the leadership of the United Nations that underscored the tireless and collective efforts of many States on this subject. My delegation commends the decisive approach through which OPCW experts collaborated with the United Nations at the time to fully address the case in a timely manner. The reported use of chemical weapons again in Syria, as described in the most recent report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (see S/2016/738), is troubling.

Nigeria remains strongly committed to steps and measures to forestall and prevent the use of chemical weapons under any guise and address the issue where reports are made. The requisite authorities should step in and engage in thorough and scrupulous investigations so as to ensure the sanctity of international peace and security, the rule of law and the protection of civilians. Having signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, Nigeria remains committed to fulfilling its obligations in meeting the Convention's overall

objectives of promoting and verifying adherence to the Convention.

The need to highlight the growing concerns regarding the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors cannot be overstressed. My delegation welcomes the consecutive executive meetings between the Group of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the OPCW Open-ended Working Group on Terrorism as a signpost of the need to enhance the interconnectedness of and cooperation between the OPCW and the 1540 Committee.

Having served on its Executive Council and not too long ago as Chair of the OPCW international working group on anti-terrorism, Nigeria promises its continued support for initiatives of the organization towards the universalization of a ban on the use of chemical weapons. We recognize the organization's fundamental growth, and we urge the many States Members of the United Nations that are yet to become part of this noble cause to commence the process and ensure ratification and membership.

As an important pillar of the prevention and response to attacks involving chemical weapons or toxic chemicals, my delegation calls for the continued sponsorship of States parties, particularly from Africa, to ensure the benefit from the OPCW's organized capacity-building programmes, including the exchange of scientific and technical information for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

In this regard and to ensure a wide and further study of multilateralism disarmament measures, my delegation wishes to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.51, entitled "United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services". The draft resolution has already been circulated to delegations. We note with satisfaction the overwhelming support for this draft resolution at past sessions of the General Assembly and call on all delegations to continue to support it. This will ensure a wider understanding of the idea of multilateral disarmament measures.

The Acting Chair: We have now heard from the last speaker on the cluster on "Other weapons of mass destruction".

The Committee will now take up the cluster on "Outer space (disarmament aspects)".

Ms. Jenie (Indonesia): I am greatly privileged to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

NAM shares the desire of the international community to strengthen the safety, security and long-term sustainability of outer-space activities, as well as to ensure that outer space is used exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all States, irrespective of the degree of their social, economic or scientific development.

NAM recognizes the common interest of all humankind and the inalienable legitimate sovereign rights of all States in the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, and emphasizes that the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including a ban to deploy or use weapons therein, would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. NAM further emphasizes the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms limitation and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements and with the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space.

NAM remains concerned over 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 Conference on Disarmament on a universal, legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which remains a priority.

NAM's position is 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 held in the format of inclusive, transparent and consensus-based multilateral negotiations within the framework of the United Nations, based on a proper and unequivocal mandate without specific deadlines, and taking into account the interests of all States, irrespective of their level of development, in order to reach a balanced outcome that addresses the needs and reflects the concerns of all States.

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 Acting Chair: I shall now call on those delegations that have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I should like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): This morning, the representative of the United Kingdom made remarks against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, naming my country as a threat. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again total rejects as absurd nonsense an allegation full of lies and against the truth and the reality on the Korean peninsula. I want to clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on two points.

The first is that just two days ago, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea warned the United Kingdom delegation about its country's decision to participate in the joint military exercises to be conducted in the coming weeks by the United States and South Korea in South Korea. That is an act of the greatest hostility to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United Kingdom is participating and fuelling the fire that is already burning out of control. Nobody knows when it will burst out of control, creating a great disaster for the peace and security of the Korean peninsula, the region and the world at large.

At this time, the United Kingdom intends to attend, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reminds the United Kingdom delegation again that the United Kingdom participated in the Korean War, killing its own innocent soldiers and civilians. It is a country that cooperated with the regime-change conspiracy of the United States in Iraq and other Middle East countries, thereby creating a disastrous, unprecedented ongoing crisis of refugees at the international level.

My second point is the origin of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. For the benefit of his understanding, I should like to clarify and give him a briefing on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. It was created by the United States and has been forced by the regime of the United States on the Korean peninsula for six decades. It started with large-scale nuclear war exercises after the deployment of an enormous number of nuclear weapons in our land. Today, the administrative regime of the United States is at a disastrous stage. The target of the United States regime is clear — it is regime change in our country.

Therefore, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has had no other option but to go nuclear.

Who is responsible? It is the United States that pushed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to go nuclear. This is the product of the more than six-decade-long United States hostility and nuclear blackmail. As long as the United States continues its blackmail and hostility against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, my country will continue to increase its nuclear power, as a nuclear Power State, in quantity and quality.

One reality that clearly explains the United States military manoeuvres is the fact that its unilateral position of nuclear-weapons monopoly came to an end with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's possession of nuclear weapon. Sanctions will never work. They are totally illegal and fabricated by the United States.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the United States this morning tried to make light of the fact that the United States Administration is in the process of accusing my Government of conducting chemical attacks. As Seymour Hersh has pointed out, the United States was aware of the transfer of chemical weapons from Turkey into Syria. These weapons were used against civilians and Syrian soldiers. In September of this year, two experts on chemical weapons from the United States gave their assistance to the Al-Nusra Front, a terrorist group, and to the Jund Al-Aqsa group, to use chemical materials against civilians, and then accused my country's Government of it. Have the Americans not learned the lessons of the past? Do they not know that they are going to pay the price for financing armed groups and terrorist groups?

There are 100 barrels containing napalm in the city of Saraqib, Idlib province, and in the region of the Ghosh. We wonder how they got there. The United States Administration is training terrorists, including Mahmoud Al-Sinn Abdullah, to prepare and use chemical materials.

The Netherlands, as people also know already, is transporting chemical weapons towards Israel; which means that they are equally responsible for this crime and must be held accountable to the entire world with respect to the quantity, quality and type of technology that they are transferring to the Israelis and that the Israelis have used to develop their own programme.

We now know that the Turkish regime has supported terrorists with conventional and non-conventional weapons, including toxic chemical weapons. From July to September, the Turkish regime facilitated the transfer of 14 tons of toxic chemical materials from Turkey to Syria, including phosphorus. The Turkish regime has allowed terrorist groups, specifically Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front, to use its territory — Gaziantep in particular, which is now known as the Turkish Tora Bora — to experiment with these materials on animals.

The Turkish regime refuses to provide information with respect to the sarin gas identified, and after which the terrorists were freed. We have also noted some instances of the use of toxic chemicals in my country by the Turkish regime. It is a regime that facilitates the transfer of this material and then issues instructions, in cooperation with regimes the likes of Qatar, to armed terrorist groups to use those materials. They then produce videos of the attacks to be used against the Government of my country. To the Turkish regime and the Qataris we say: the Syrian people will never forget those crimes. We will pursue them and there will have to be accountability.

With respect to what the Canadian delegation said yesterday, one should not claim and talk about any sort of significant knowledge when in fact complete ignorance is the reality. The representative of Canada, and some others, spoke as if indeed he had knowledge and know-how. The Canadian delegation has taken every opportunity to undermine my country and, because they do not have much to say, Canada is unfortunately basing its comments on sources that do not tell the truth. Their embassy in Damascus has been closed, and so they no longer have any diplomats who could provide them with credible information. My country exports to Canada its best workers, who participate in building Canada. But Canada bombs us with accusations and lies, prejudice and erroneous information. Canada should refrain from doing that.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the statement of the United Kingdom in which it was alleged that Iran's ballistic-missile test launches in March 2015 were inconsistent with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

I should like to put on record that the phrasing of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), with respect to Iran's ballistic-missile programme, leaves no doubt that

the referred launches could not be qualified as being inconsistent with annex B, since they are not designed to be capable of delivering nuclear warheads. The deliberate addition of the phrase "designed to be" to the wording "capable of delivering nuclear weapons" used in terminated Security Council resolution 1929 (2010) was a deliberate modification following lengthy negotiations in order to exclude Iran's missile programmes, which are designed exclusively for conventional defensive use.

The fact that Iran has never been on the path to acquire nuclear weapons and is committed by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action not to follow such a path makes the accusations against our conventional missile programme all the more irrelevant and extraneous. Therefore, we reject the baseless and politicized claim of the United Kingdom in that regard and hope that our reasonable explanation will convince the United Kingdom to reconsider its unreasonable position and claim.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I take the floor to exercise my right of reply. I should first like to respond to comments made by the representative of the Cuban delegation with the following points.

The United States is in full compliance with its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. The United States does not deny Cuba access to medicines, vaccines, diagnostic equipment or laboratory instruments. I would add that, just last Friday, the United States announced a sixth round of regulatory changes to further expand our bilateral trade relations.

To respond to the comments made by the representative of Syria, if anyone in this room has any doubts about the use of chemical weapons in Syria, I would strongly recommend that they read the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) report. I think it makes very clear where the responsibility lies for the chemical attacks that have taken place in Syria.

The charge that the United States is training terrorists in the use of chemical weapons is simply preposterous. The Syrian regime needs to be held accountable for carrying out heinous chemical attacks against its own people, and the United States will not be silent on that issue.

My last point refers again to the continual delusional diatribe from the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Let me quickly say once again that the United States poses no threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but it is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that is the threat to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked for the floor to answer the representative of Syria. The representative of Syria is abusing this forum to accuse and make allegations. I can only answer that we mentioned in our statement the reports of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), which confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Syria and said that in two cases such weapons were delivered by helicopter, and the responsibility was Syria's and Da'esh's. A report mentions some witnesses that say that helicopters were seen when the chlorine attacks were perpetrated. The Syrian regime controls the air space. The JIM declared that no party can use helicopters without the knowledge of the Syrian armed forces. The report also says that in all cases in the use of chlorine the explosive barrels were launched by helicopter. In fact, the reality is clear in this report. It is a group that was mandated by the Security Council to identify groups and individuals or Governments that have used chemical weapons in Syria. It is not journalism, and so the regime must answer for what is in the reports and not just repeat their contents — or at least not choose this forum, as it did today.

I think that the Syrian regime is trying to get us to forget the atrocities it methodically commits every day, while accusing the countries that in fact support the Syrian people. We condemn and reject those words. According to the Syrian regime, all the parties are terrorists, including the Syrian people, who undertook a peaceful revolution to reclaim their rights.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): I have asked for the floor to reply to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Let me be clear once again on the Korean War. North Korea invaded my country and, under a United Nations mandate, a number of Members joined forces for the noble cause of repelling the reckless invaders.

Among the many freedoms that are non-existent in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we are witnessing day after day how the lack of freedom from

fear there operates. It is saddening and tragic to see the same representative saying the same thing over and over again. It totally attests to the terror that reigns in the everyday lives of everyone living there.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): We have been listening to the Syrian regime's representative here putting forward allegations against each and every State that criticizes the use of chemical weapons in the country. That is something that we need to stop. As long as we do not, that will continue just like the lies that we hear in this conference room. If there is anything that the Syrians will not forget, I trust it is the shelter, food, schools and protection that Turkey has provided to the Syrians — the 3 million Syrians who have run for their lives from the horrors of the regime.

Finally, Turkey is a member of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and upholds its commitments and obligations under it. We thoroughly investigate anything that might not be in accordance with the CWC.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): With regard to the statement by the United States representative, who said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a threat, many facts indicate one question to raise with him: is it not true that the United States increased the number of nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea over six decades, and did not the holding of very provocative and aggressive large-scale military exercises target roads and trains, and the decapitation of our leadership at the final stage most recently? I want his answer, as well as to remind him that denying or declining to answer is akin to a gangster standing in front of another's house to attack for robbery. It is like him saying: "I am not a gangster, but you — the owner of the house — are the gangster". That is a very strange and nonsensical allegation, fooling the international community.

I remind him again very clearly that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will only increase its nuclear deterrent, its war deterrent. That is the single most reliable instrument that can defend our peace and security with great confidence. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already declared it is ready to face any type of war, whatever choice the United States makes.

With regard to the statement made by the representative of South Korea, who talked about the Korean War, I want him to get access to historians, and to American

declassified documents. There is a document, an “ABC” war plan against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Under this war plan was an open, unleashed attack on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 25 June 1950, inflicting disastrous suffering and pain upon our people, dropping millions and millions of bombs upon peaceful cities of the entire territory of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Those regimes that live in glass houses should not cast stones upon the houses of others. We said to the representative of the Turkish regime and the representative of the Qatari regime that Syria is bigger than Qatar, and he and his masters know the meaning of this word.

The Qatari regime has funded, trained, armed and supplied the armed terrorist groups with all manner of conventional and non-conventional weapons, in particular chemical weapons to Jabhat Al-Nusra. The Qatari regime is the one that is giving orders to the terrorist organizations to use chemical weapons and to produce videos to accuse my country of being responsible.

Turkey prepared camps in which Syrians could take shelter, before the emergence of the crisis. The Turkish regime, as everyone knows, is a sponsor of terrorism. The terrorists who are drowning Syrians in the sea are the ones who are threatening the European Union countries with Syrian refugee cards. The Turkish regime is trying to shirk its responsibility for an unlimited number of crimes, but that is not going to be of any use.

As to the statement by the representative of the United States, did he take the trouble to analyse the report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism? No, I do not think so. Nowhere does the report provide a single substantiated element as to who used chemical weapons. The report contains not a single documented medical report as to injuries sustained by persons who claimed to have been exposed to toxic materials, noting that those supposedly injured people were transported or received medical aid in camps of the terrorist groups or inside Turkey. I shall limit myself to those comments.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor for a second time, but I need to respond to the comments made by the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. He goes on about gangsters. I have no idea what he is talking about.

He makes no sense. Frankly, he needs to abandon his stale, tired, worn rhetoric and try a new narrative, because the current one is believed by no one and only shows what an unstable regime he represents here.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have requested the floor to make a brief comment and to respond to the statement made by the representative of the United States. I think it is relevant to recall that, under article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention, all State parties to the Convention have the right to participate in the broadest exchange possible of substances, equipment and technologies in the chemical sphere for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. In addition, all parties to the Convention are obligated to facilitate such exchanges. Also on the basis of article XI of the Convention, State parties are obligated to lift and eliminate all restrictions that hinder free exchange in the chemical sphere for peaceful purposes.

It is unfortunate that, despite the steps that have been taken, the economic, commercial and financial blockade policy established by the Government of the United States against Cuba continues to be in force. On the basis of that policy, there continue to be applied against Cuba unilateral sanctions and unilateral restrictions and prohibitions that affect and complicate the development of Cuba’s chemical industry and its capacity to exchange and trade with other countries.

In conclusion, I call upon the delegation of the United States immediately to eliminate those restrictions and prohibitions and to guarantee full compliance with the obligations set forth in article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): With regard to the statement by the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea concerning the Korean War, they have no other option but to rely on what, for lack of a good expression in English, in Spanish would be “huír hacia adelante”, or in French “fuite en avant”. They are escaping forward. That is the fact on the Korean War. I should like to conclude by saying that his obstinacy with the same illogical argument every day here goes beyond delusion. I would characterize it as delirium.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): As I said in my first intervention, our statement is based on the findings of the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with regard to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We regret the fact

that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic is using a United Nations forum to make accusations here and there. We should remember always that this is a Committee concerned with disarmament and international peace and security. The people of Syria will not forget that those who had the responsibility to

protect the people are the ones who are destroying its homes. I just wanted to recall those two points without entering into details that are totally unconnected with the work of this Committee.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.