



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

First Committee

8th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair: In accordance with our programme of work, we will begin with the traditional exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions and the presentation of reports. As I noted at the organizational meeting of the Committee on 30 September, the High Representative will be represented by his Deputy, Mr. Tom Markram, for this exchange.

I shall now suspend the meeting to enable us to consider this topic in an informal setting, in keeping with the established practice of the Committee.

The meeting was suspended at 3.05 p.m. and resumed at 3.20 p.m.

Ms. Ariffin (Brunei Darussalam): On behalf of the delegation of Brunei Darussalam, I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and also to the other members of the Bureau. We assure you of Brunei Darussalam's utmost support for your leadership in making our work successful.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

For a small developing nation such as Brunei Darussalam, this platform certainly gives us an expanded reach on a global scale. We are extremely grateful and honoured to have the opportunity to be a part of the discussion on issues that are of importance to promoting and maintaining global peace, security and stability.

Fitting to the meaning of "Darussalam" as the abode of peace, we have been tremendously blessed with a peaceful and stable environment. However, peace and stability are by no means durable certainties on their own. Creating the conditions for peace is one thing; sustaining it is another. Taking into account the increasingly complex, interwoven and unpredictable threats and challenges the global community is facing today, the noble duty to generate a sense of security for our people to feel safe and confident is undoubtedly getting tougher and more demanding. We in Brunei Darussalam are also not immune from these challenges. We are therefore conscious of the need for vigilance and diligence in protecting our peace, security and stability.

It is in this context that Brunei Darussalam reiterates its unequivocal support for disarmament efforts and the non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction at both the regional and global levels. As testimony to our steadfast commitment to eliminating the risks associated with nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, Brunei Darussalam is a party to most of the major regional and global instruments pertaining to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Regionally, Brunei Darussalam is a State party to the Treaty on the South-

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East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and we take this opportunity to reiterate our hope for the early accession of all nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to the Treaty without reservations. Globally, we are a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

We note, however, that translating such ideals into reality for the greater good of humankind has been a colossal challenge. We are concerned at the substandard pace of progress in global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The twentieth anniversary of the CTBT this year serves as a stark reminder that, while it is a significant mechanism in strengthening international stability, more work lies ahead to achieve universal ratification of the Treaty. To this end, we must continue to use every opportunity and engage in dialogue, especially with the nuclear-weapon States, in order to realize our joint goal of a safer and more secure world.

Despite the extent of the challenges we face collectively, Brunei Darussalam is pleased to note that the degree of determination is stronger than ever to move forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, as can be seen through the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations earlier this year in recommending an open and inclusive approach leading to the conclusion of concrete and effective legal measures. In recent years, we note that there has been added momentum because of an increasing awareness of the humanitarian consequences of any nuclear fallout, be it intentional or accidental. The thought of such possible devastation should make us all work harder to achieve our shared vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Brunei Darussalam therefore endorsed the humanitarian pledge at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

However, we remain deeply concerned about other weapons of mass destruction, particularly chemical and biological weapons. Brunei Darussalam joins the international community in condemning the use of chemical weapons in wars and conflicts, which often

causes great loss of lives and violates human rights and international law. Brunei Darussalam also remains concerned about the illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons and their potentially devastating impact on the peace and security of Member States.

We need to remind ourselves that our pursuit of lasting peace is for the greater good of humankind. Only with peace and security will we be able to effectively fulfil our other common aspirations of sustainable development and prosperity. As part of our wider efforts to preserve and spread the values of a culture of peace, Brunei Darussalam will continue to support international cooperation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, dialogue and confidence-building measures with a view to the achievement of our shared vision of lasting global peace, security and stability.

Mr. Lamsal (Nepal): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and through you the other members of the Bureau on their respective elections. Let me also commend the role of the outgoing Bureau for its contribution at the previous session. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The past year has been marked by two important developments in the larger interests of humankind. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, we demonstrated our determination to foster peaceful and just societies, free from fear and violence. Then, only last week, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was set in motion and will become effective early next month. This step genuinely paves the way for the international community to take collective action against the irreversible threat to human societies posed by climate change.

The effective and thorough execution of the aforementioned Agenda and Agreement will require substantial resources. Commitments, however, remain far below expectations. On the contrary, we are witnessing an increasing trend of military expenditure, estimated at more than \$1.7 trillion per annum. We should focus our efforts on diverting resources from military expenditure towards much-needed areas, such as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals set by

our leaders in accordance with our own requirements. We believe that funding judicious development greatly helps to prevent conflicts, which breed mostly in poverty and exclusion.

As a peace-loving country, Nepal has been playing an active role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Our engagement in disarmament initiatives and peacekeeping operations and our strong anti-terrorism stand have remained firm. Nepal's foreign policy, as enshrined in the Constitution promulgated last year, is based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, the Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace.

In recent years, we have witnessed an unprecedented increase in armed conflict, violence against civilians and extreme forms of criminality. To address the challenges posed, we must work collectively by mustering our strategies and strengths and redoubling our efforts. Nepal stands ready to join hands with fellow member countries in this regard. We are always supportive of time-bound proposals leading to general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. We uphold the inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. We believe that there is an urgent need to start negotiations on a legally binding document granting security assurances by the nuclear Powers to non-nuclear-weapon States. We regret the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT to reach consensus on the final outcome document.

As a party to the NPT and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and as a signatory of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Nepal is concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their possible use or threat of use. Given the catastrophic consequences, the existence of even a single nuclear weapon poses a serious threat to humankind. We believe that negative security assurances by all nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States through a legally binding instrument will be an important step towards achieving nuclear disarmament. We support any steps towards a permanent ban on nuclear tests and reject the policy of nuclear deterrence.

Nepal is in the process of ratifying the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the various regions will eventually contribute to total and complete disarmament, and we welcome efforts towards establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

We are aware of the worldwide humanitarian and developmental impact of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, which wreak utter havoc on people. Because of the menace of such weapons, Nepal fully supports the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and welcomes the adoption of the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in New York in June.

The coming into force of the Arms Trade Treaty should ensure international regulatory control in the trade of conventional arms as the legally binding instrument for transparency and accountability. At the same time, we should have in place measures to enhance the capacity of States to implement the international instruments to which they are parties. The weaponization of outer space is dangerous not only for the environment but also for humankind; therefore, steps must be taken to avert an arms race in outer space.

Nepal attaches high importance to the multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to promoting collective ownership, deliberations and responsibility for collective global action. An early conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty would be an important step in that direction. We call for the revival of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, in accordance with its mandate.

We believe that the United Nations regional mechanisms for peace and development can contribute significantly to global disarmament efforts. Building understanding and confidence among the countries in a region can make an important contribution to global peace and stability. As host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal sees great potential for the Centre. After a temporary relocation to Bangkok

in the aftermath of the earthquake in 2015 in Nepal, we are expecting the Centre to resume its work soon from Kathmandu.

We are encouraged by the supportive views expressed by the countries of the region. The Government of Nepal has extended all necessary assistance for the Centre's operation from Kathmandu and has worked together with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as with the Centre, to revitalize the Kathmandu process for disarmament. As in previous years, Nepal will be introducing a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific" at the current session of the Committee. We would appreciate the continued support of all delegations for the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, and also call on all traditional and potential sponsors to sponsor the draft resolution.

Let me conclude by expressing my delegation's confidence that the discussions here will contribute to strengthening the disarmament discourse with a view to establishing a stable, safer and secure world. Rest assured, in this context, of our fullest cooperation.

Mr. Denктаş (Turkey): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your election. Turkey attaches importance to the First Committee's work, and you can count on our cooperation during your tenure.

Turkey strongly supports global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We are fully committed to our shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We will continue to work with our partners towards that ultimate goal. We see the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the centrepiece of the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We would like to reaffirm our firm conviction that the implementation of the NPT through practical steps in an incremental manner is still the only viable way forward. Equally important is proceeding with consensus. Turkey urges all stakeholders to refrain from any action that could undermine the integrity of the Treaty or create an alternative to its full implementation and universalization.

As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we wish to emphasize the need for its early entry into force. As underlined in the joint statement issued at the eighth Ministerial

Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, the Treaty is a core element of the international nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We welcome the ratification of the Treaty now by 166 States, and we once again invite all States, particularly the eight remaining annex 2 States, to ratify the Treaty without further delay. Both last month's Friends Ministerial Meeting in New York and the twentieth anniversary Ministerial Meeting in Vienna in June helped to raise awareness of the need for its early entry into force.

We welcome the P-5 joint statement by which these States pledged to strive for the Treaty's early ratification and reaffirmed their moratoriums. Similarly, Turkey was a sponsor of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). Turkey values its relations with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and is willing to further its contributions to the provisional secretariat, including its representation.

Turkey condemns in the strongest terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches. We consider them to constitute a threat to regional and international peace and security and expect the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its international commitments.

Regarding Iran's nuclear programme, full, transparent and uninterrupted implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as well as Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and its annexes, will help to reassure our neighbourhood against proliferation concerns. Resolution 2231 (2015) will ensure the enforcement of that Plan and guarantee that the International Atomic Energy Agency will continue to verify Iran's compliance with its nuclear-related commitments.

Nuclear and radiological security is a key priority for Turkey. We value the international safeguards system of the Agency. Turkey recognizes the need for the further strengthening and universalization of the Agency's verification authority. States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology. We must also ensure that all requisite steps are taken so that there will be no diversion of nuclear programmes from peaceful to military uses.

It is our firm belief that the time is right for starting negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty. This will be a significant contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. It will also pave the way for

parallel advances in other core agenda items of the Conference on Disarmament.

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 are important components of the global system against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Turkey does not possess such weapons. We reiterate our call for a wider adherence to and a strict implementation of these Conventions. We actively support efforts for their universalization.

Turkey attaches particular significance to the CWC as one of the most valuable instruments of our times. The most important and relevant aspect of the CWC today is its implementation. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), despite all its efforts, has not been able to verify the Syrian regime's declaration, and there remain gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in these declarations. Recently, the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) has established the liability of the Syrian armed forces in at least two cases. JIM's findings confirm that the Syrian regime has not fulfilled its obligations and has continued to use chemical weapons after its attacks in Ghouta in 2013. They also demonstrate that Turkey has been justified in its previous warnings. As we look forward to the JIM's final report on three more cases where the regime is again the primary suspect, the international community must prepare to take action.

The use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and a war crime. The perpetrators of these horrific acts must be held accountable. There can be no impunity if we do not want to allow the use of chemical weapons to become our new normal. The next step must be to take measures against the Syrian regime in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015).

The Syrian Armed Forces are not the only entity that is using toxic chemicals as weapons. The use of chemical weapons by Da'esh has also been established by the JIM. Turkey strongly condemns all use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere by anyone and under any circumstances. Our efforts to counter Da'esh will continue with resolve.

We recognize the importance of strengthening international efforts to prevent both State and non-State actors from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction. The eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention and the comprehensive review of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) are extremely important opportunities to take that action.

As regards conventional disarmament, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects constitutes an indispensable element of international law on conventional weapons with indiscriminate effects. The universality of such a Convention remains a key objective. The threat posed by the proliferation of illicit conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, is no less important than the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. However, for the sake of finishing this meeting on time, we will talk about this subject in detail under the relevant cluster.

The safety and security of space is also important and deserves our equal attention. We note the recommendations of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts with respect to outer space. As regards cybersecurity, we supported the establishment of the fifth Group of Governmental Experts. We are following its briefings on its deliberations closely and expect its work to be as inclusive as possible. Turkey has remarkably strengthened its national legislation and international cooperation in recent years and wishes to register its desire to provide an expert to the next Group of Governmental Experts.

Each of the seven clusters that we will address in the First Committee this year deserves particular emphasis. We will share our views on these in detail in the thematic debates. I wish to conclude by reiterating my delegation's full support in our common efforts.

Mr. Bessedik (Algeria): Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador van Oosterom of the Netherlands, for his leadership and the Committee's admirable efforts during the previous session of the General Assembly.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, and by Tunisia on behalf of the Arab Group (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

First, I should like to reiterate the commitment of Algeria to multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. In previous years we have seen renewed efforts, proposals and initiatives aimed at addressing a wide range of issues in the field of disarmament and international security. Nevertheless, more substantive progress in this area needs to be made. We reiterate the need for all Member States to pursue multilateral negotiations in good faith, as agreed by consensus in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

As a State party to the main treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction, Algeria reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains the first and foremost priority and expresses its concern over the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. I take this opportunity to reaffirm Algeria's long-standing position on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This unique international instrument remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and we stress once more the need for its full implementation and universalization as well as for compliance with each of its three pillars in a balanced manner.

According to the NPT, nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility to achieve nuclear disarmament. In this respect, they have to fulfil their Treaty obligations and to honour their commitments under the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the Action Plan adopted by consensus at the eighth NPT Review Conference.

We deeply regret the inability of the ninth NPT Review Conference to reach a consensus outcome document despite the endeavours of the States parties and their intensive consultations. We still believe that the international community has lost a precious opportunity as a result and that, sadly, doubt has been cast over the credibility of the whole regime owing to the lack of political will. However, we emphasize resolution 70/34 as a fundamental element of multilateral disarmament efforts because it provides a specific road map towards achieving a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons aimed at the prohibition of their possession, development, production, acquisition,

testing, stockpiling, transfer, and use or threat of use and at their total elimination.

In this regard, Algeria welcomes the report (see A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established by resolution 70/33, and strongly supports the recommendation contained therein that the General Assembly should convene a high-level conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

We regret that, 20 years after the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), this vital multilateral instrument for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament still has not entered into force. While welcoming the recent ratification of the Treaty by Swaziland and Myanmar, which brings the number of States parties to the Treaty to 166 out of 183 signatory States, we believe that this growing number of ratifications represents firm support for the progressive universalization of this international instrument. In that respect, Algeria calls upon all States, particularly those whose accession is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify it without further delay. My delegation wishes to reiterate once again the need for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument that provides negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States.

Algeria welcomes the convening of conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Such meetings offer the opportunity of highlighting the irreversible devastating effects of nuclear weapons and the immeasurable suffering caused to human beings. With Algerian territory having been the site of nuclear testing in the early 1960s, Algeria fully understands the appalling consequences of such testing. For all these reasons, Algeria has endorsed the humanitarian pledge, thereby joining the effort to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, and it strongly expresses its concern about their catastrophic humanitarian consequences for human health, the environment and vital resources.

My delegation strongly supports initiatives aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world, as they are not only confidence-building measures but also concrete steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation

norms, and they consolidate international efforts towards peace and security.

In this context, we reaffirm that the entry into force on 15 July 2009 of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, represents an important contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security. Algeria, which was among the drafters of that Treaty and was one of the first countries to sign and ratify it, calls on nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant annexes to that Treaty.

Undoubtedly, the Treaty of Pelindaba sets a clear example for other regions to follow, particularly the volatile region of the Middle East. Algeria deeply regrets that this region remains unable to attain such a status many years after the adoption by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference of the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In rejecting the status quo, Algeria stresses its strong commitment to the implementation of that resolution and to the 2010 action plan, and expresses its deep disappointment at the postponement of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Lack of political will is clearly the reason for the continuing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and is obviously another source of frustration and disappointment. In this regard, Algeria reaffirms the importance of the CD as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. It reminds members of decision CD/1864, which was adopted by consensus in 2009 under the Algerian presidency, and calls upon the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has been unable to adopt concrete recommendations for several years, Algeria reaffirms its commitment to the mandate of the Commission, expresses its full support for the Commission's work and calls upon all Member States to demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility to enable the Commission to make concrete recommendations in 2017.

With such cases of persistent deadlock in some parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery, we are of the view that the fourth special session of the

General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) should be convened in order to review thoroughly all disarmament issues. In this context, the Open-ended Working Group on SSOD-IV, chaired by Ecuador, should provide an opportunity for reviewing the most critical aspects of the disarmament process and should be the crucible for all international efforts aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and at the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

With regard to the issue of conventional arms, my delegation would like to stress that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly in North Africa and the Sahel. This illicit trade is a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime, and is therefore of ongoing concern to my country. On the basis of its national experience, Algeria reaffirms that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons are more than ever of the utmost relevance. We continue to emphasize the importance of their full, balanced and effective implementation.

Let me conclude by stating that we view the First Committee as an essential component of the United Nations disarmament machinery, and we remain committed to working actively and constructively during this session. In this context, Algeria will submit its annual draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region" in the course of our meetings and hopes to receive the support of all delegations.

Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair during this session. My delegation is wholeheartedly committed to the successful fulfilment of the work of the Committee and assures you of our full support and cooperation.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

My Government recently adopted the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, a five-year strategic plan for achieving self-reliance. The plan focuses on three areas: reconciliation,

security and stability. We have also adopted a five-year national campaign plan to increase the mobility and effectiveness of our security forces. Improvements to the Afghan national defence and security forces are critical not only for securing our country against armed extremist groups sent from outside but also for reducing criminality such as extortion, kidnapping and illegal seizure, which have become huge disincentives to business investment.

The presence of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explosive remnants of war (ERW) and landmines pose a severe threat to the lives of the Afghan people and impede development activities. Each month more than 100 civilians are victims of IEDs, landmines and ERW. Unfortunately, Afghanistan still remains one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. According to United Nations reports, sustained financing is critical for the mine action programme in Afghanistan to declare Afghanistan mine-free by 2023 in line with its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Achieving that goal would be historic for Afghanistan and the world, given the scope of the problem.

The mass illicit trafficking of arms, mainly small arms and light weapons, along the Durand Line, which has enabled terrorists and violent extremists to cause the Afghan people tremendous suffering for decades, must be brought to an end. The savage attacks in populated urban centres showcase the cowardly behaviour of the terrorist groups and their supporters as they try to compensate for their so-called spring and summer offensive losses.

We have evidence that most of these attacks were orchestrated outside Afghanistan. Last month we seized two trailer trucks entering Afghanistan from Pakistan with 35,700 kilograms of ammonium nitrate, an amount nearly 20 times larger than the amount used in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. This would have posed an enormous threat to lives and property had the attack been carried out. Therefore, States must assume responsibility for controlling access to precursors and weapons by terrorists and violent extremists. We call on all relevant parties to further strengthen their rules and regulations to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

My delegation believes in and reiterates its commitment to multilateral diplomacy as a crucial

principle for advancing the global disarmament agenda. To achieve the goal of arms control, reduction, disarmament and total elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, there is an urgent need for all sides to demonstrate political will.

In this context, it is imperative that the P5+1 and the Islamic Republic of Iran fulfil their commitments under the agreement that was concluded successfully last year. Afghanistan, as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction, strongly supports all initiatives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. We support all initiatives that could lead to the de-escalation of the recent tensions between neighbouring nuclear States in our region. Afghanistan strongly urges all States to fulfil their international responsibilities by signing and ratifying all multilateral treaties relating to disarmament and non-proliferation and by actively supporting all efforts to promote the goals of those treaties. In this context, my delegation condemns in the strongest terms the recent nuclear test conducted by North Korea.

We express our deep disappointment at the failure to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. As the political turmoil in the Middle East threatens to spill over into neighbouring regions, Afghanistan wishes to highlight the need for immediate action by the international community to overcome an ongoing diplomatic stalemate and avert a looming humanitarian and political catastrophe.

Afghanistan is extremely disturbed by the humanitarian threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use, intentionally or accidentally. It is for this reason that we welcome the outcome of the third and final Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which recognizes that the total elimination of all nuclear weapons is the only definite safeguard against a catastrophic nuclear explosion.

I should like to reiterate that Afghanistan is gravely concerned about the continued use of IEDs in many parts of the globe. IEDs are responsible for thousands of civilian casualties every day. They have become the primary weapon for non-State armed groups in many

conflicts. Their impact on the security and stability of States is profound as they not only impair the political, social and economic development of a country, but also prevent necessary humanitarian aid from reaching the affected areas.

Because of the lack of a comprehensive and systematic approach to countering the use of IEDs, which are all too easy to manufacture, acquire and transport, my delegation introduced a draft resolution last year that was adopted by consensus. We are grateful to all who supported that important resolution. Pursuant to the resolution, the Secretary-General has issued his report (A/71/187), for which we thank him. My delegation will soon start informal consultations on the follow-up draft resolution, and we will again be seeking cooperation and support from other delegations so that the resolution can be adopted by consensus.

In conclusion, my delegation notes with concern that, despite the many positive developments in the work of international diplomacy for nuclear disarmament, we still face threats to human security and sustainability of an unprecedented nature. The global and regional climate of terrorism and violent extremism has made the call for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including small arms and light weapons, even more urgent.

Ms. Hassan (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): Given that this is the first time I am taking the floor, I should like to convey to you, Sir, the congratulations of Djibouti upon your election as the Chair of this Committee. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We assure you of our full support and cooperation during this seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered, respectively, 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 (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

At present, there is a widespread feeling of insecurity. The causes and urgency of the risks vary from one part of the world to the next. Nuclear disarmament is and remains a priority for our planet. Today, there are nearly 17,000 nuclear warheads in the world's arsenals. They cost approximately \$100 billion per year — funds that could be channelled to tackle the various challenges our planet faces, including climate change, poverty, socioeconomic crises, and the list goes

on. In actual fact, these challenges are interrelated and know no national borders. Hence, joint global strategies are required to address them, and Governments must come together at the United Nations here in New York to craft and implement such strategies. The only area where there is no strategy is the one which presents the greatest danger of all, namely, that of nuclear weapons.

(*spoke in English*)

We need to promote awareness of the devastating effects posed by nuclear weapons and reaffirm our commitment to global nuclear disarmament. The people of Djibouti share the universal desire to live in a world free of nuclear weapons. We unfortunately celebrated last month the third International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, mindful of the failure for almost seven decades to bring the nuclear-weapon era to an end. Our rhetoric on ensuring a safe and secure world must be translated into concrete action to bring about a nuclear-weapon-free world. The status quo is no longer an option.

(*spoke in French*)

My country, as a signatory to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), favours the complete elimination of nuclear activities for military purposes, as they threaten global peace and exacerbate national and international tensions. We must therefore act resolutely to ensure the implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was signed 20 years ago. We must also spare no effort in ensuring that the obligations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are fulfilled.

(*spoke in English*)

As a State party to the NPT, Djibouti looks forward in particular to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as decided at the NPT Review Conference in 1995. Nuclear-weapon-free zones can be a means to boost international efforts in favour of peace and security.

The renewed focus on the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has reinvigorated the debate on nuclear disarmament and raised questions about the policy responses to date and the need to explore all options so as to eliminate the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humankind as a whole. Having endorsed the humanitarian pledge, Djibouti also looks forward to the General Assembly decision to convene a United

Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament no later than 2018.

(spoke in French)

Many States in Africa suffer disproportionately as a result of the pernicious repercussions of irresponsible arms transfers that destabilize the continent's political, sociological and economic balance. According to the African Union, nearly 500 million light weapons are circulating in Africa. Conflicts and insecurity unfortunately cost Africa billions of dollars per year, not to mention human casualties.

(spoke in English)

To conclude, at a time when the inherent danger of the illicit transfer of such weapons has been of assistance to transnational organized criminals, including terrorists, we continue to believe that an effective Arms Trade Treaty will not only contribute to establishment of a responsive regime for transferring small arms and light weapons but will also bring peace and opportunity to regions and peoples who have known little of either.

Mr. Eloumni (Morocco) *(spoke in French)*: Permit me firstly to convey to you, Mr. Chair, as well as to other members of the Bureau the congratulations of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco on your election. I also wish to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, on his outstanding chairship.

The delegation of Morocco associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). Since we are limited in time, I will only read part of my statement, but the full text will be available on PaperSmart.

Our deliberations are taking place in an international context marked by a deterioration in international security and an exacerbation of the terrorist threat, especially in the Middle East and in the Sahelo-Saharan area. This session is also taking place after the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), where the situation was characterized by the slow pace of nuclear-disarmament mechanisms and the absence of real progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this context, Morocco shares the concerns expressed in particular by the Security Council

following the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear tests, which could relaunch an arms race, thus constituting a threat to peace and security in the region. Morocco is convinced that diplomacy, dialogue and positive continuous engagement in the region are the appropriate means to solve disputes. Morocco supports the declaration of the Korean peninsula as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, which is crucial for regional peace and security.

The Kingdom of Morocco, a party to all international nuclear-proliferation and disarmament instruments, is firmly committed to the elimination of all nuclear weapons, which remain the only weapons of mass destruction that are not subject to a universal prohibition standard through a binding instrument.

The report (see A/71/371) deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, in Geneva, have emphasized once again our division with regard to practical disarmament measures. The report also shows that the vast majority of States no longer accept the stagnation of multilateral disarmament efforts and want to see a breakthrough and real progress in the elimination of nuclear weapons. Morocco congratulates Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand on his chairmanship of the Working Group and fully supports the Group's recommendations, including those which call for the convening of an international conference to negotiate an instrument for banning nuclear weapons.

In my delegation's view, it is not just a matter of being in favour of or against this recommendation. Before we adopt such an important decision, we need a real dialogue with everyone's participation. The First Committee, and all of us, should take the time to consider the report of the Working Group and its recommendations. Unfortunately, we note that all the work of the Group and its report have been reduced to the single recommendation to convene a conference in 2017.

The delegation of Morocco believes that consultations on the relevant draft resolution, as well as the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, should offer the opportunity for real dialogue on the possibilities of reaching agreement on one or several collective processes leading to the ban and total elimination of nuclear weapons. Neither acting in haste nor a categorical rejection should prevent such dialogue. The Kingdom of Morocco, willing to participate

actively in such a dialogue, will be guided by the following considerations.

First, the NPT is a key instrument for maintaining international peace and security. It is imperative that the provisions of the NPT and the obligations derived therefrom be respected by all States. Also, the measures included in decisions of review conferences are contracts, the full respect for which will make it possible for us to collectively move towards the realization of the objectives of the Treaty.

Second, article VI of the NPT sets forth an obligation to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament, in terms of effective measures and an early date for the cessation of the nuclear arms race. We should keep in mind, however, that the Treaty was opened for signature in July 1968. The obligation under article VI is very clear, given the agreements concluded at the review conferences and the international consensus of 1978, when the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament stated that nuclear disarmament was the highest priority.

Third, it is not acceptable to unduly exploit the language of compromise contained in article VI. Neither the progressive nature of nuclear disarmament nor general and complete disarmament should be invoked to delay negotiations on effective measures of nuclear disarmament. The evolution of the international situation and new security challenges with the risks of proliferation should never serve as a pretext not to implement the obligations in the area of nuclear disarmament. Quite to the contrary, collective security and the safety of our world require stepping up efforts so as to free ourselves of nuclear weapons in the framework of a transparent and internationally verifiable process.

Fourth, the cessation of all modernization of nuclear arsenals and the reduction of their role in defence doctrines, as well as negative security assurances to non-nuclear States parties to the NPT, should constitute confidence-building measures in this disarmament process.

Fifth, a ban on nuclear tests should also be irreversible and verifiable with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Morocco reiterates its appeal to all annex 2 States that have not yet done so to ratify that Treaty to facilitate its entry into force as quickly as possible.

Sixth, nuclear-weapon States have a special status which imposes on them a specific responsibility. Those States are called upon without delay to start bilateral and multilateral processes with a view to obtaining substantial and irreversible reductions of their nuclear arsenals and to building confidence among them. Those countries are called upon to change their attitude, which is untenable, in the area of disarmament, ceasing to reject all proposals entailing internationally verifiable multilateral processes.

Seventh, Morocco will continue to favour a general and inclusive process and will not abstain from contributing to all attempts to realize the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is regrettable that the 2015 NPT Review Conference was not able to take decisions to promote international efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in application of the 1995 resolution. An international conference on that question could offer a historic occasion to trigger a process to free the region from weapons of mass destruction and strengthen regional peace and security. Morocco stresses the importance of adhering to the NPT and the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency by all States of the Middle East region, including Israel.

Morocco is deeply convinced that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world requires the efficiency of United Nations disarmament mechanisms, particularly the Conference on Disarmament. The strengthened efficiency of these mechanisms depends on the political will of the States and respect for obligations undertaken.

The Kingdom of Morocco attaches specific importance to the exchange of information and experience, as well as the strengthening of international and regional cooperation in the area of nuclear security and the fight against the illicit trade in radioactive and nuclear material.

The expertise and experience shared in the framework of several international initiatives will be able to strengthen multilateral actions in the areas of non-proliferation and nuclear security.

We will not comment on disarmament mechanisms and conventional weapons and other topics today, given our limited time. That will therefore be done during the thematic debates.

Mr. De Sousa (Timor-Leste): At the outset of my remarks, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I am confident that, given your in-depth knowledge and experience, this session will deliver the best possible outcome. I assure you, Sir, of the full cooperation of the delegation of Timor-Leste in contributing to the success of our work.

The world is currently facing an international security crisis with the proliferation of nuclear weapons and an increase in terrorist attacks and small-arms trafficking and conflicts. As a post-conflict nation, Timor-Leste believes that the arms race and the use of weapons will never bring peace and justice to the world. This notion is reflected in our Constitution, where we defend international security through the promotion of peace and reconciliation in the nation-building process.

The world that we know today faces numerous challenges. War, terrorism, the race to acquire weapons of mass destruction, inequality, exploitation and injustice, just to mention a few, are still part of our daily reality. Timor-Leste welcomes the initiative of world leaders who urged States to find a common solution to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and the prevention of their use. Accordingly, Timor-Leste associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Myanmar on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively, in promoting multilateral diplomacy as the sole and sustainable method of addressing disarmament, non-proliferation and international security (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The United Nations, specifically through this Committee, has served as the platform for multilateral diplomacy in addressing international security issues. Timor-Leste also offers the Security Council its full support, as we have complete confidence in its ability to find a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

On 13 January 2007, Timor-Leste signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the purpose of which is to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation among the peoples of South-East Asia. By doing so, we declared that we expect a high level of solidarity and collaboration among nations of the region based on the fundamentals of respect, non-interference, settlement of differences

by peaceful means, renunciation of the threat or use of force and effective cooperation among nations.

Over the years the links between disarmament and peaceful development have been the main focus of the General Assembly. Post-conflict countries face many challenges during the initial stages of their State-building processes. As a post-conflict nation, Timor-Leste knows what it means to have a security crisis in a non-peaceful environment. Timor-Leste is a founding member of the g7+ group of fragile States, whose purpose is to share experiences and lessons learned between ourselves and other post-conflict nations and to promote cooperation for the achievement of peace and development. The motto of the g7+ suggests that there is no peace without development and there is no development without peace.

Committed to that principle, Timor-Leste has ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. This is a clear manifestation of our commitment to promoting a peaceful and just world.

In conclusion, Timor-Leste recognizes the efforts of the United Nations — through this Committee and other channels of multilateral diplomacy — to secure regional and international security. The reduction in nuclear weapons, disarmament and the elimination of small-arms trafficking have been and should remain the top priorities of the United Nations in order to promote regional and international stability, peace and development.

Mr. Laouani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Tunisian delegation, I should once again like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee. We assure you, Sir, of our full cooperation to ensure the Committee's success during this session.

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

Tunisia attaches great importance to multilateral efforts for disarmament and will continue to support all initiatives to promote the elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as the reduction of conventional weapons. Despite the disastrous humanitarian consequences triggered by the accidental or voluntary use of a nuclear weapon, the major differences among nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, as well as among the nuclear Powers themselves, significantly hamper the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament and the resumption of negotiations to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Tunisia wishes to reaffirm our conviction that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a key tool to achieve that aim and stress the importance of supporting it while seeking to apply it in a balanced way without discrimination in reliance upon its three pillars. We also commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and support the recommendation in favour of a binding legal instrument banning nuclear weapons which would help to achieve the Non-Proliferation Treaty's objectives.

Tunisia regrets the fact that States parties failed to adopt a final outcome document at the last NPT Review Conference, owing, *inter alia*, to a deadlock on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We urge the international community to adopt urgent specific measures to break the deadlock, which is largely the result of the refusal of the principal stakeholder concerned to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We fear that a lack of action will significantly undermine the credibility of the NPT, and we are liable to see countries in the region engage in an arms race. We will then have failed in our long-standing goal.

We would like to reiterate our conviction that the immense resources at present dedicated to nuclear weapons could be better used for peace and security if they were used, even partially, for development, the protection of the environment, and the promotion of democracy and human rights.

In any event, my delegation believes that disarmament is all the more indispensable now given the ubiquitous nature of the terrorist threat. We must redouble our efforts to prevent non-State actors from

gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, biological or chemical. Accordingly, Tunisia reiterates its commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and condemns any use of such weapons regardless of the perpetrators.

The African continent is the first to have been affected by the adverse humanitarian, economic and social consequences of the excessive and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which drive internal conflicts of all types and fuel the activities of terrorist groups. Tunisia underscores the need to fully and effectively implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We welcome the outcomes of the sixth Biennial Meeting, as well as the outcome of the second Review Conference of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Finally, we share the growing concerns about the use of explosive weapons in inhabited areas, especially in the Middle East, and the devastating consequences of such use for civilian populations.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): Malaysia congratulates you, Ambassador Boukadoum, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and the other members of the Bureau. My delegation also extends its appreciation to the Secretariat for its contribution to our work.

My delegation also wishes to convey its deepest sympathy and condolences to our Haitian colleagues and to the people of Haiti following the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew. Malaysia stands in solidarity with the Haitian people and their Government during this difficult time.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The existence of more than 15,000 nuclear weapons today continues to pose a serious threat. The modernization and upgrading of nuclear arsenals continues, and trillions of dollars are being channelled to that end. We have witnessed how States have forgone their commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There

are also credible fears that non-State actors are attempting to acquire nuclear weapons or materials for terrorism and other criminal acts. Efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons should therefore continue to be the priority to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in the event of a nuclear explosion.

The lack of progress on nuclear disarmament is a source of concern and growing frustration among the majority of the States Members of the United Nations. In that context, Malaysia welcomes the recommendations made in the landmark report (see A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. We believe that the Open-ended Working Group process is complementary to the NPT, as it reinforces the commitment to nuclear disarmament set forth in article VI of the Treaty, along with the support it provides to the non-proliferation pillar of the Treaty. Therefore, arguments and fears that the process undermines the NPT are unwarranted and unsubstantiated.

It must be noted that the evolution of the Open-ended Working Group process must not be viewed as undermining the Conference on Disarmament machinery, but one that is complementary and creative in the absence of decades of tried-and-tested methods. We therefore call on delegations that have not fully engaged to reconsider their positions and be part of the collective effort to achieve progress at a desired and more comfortable pace for the international community.

This year we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). But can we really celebrate such a milestone when in reality there is still unfinished business on the Treaty? It would seem rather ironic to mark 20 years of the non-entry into force of the CTBT. We firmly believe that the lack of movement to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT is detrimental to the purpose and objectives of the Treaty.

On a positive note, Malaysia welcomes Myanmar and Swaziland as the Treaty's most recent ratifiers. We need to see incrementally positive progress like that to ensure the CTBT enters into force at the earliest possible date.

Malaysia supported Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), on the CTBT, which was adopted last month, as it strengthens the international norms against nuclear testing. However, we wish to underline that

the resolution should not stall or be a substitute for ratification, particularly by annex 2 States, but instead inspire fresh impetus for their expeditious signature and ratification of the Treaty.

During Malaysia's presidency of the Security Council in August, Malaysia convened a high-level open debate (see S/PV.7758) on the challenges of addressing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials to non-State actors. The debate was also held to contribute to the comprehensive review exercise of resolution 1540 (2004). During the debate, we called, inter alia, for a regular review of scientific, technological and international commercial advances that facilitate access to the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. We see that aspect as incrementally requiring a sharper focus in the First Committee.

Malaysia is a long-standing supporter of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthen peace and security, as they promote greater transparency and dialogue among States regionally, eventually leading to the creation of an environment conducive to arms control and obliquely reduce the risk of regional tensions and conflicts.

My delegation is firmly committed to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. We believe in the value of engagement to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty.

As we commemorate the 8 July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (A/51/218, annex), it is worth recalling that the unanimous decision concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In that vein, during the upcoming thematic debate, Malaysia will submit its traditional draft resolution on the follow-up to the opinion, which will incorporate technical updates. At this juncture, I should like to invite all Member States to support the draft resolution and to consider joining the growing number of States sponsors.

On conventional weapons, Malaysia continues to undertake the necessary steps, including internal consultations and a possible review of domestic and administrative provisions, as part of our considerations

in ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Adequate and relevant domestic laws have been established, and steps to prevent the diversion of arms into the illicit market are being taken, as part of our contribution to the universalization efforts of the ATT.

In conclusion, let us be bold in fulfilling our obligations by considering options that will allow us to advance at a more comfortable pace towards improving the outcome in the First Committee in a tangible, progressive and substantial way. My delegation remains committed to that end and to achieving a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Touré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Guinea would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, upon your election to the helm of this important Committee. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Your evident competence and personal qualities, Sir, will guarantee the success of our work, and we would like to assure you of our full cooperation. We would also like to voice profound gratitude to your predecessor from the Netherlands, who discharged his duties effectively during the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

The statements delivered by Indonesia, Nigeria and Tunisia (see A/C.1/71/PV.2) — on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States, respectively — perfectly reflect the concerns of the international community as it faces a major challenge in a context that is marked both by promising prospects and especially myriad threats due to the phenomenon of globalization. It is a question in particular of making efforts to persevere in achieving general and complete disarmament, and in building, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, collective security for the benefit of all of humankind.

In that context, conventional disarmament remains a major issue for many countries worldwide, owing to the political, economic, social and humanitarian consequences of the illicit manufacture, transfer, proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons, especially in Africa. This dangerous scourge has reached an unprecedented level with the surge in terrorist attacks and mounting violent extremism in all its forms. That is why adopting the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in addition to legal

instruments such as the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), remains critical. They must now be implemented with more visible ownership. There must be universal accession to them, international cooperation and assistance, and support for key actors such as civil society. We cannot sufficiently emphasize the importance of the conventions, protocols, codes of conduct, declarations, decisions, principles, guidelines and regimes of the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

A national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been set up in Guinea. It brings together the Ministries of National Defence, Security and Civil Protection, Justice, and Territorial Administration and Decentralization, as well as the National Assembly and civil society. My delegation would like to thank the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, which recently organized a workshop in Dakar from 22 to 30 September, on the efficient implementation of the ATT, with support from Switzerland, France and the United Nations Development Programme.

At present, the risks of nuclear proliferation are grave and numerous. Accordingly, we firmly support the following initiatives: the cessation of the arms race in outer space, so as to ensure the security and safety of all and prevent its militarization; the use of economic and social development to foster international peace and security; the development of new information and communications technology; the ratification and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by all parties without exception and the use of tests for peaceful purposes; the acknowledgement of the irreplaceable role of the Conference on Disarmament as the multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and of the First Committee, with the aim of breaking the decades-old deadlock in negotiations; the convening in 2017 of an international high-level conference on nuclear disarmament; the underscoring of the key role of the International Atomic Energy Agency; the establishment and operationalization of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in the context of which the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, to which Guinea is a signatory, is to be commended; the support for the Group of Governmental Experts to address nuclear

disarmament under the NPT and its three pillars; and the adoption of stringent norms and rules for chemical and biological disarmament in the light of the human and environmental devastation caused by such weapons.

In conclusion, the Republic of Guinea stands willing to make a contribution alongside other nations to uphold the global order and build a world that is peaceful, prosperous and fair and a global system of governance that is democratic and transparent based on consensus, negotiation and cooperation. We attach particular importance to a global approach, without excluding strengthened regional security to settle conflicts, eradicate terrorism and ward off the nuclear threat.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): The Holy See delegation extends its congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, and to your Bureau and assures you of our full cooperation in the work of the First Committee.

Weapons of all sizes and shapes must be our continuing concern. While progress has been made in limiting the arms trade, landmines and cluster munitions, the continued use of small arms and incendiary weapons is deeply disturbing. The public is rightly repulsed by the growing use of incendiary weapons, which cause excruciatingly painful burns that lead to long-term physical and psychological injury. Innocent civilians experience terrible suffering. Protocol III of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects is not strong enough to end the use of those weapons. The Protocol must be strengthened to stop their use.

The international community must strive harder to stringently control the use of so-called conventional weapons that clearly violate international humanitarian law. Increasingly more powerful and sophisticated conventional weapons are devastating entire communities, hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure, and must now be treated with the same condemnation we attach to weapons of mass destruction.

The tragedies we are witnessing make it a matter of urgency for the international community to review existing classifications and definitions of what constitutes a weapon of mass destruction. The Holy See

therefore recommends that discussions on weapons of mass destruction go beyond the traditional categories of nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons, to include devastatingly powerful conventional weapons used to perpetrate war crimes and crimes against humanity. Such an approach is imperative if we are to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in zones of conflict. United Nations affirmations that development, peace and security and human rights are intimately connected and mutually reinforcing abound. In adopting the 2030 Agenda, Member States expressed their determination to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development.

That commitment can be translated into reality only if wars and conflicts are resolved, and they can be resolved only if there are strict controls on the arms trade, both legal and illegal. Peace, security and stability cannot be gained solely by the force of arms, or by increasing military spending, since these are multidimensional objectives that include aspects that are linked not only to the political and military sphere but also to those of human rights, the rule of law, economic and social conditions and the protection of the environment.

At this session the First Committee must pay special attention to the report (see A/71/371) issued by the recently concluded Open-ended Working Group, which was given the task of taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. This well-balanced report, the product of serious discussion, highlighted the Open-ended Working Group's recommendation that additional efforts should be pursued to elaborate concrete effective legal measures to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. In reaffirming the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the report noted majority support of the participating States for the General Assembly to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

In that respect, the Committee will need to consider seriously how to pursue a negotiating process open to all States, with a view to fulfilling the basic requirement of the NPT, which enjoins States parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race.

It is incumbent upon the Committee to redouble its efforts to advance the recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group, especially at a time when the disarmament machinery is at a standstill.

Last year, when Pope Francis addressed the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.3), he said there was an urgent need to work for a world free of nuclear weapons, in full application of the NPT, in letter and in spirit, with the goal of a complete prohibition of these weapons. The Holy See believes that nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence. We must work urgently and unceasingly to find the legal path towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Bamyia (Palestine): On behalf of the State of Palestine, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your well-deserved election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. This is yet further testimony to the standing of your country, Algeria, as an important actor on the multilateral stage. Allow me also to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau and to wish them every success in their duties.

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Tunisia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The acquisition by the State of Palestine of observer State status at the United Nations paved the way for its accession to various international conventions. When identifying the treaties it wished to join, the State of Palestine gave priority to those relating to protecting life, fundamental freedoms and human dignity. Disarmament is first and foremost about fulfilling those purposes. That is why Palestine acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, and the Protocols to that Convention on Non-Detectable Fragments and on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons, as well as the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The State of Palestine is contemplating

acceding to other treaties in the field of disarmament, thereby contributing to their necessary universality.

The State of Palestine has also joined core international humanitarian law conventions, and underlines the vital articulation between disarmament and international humanitarian law. At the heart of international humanitarian law lies the protection of those who do not take part, or who have stopped taking part in hostilities, notably civilians. Such protection entails upholding the principle of distinction, and as such ridding our world of certain weapons and duly restricting the use of others. It also entails upholding accountability as indispensable for ensuring respect for international law.

The greatest possible breach of the principle of distinction derives from the use of nuclear weapons, with their indiscriminate short- and long-term effects. Nuclear weapons constitute the greatest threat of all. Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are complementary and equally essential for ensuring international peace and security. There is no substitute for the total elimination of nuclear weapons in order to safeguard us from the existential threat posed by the use of such weapons.

We deeply regret the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final document, which constituted a setback to efforts to advance the full implementation of existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament commitments towards the fulfilment of article VI of the NPT. The establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East is more urgent than ever and deserves the support of all. Twenty-one years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and six years after the adoption of the 2010 Action Plan on the Middle East, determined action is long overdue.

One party — Israel — has illegally developed a nuclear arsenal and has consistently refused to renounce it, or to accede to the NPT without preconditions and place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards, thereby blocking the prospect of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. Such a destructive attitude should not be shielded or rewarded, but rather condemned and confronted. While the process of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone must be open to all, it similarly must be stoppable by none. Nuclear-

weapon-free zones are an indispensable step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, a prospect we should all strive for.

Similarly, there is an urgent need to uphold the prohibition on the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical and biological weapons. While not yet a party to the Arms Trade Treaty, Palestine fully endorses and supports the underlying principles behind the conclusion of the Treaty, its object and purpose and the prohibitions it formulates.

Palestine also underlines our shared and collective responsibility to preserve and protect the spaces that belong to all humankind — outer space, the seabed, the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, and cyberspace. Ensuring that those are safe and secure spaces dedicated to research and development and our collective human advancement is essential for promoting international cooperation and safeguarding international peace and security.

It is time to substitute the balance of fear and the arms race it entails with a measure of reason, which can save us all. Some countries measure their power in counting the number of weapons they hold. Others are left with counting the victims of those weapons. We belong to the latter group. It is often those who are the victims of horrors and violations of their rights to life, freedom and dignity who are at the forefront of the development and strengthening of international law. As such, Palestine, which remains under prolonged military and colonial occupation, pledges, as an integral member of the international community, to strive fully and faithfully for the promotion, enforcement and respect for international law and the expansion of its protection, including in the vital field of disarmament.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. De Macedo Soares (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean): On behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), I wish to express to you, Mr. Chair, our warmest congratulations on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We also extend greetings to the other members of the Bureau and to the Secretariat. We have full confidence, Sir, that you will lead us to a successful outcome.

This session of the First Committee will be a historic one — probably the most important one since the General Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in 1996. The States members of OPANAL are unanimous in supporting the recommendation by the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

OPANAL and its member States are fully disposed to work next year for the achievement of this progressive development on the road towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. On 26 September, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, celebrated here at the United Nations with a special meeting, OPANAL issued a declaration circulated as document A/C.1/71/2, annex. It is worth noting that Latin America and the Caribbean, by means of its own specialized organization, OPANAL, was the only region that made a formal and comprehensive statement on that occasion. That shows the wisdom of the decision to include an institution in the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty of Tlatelolco. OPANAL not only enhances the region's position and action against nuclear weapons through the Treaty, it also ensures compliance with it. As the Treaty states in its preamble, militarily denuclearized zones are not an end in themselves, but a means to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. As happens every three years, at this session the General Assembly is expected to adopt a draft resolution on the Treaty of Tlatelolco under item 91 of the agenda. As in previous instances, we hope the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

On 14 February 50 years will have elapsed since the Treaty of Tlatelolco was concluded. The celebration at that event will be highlighted by the twenty-fifth session of the OPANAL General Conference, which will be meeting at the ministerial level in Mexico City with the participation of the States parties to the Additional Protocols to the Treaty and international organizations active in the field of disarmament. Civil-society organizations are also being invited to provide support and inspirational initiatives. A high-level international seminar on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, also in Mexico City, will be part of the commemoration. It is appropriate, and indeed important, that States belonging to nuclear-

weapon-free zones, and Mongolia, be involved in the celebration marking the first time a region had decided to create a new institution of international law, banning nuclear weapons forever from an immense area.

It is urgent to revitalize the contacts and cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones. OPANAL remains totally disposed to facilitate the strengthening of a movement that started 16 years ago, and which should not be discontinued in the interest of the 115 participating States.

OPANAL member States expect the events marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco to be more than a celebration. They could well be the launching pad for a year that may bring dramatic progress in our common effort to eliminate the greatest threat to our survival. By saying “our common effort” I am not excluding any State. In the past 70 years all States have been declaring, in one way or another, that they want to see the end of nuclear weapons. However, there is always something, a compulsive reason, like an element of fate, that prevents that goal from being reached. Words change and vary. “Deterrence”, it seems, is less used nowadays. It has now given place to “strategic stability”. Whatever the words, the reasons, the excuses, the intentions, the terrible threat remains with us.

Finally, I wish to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your fairness in acknowledging OPANAL’s request to participate as a member of the panel where the High Representative and senior officials of the different agencies will have an exchange with Committee members. On the eve of completing 50 years of existence, OPANAL is the only intergovernmental organization devoted entirely to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The 33 States members of OPANAL expect that the consultations you are conducting, Sir, will correct the anomalous situation of our exclusion, which is tantamount to discrimination.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Mabhongo (International Atomic Energy Agency): On behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to chair the First Committee during this session of the General Assembly.

In September, the IAEA started celebrating its sixtieth anniversary, which is a significant milestone in

our history. By making nuclear science and technology available to improve human well-being and prosperity, we have made a real difference in the lives of millions of people throughout the world. We have also made a unique contribution to international peace and security through our work to verify that nuclear materials continue to be used only for peaceful purposes.

A core function of the IAEA is to verify that countries are not working to acquire nuclear weapons. Our Agency inspectors conduct verification at nuclear facilities throughout the world. They bring back samples that are analysed for possible traces of nuclear material. The IAEA independently verifies the correctness and completeness of declarations made by States about their nuclear material and activities. Safeguards provide credible assurances that States are fulfilling their international obligations not to develop nuclear weapons. They also make it possible to detect any misuse of nuclear material or technology in a timely manner by alerting the world to potential proliferation.

Safeguards are therefore a vital component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Safeguards agreements are currently in force with 182 States, of which 174 are Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) non-nuclear-weapon States with comprehensive safeguards agreements. However, 12 States parties to the NPT have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency, as required under article III of the Treaty. For those States parties, the IAEA cannot draw any safeguards conclusions. The Agency therefore continues to urge all NPT States parties to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements as soon as possible.

The number of States with additional protocols in force continues to increase. It now stands at 128, which is encouraging, since the implementation of an additional protocol significantly increases the Agency’s ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force. We therefore encourage all States to bring additional protocols into force.

The IAEA also stands ready to assist with verification tasks, in accordance with our Statute, in connection with nuclear disarmament or arms-control arrangements, if so requested by States that are party to such arrangements and if approved by our Board of Governors. In addition, the Agency has supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The IAEA plays the central role in helping the world to act in unison against the threat of nuclear terrorism. We provide nuclear-security training, help countries to improve the physical security of facilities at which nuclear materials are held, and maintain the most authoritative global database on illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials.

This year we achieved an important milestone when the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material entered into force, nearly 11 years after it was first adopted. The amendment makes it legally binding for countries to protect nuclear facilities, as well as nuclear material in domestic use, storage and transport. It will reduce the risk of a terrorist attack involving nuclear material, which could have catastrophic consequences.

In conclusion, we continue to urge all countries to adhere to the amended Convention. Universal implementation of this important legal instrument will ensure that nuclear and other radioactive material throughout the world is properly protected against malicious acts by terrorists.

The Chair: I shall now give the floor to members who have requested to speak in the exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I should like to remind all delegations that the first statement is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Ms. Yoon Seong-mee (Republic of Korea): I should like to exercise my right of reply in response to the comments made by the Chinese delegation yesterday (see A/C.1/71/PV.7) on the issue of the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system in the Republic of Korea.

The deployment of the THAAD system in the Republic of Korea is a purely self-defensive measure against the North Korean nuclear and missile threats. North Korea's multiple nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches pose a grave threat to our security and to the entire Asia-Pacific region. Beyond the development of its nuclear and missile capability, North Korea has revealed its willingness to make use of such capability against the Republic of Korea, which is a direct, real and imminent threat to us.

Taking this level of urgency and the gravity of the situation into account, any responsible Government must do all it can to protect its national security and the safety of its people. In that context, we reiterate

that the THAAD system will be focused solely on the North Korean nuclear and missile threats and will not undermine any third-party nation's interests.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am exercising my right of reply to the statement made today by the Turkish representative.

Lying is scandalous, and continuous lying betrays the guilt of the liars. The criminal policies of the Turkish regime against my country have been stepped up. They contravene good-neighbourliness and international law. They involve the misuse of water sources to stifle our agricultural production and to force residents around the Euphrates and the Tigris to migrate.

This Turkish crime takes place as a result of Turkey's membership of NATO. Nowadays the best means of protection for those who breach international law is by joining NATO, or staying in its orbit, or supporting it through mercenaries. When it comes to abusing my country, the Turkish regime has left no stone unturned: it sponsors terrorist groups; it sends mercenaries from all over the world into my country; and it smuggles chemical materials from Libya into Turkey, and then delivers them to armed terrorist groups to be used against our army and our civilians. Of course, they place the blame for these actions on our army.

We would remind the Committee of the Turkish regime's sponsorship of the terrorist groups in Libya, which it supports with weapons, intelligence and funding. The Turkish regime observes and sponsors the new mafia responsible for drowning Syrians in the Mediterranean and blackmailing European Union member States accordingly. The Turkish representative would have done better to respect international law and international legitimacy by apologizing to the Syrian Government for the series of crimes that his regime has perpetrated against our people.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to refer to the remarks made by the representative of South Korea, and to begin by rejecting the allegations of South Korea as utterly false and intended to mislead the world with regard to the reality of what is happening on the Korean peninsula.

I should like once again to clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As I said yesterday (see A/C.1/71/PV.7), my country became a nuclear Power because of the hostility of the United

States. Had it not been for the threats and the nuclear blackmail coming from the United States, there would have been no need for us to go nuclear. Those threats have lasted for more than six decades. As members well know, even now the nuclear aircraft carrier *Ronald Reagan* and its massive strike force, armed with the most sophisticated weapons, is patrolling the seas to the east and the west of the Korean peninsula and are openly targeting the office building used by my country's leadership, our nuclear facilities and our strategic rocket bases, which are all within range of a precision strike. Moreover, in March/April and August/September, there were continuous large-scale joint military exercises, again aimed at toppling the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, whose evident purpose was to effect regime change in my country.

Therefore, we had no option but to go nuclear in order to safeguard the national peace, our sovereignty and the safety of our people, as well as to safeguard peace in the Korean peninsula, the region and the world at large. The nuclear deterrent is a means of defence against the nuclear blackmail of the United States. It is a most reliable guarantee for the peace and security of the region and the world.

I would like to ask the South Korean representative questions about the threats. Is it not true that in 1957 the United States brought into South Korea the first of the nuclear weapons on the peninsula? Is it not true that South Korea allowed the deployment? Is it not true that the United States increased its nuclear strength by more than 1,000 weapons in the 1970s? Is it not true that the United States was involved in the joint conspiracy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea when, in 2002, it branded my country as part of the "axis of evil" and singled us out as a target for a pre-emptive nuclear strike? I urge the South Korean representative to answer those questions.

With regard to the comments made by representatives of other countries, I want to ask another question. Security is the supreme interest of each and every nation. It is even more so in the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are faced with the largest nuclear-weapon State, the United States. We are faced with massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons, which are brought in and out of the peninsula on the pretext that they are needed for nuclear war exercises, which are held on the very doorstep of our country. We are faced with the country that has already

committed several kinds of armed invasion against sovereign nations, such as Iraq, which it invaded on the basis of false information, with which it deceived the world, branding Iraq as part of the "axis of evil" in line with its own categorization.

That country openly said after the invasion of Iraq that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the next target. Therefore, I want to ask one very important question. In that kind of dangerous situation on the very doorstep of your own nation would you just sit idle, with your arms folded? When gangsters are coming in, how can a nation be expected to drop its entirely legitimate means of defence?

Mr. Alokly (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I had not expected to have to resort to my right of reply when among friends. However, I am forced to do so when someone makes a false political statement about my country.

The Syrian representative spoke of the transfer of chemical material, referring to sarin gas, from Libya to Turkey. Twice in the past he has stated that his sources were Security Council reports. I have no idea which Security Council he is talking about. If it is the Security Council we all know, I ask him to furnish us with those reports, which he cannot because they are non-existent. If there is another Security Council, I hope he will guide us to its reports, so that we can understand what is involved and thrash the matter out. We got rid of the mustard gas; and we do not possess sarin gas, nor will we ever possess it.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I take the floor to respond to the comments by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Let me emphasize again that the United States does not pose a threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the provocative rhetoric and behaviour of that country that is the source of instability on the Korean peninsula. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to halt its hostile rhetoric, end its nuclear tests and rocket launches, and abide by its international obligations.

Finally, as I made clear yesterday (see A/C.1/71/PV.7), the United States does not, and will not, recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a nuclear-weapon State.

Ms. Yoon Seong-mee (Republic of Korea): The threat to security on the Korean peninsula and to global

non-proliferation is evident from the mere fact that North Korea has conducted five nuclear tests, including two tests only this year, and scores of missile launches of every type. Not a single day passes by without North Korea adding to its weapons of mass destruction and missile capability. It is with the urgency and seriousness of the North Korean nuclear missile development issue in mind that we took the decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system in our country.

I believe that now is the time for the international community to show its strong determination to stop one of the gravest security concerns that we all share.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The representative of the United States again made a ridiculous argument, describing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as very provocative because of our legitimate exercise of the right of self-defence under the Charter of the United Nations. Once again, I clarify that the United States is the one that is blackmailing with nuclear weapons. During the Korean War, it separated 10 million families. It divided the peninsula into North and South Korea, as I said yesterday (see A/C.1/71/PV.8). One can imagine the great pain and suffering that result when family members remain divided and separated for more than six decades.

The United States brought in a massive number of nuclear weapons. It alleges that those weapons have been taken out, but no evidence has been produced to show to the world whether or not that is the case. It says that the movement of weapons is not verified. It says the weapons are not a threat. Large-scale exercises, involving as many as half a million troops, are being staged year after year, very provocatively and aggressively. The fact that those exercises have been going on for more than six decades means that they are no longer exercises. The United States is ready to attack us at any time, using the massive deployment of troops and sophisticated strategic nuclear weapons on our doorstep. It is just biding its time. One cannot say that this is not a threat.

The representative of the United States called the nuclear test provocative. Yet the United States has

the record for the largest number of nuclear-weapon tests, far ahead of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but that has never been raised as an issue. Is it because the United States is a permanent member of the Security Council, whereas the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not a permanent member of the Security Council? That only goes to show the arbitrariness, provocativeness and aggressiveness of the United States.

With regard to our nuclear status, I wish to state that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not become a nuclear Power because it wanted its status to be recognized by the United States. It did so on account of being blackmailed by the United States for more than half a century.

To the representative of South Korea I merely say, first, that she did not answer the very reasonable questions I asked, and, secondly, that South Korea has no legal or moral ground to talk about the nuclear issue; it is something that is not of relevance to South Korea.

Programme of work

The Chair: Tomorrow, in an informal segment in this Conference Room, the Committee will listen to statements by the representatives of non-governmental organizations, and in doing so will conclude the general-debate segment of its work.

On Thursday, the Committee will begin the second phase of its work, namely, the thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee. I also remind delegations that the President of the General Assembly will address the Committee on that same day.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions to the Secretariat is Thursday, 13 October, at noon. Delegations are urged to adhere to that deadline in order to enable the Secretariat to process the documents in a timely manner, thereby expediting the work of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.