



# General Assembly

Seventy-second session

## First Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 3 October 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom ..... (Iraq)

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

**The Chair:** Before I open the floor for the general debate, I would like to remind all delegations once more that the rolling list of speakers for this segment of our work will close at 6 p.m. today. All delegations that intend to take the floor should inscribe their names on the list before that deadline.

I would further remind delegations that I count on members' cooperation in limiting statements to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 13 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. In order to assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, we will use a timing mechanism by which the red light on the speaker's microphone will begin to blink when the time limit has been reached. As necessary, I will remind speakers to conclude their statements in our collective interests. I encourage representatives who have longer statements to deliver a summarized version and provide their full statement to be posted on the First Committee web portal QuickFirst. I also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed so as to allow for adequate interpretation.

I now call on the representative of Brazil on a point of order.

**Mr. Vieira (Brazil):** I take the floor regarding an issue that, during this session of the First Committee, was initially raised by my delegation on the first meeting, on 28 September (see A/C.1/72/PV.1). At that time, we again presented the request by the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of

Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) to take part as a panellist in the framework of the thematic discussions in the exchange of views between the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials from relevant international organizations in the field of disarmament. That request was supported by many delegations and was not subject to any public objection.

During the same meeting, an oral motion to include OPANAL's Secretary-General as a panellist was formalized by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico. As OPANAL coordinator in New York, I would like to request that the First Committee now formally consider that motion.

**The Chair:** Members may recall the discussion on document A/C.1/72/CRP.2 at the organizational meeting of the Committee held on 28 September (see A/C.1/72/PV.1). As promised, I consulted delegations on the amendment to document A/C.1/72/CRP.2, proposed by a number of delegations, to reflect the participation, on Wednesday, 11 October, of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials. I have reached out to all interested parties on this matter.

May I take it that the Committee now wishes to proceed in accordance with the draft indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/72/CRP.2, as orally amended to include the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of

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Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in the panel discussion of Wednesday, 11 October?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** I call on the representative of the United States on a point of order.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I request a few moments for consultation to consider the motion that was just put forward.

**The Chair:** As per the request of the representative of the United States, we will have more time to consult on that point. I shall now open the general debate and will come back to that point later.

I call on the representative of Brazil.

**Mr. Vieira** (Brazil): I would like to insist on a decision on this issue right now. This motion was presented three days ago. We have had enough time to discuss and examine it. I would ask, Sir, that it be submitted to a vote or a final decision now.

**The Chair:** I call on the representative of the United States.

**Ms. Friedt** (United States of America): We would like to repeat our request for a brief opportunity to consult; perhaps 15 minutes would suffice.

**The Chair:** We would like to give more time for consultation as requested by the representative of the United States.

I call on the representative of Brazil.

**Mr. Vieira** (Brazil): I would suggest that we postpone the beginning of our meeting today until delegations have time to consult their capitals and their authorities. Perhaps we could return in 15 or 20 minutes to come back to this point, after which we could start today's meeting.

**The Chair:** In order not to delay the general debate, I shall consult on this matter with the representatives of the United States and Brazil.

#### **Agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106 (continued)**

#### **General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items**

**Mr. Tenya** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to convey our gratitude to Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum, Permanent Representative of Algeria,

for his outstanding work as President of the First Committee at its previous session.

Peru aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Peru is a country with a long tradition of promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and we are therefore part of all the international regimes on the subject. As a sign of our commitment, my country signed the Arms Trade Treaty in September 2013 and, in February 2016, submitted its instrument of ratification. We also took part in the work of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in September, where we reaffirmed the importance of the role of international assistance in the implementation of the Treaty, adopting the terms of reference of the Voluntary Trust Fund, as well as the establishment of a permanent working group for ensuring the Treaty's effective implementation. With that initiative, we hope to contribute to an effective response to the serious consequences of the illicit arms trade, particularly involving non-State actors or unauthorized users often linked to transnational organized crime.

Peru wishes to reiterate its firm commitment to the full and 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 the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. My delegation emphasizes that multilateral work in the framework of the Programme of Action should continue in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, while moving towards the adoption of legally binding instruments related to arms marking and tracing in order to prevent the diversion of such weapons to the illicit market.

For my country, the manufacture and use of cluster munitions are a matter of the highest order and of the highest priority, considering that they not only indiscriminately affect the lives and health of the civilian population, which is bad enough, but also exacerbate poverty and limit local and national capacity for development. In that connection, we welcome the results achieved at the seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Geneva last September, as well as the establishment of Central America as a cluster-munition-free zone, agreed during

the fifth Meeting of States Parties, held in Costa Rica in September 2014. Peru, in strict compliance with the Convention, has submitted its fifth transparency report, covering the period from January to December 2016.

Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are also of great interest to my country, to be achieved through general and complete disarmament. That is why my country was one of the promoters of the establishment of Latin America and the Caribbean as the first most densely populated nuclear-weapon-free area in the world, under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We were one of the first States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in November 1997, as my country is aware of the particular importance of that agreement in the context of international efforts towards the reduction of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear proliferation. In that regard, Peru emphasizes the importance of the early entry into force of that Treaty, and we urge the States listed in annex 2 to sign and/or ratify that instrument.

Peru reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the full implementation of its three pillars. We also reaffirm the inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination, in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the Treaty and in the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In that connection, we were one of the first States to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons because we believe the consequences of their use to be catastrophic, they know no national borders and they have serious repercussions on human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations.

In line with our traditional position, we emphatically condemn the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in flagrant violation of international law and Security Council resolutions. That is why Peru demands that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately and permanently end its nuclear-weapon development programme, comply with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect its nuclear facilities.

With regard to the disarmament machinery, my delegation believes that the reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament is a priority, since that forum should be the negotiating body par excellence in matters related to international disarmament and security. We are concerned that the Conference on Disarmament, which should have met from 26 June to 19 August, did not convene plenary meetings due to the limited time for developing a programme of work. My country urges all members of the Conference to show greater political will by adopting and implementing a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Peru recognizes the progress made by the United Nations Disarmament Commission this year and stresses the importance of having reached consensus in Working Group II on a text relating to recommendations on confidence-building measures on conventional weapons.

It will once again be up to my country this year to facilitate the draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is based in Lima. We wish to highlight the Centre's important work of contributing to the advancement of the region through a series of disarmament initiatives, confidence-building measures and the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives, which pose a serious threat to public security in the region.

*Ms. Raadik (Estonia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

Finally, I wish to conclude by reaffirming Peru's steadfast and solid commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. That is why we commit ourselves to putting forth our best efforts in the work of the First Committee.

**Mr. Vieira (Brazil):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their assumption of the leadership of the First Committee. My delegation reaffirms its full confidence in the Chair's leadership.

Brazil associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Nuclear weapons are the sole anthropogenic factor that can instantly destroy humankind and irreversibly change the Earth. The very first resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 1 (I), sought the

elimination of such weapons. Then as now, the existence of weapons with such catastrophic, disproportionate and indiscriminate effects sat ill with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Nuclear weapons are incompatible with international law, particularly international humanitarian law. And yet they were the only weapon of mass destruction not explicitly prohibited by a legal instrument. Urgent action was needed to fill that gap. That is why Brazil was one of the proponents of the conference that culminated in the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in July. Brazil is honoured to have been the first country to sign that Treaty, last September.

The Treaty is consistent with and complementary to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which obliges all States parties to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. It strengthens the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, including the NPT and the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency derived therefrom, the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon free zones and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It also opens a pathway for States possessing or hosting nuclear weapons to joining — through a time-bound verifiable and irreversible process of nuclear disarmament.

In the wake of more than two decades of paralysis in multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, the new Treaty represents a remarkable step forward. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now a fact and will have an impact on our work in the First Committee, hopefully tipping the scales in favour of more ambitious commitments and other aspects of disarmament.

We reaffirm the role of the NPT in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It is incumbent upon all parties to the Treaty to engage constructively to reach a successful outcome to the current review cycle, which must be used to establish a concrete road map to nuclear disarmament. A repetition of 2015 is unacceptable if the relevance and credibility of the Treaty are to be maintained.

The convening of a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as provided by the 2010 NPT Action Plan, cannot be left in limbo. As a party

to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first such treaty for a densely populated area of the planet — which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary this year — Brazil is ready to continue to contribute to efforts leading to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world.

Lack of progress in nuclear disarmament endangers the hard-won successes on the non-proliferation front. The illusion of security provided by nuclear weapons must be exposed, otherwise more countries might feel tempted to develop them. It is unacceptable that nuclear arsenals continue to have such an important role in military strategies. The recent nuclear and missile tests carried out by North Korea constitute a serious threat to which none of us can be indifferent. Brazil vehemently condemns such acts, as they undermine the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and hinder efforts for the entry into force of the CTBT. It is urgent to seek a peaceful solution to a situation whose consequences are unimaginable.

Brazil has always stressed that there is no alternative to a diplomatic negotiated solution to the issues related to Iran's nuclear programme. The successful implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is a vindication for diplomacy. The entry into force of the CTBT is the only legally binding assurance against the recurrence of nuclear testing. The Treaty was negotiated and adopted not as a standalone instrument on non-proliferation, but as part of a wider framework leading to nuclear disarmament. The continuing development and modernization of nuclear weapons, carried out through subcritical testing and computer simulations, constitute violations of the letter and the spirit of the Treaty and undermine the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The weaponization of outer space is incompatible with the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Brazil is committed to the enhancement of the multilateral legal framework concerning the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure environment in outer space and, since 2014, has been a co-author of the resolution "No first placement of weapons in outer space". While political commitments and voluntary arrangements are welcome, they cannot be a substitute for legally binding multilateral norms. In that context, Brazil supports the initiative to establish a group of governmental experts to consider and make recommendations on elements for an international

instrument for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We would also like to reiterate our willingness to start negotiations on any of the agenda items of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) under an agreed programme of work. The paralysis plaguing the CD is unacceptable and must be addressed with a sense of urgency. In that connection, we welcome the recommendations adopted by the Open-ended Working Group for a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

Brazil supports the strengthening of the multilateral norms and principles applicable to the conduct of States in the field of information and communications technology in the context of international security. However, this cannot take place at the expense of the free flow of information and respect for human rights, particularly the right to privacy — in recognition that international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations apply to State behaviour, and their use of information and communications technology paves the way for a peaceful and stable digital environment. In addition, the international community must examine the needs to develop a specific legal framework in that regard.

Like many other delegations, Brazil is not satisfied with the outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), held last year. States parties could have achieved more substantive results, in particular with respect to the institutionalization of the Convention. We reiterate that the best path to strengthen the BWC is to take decisions that would gradually bring the Convention to the same institutional level as that of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) constitutes a byword for the continuous efforts of the international community to promote a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We recognize the organization's capacity to uphold its necessary neutrality and discharge its mandate in challenging environments. Sadly, disturbing reports of incidents involving the hostile use of chemicals in the Syrian conflict are not confined to the past. While unequivocally condemning the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances, Brazil reiterates its full support for the work carried out by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

In conclusion, when dealing with the issues at stake in the Committee's agenda, Brazil will continue to strive for a balanced and non-discriminatory approach with legally binding obligations applicable to all. That is the only road that can lead us to an international order that promotes peace, stability and well-being—a goal shared by all of our countries.

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

**Ms. Friedt** (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the Iraqi delegation on their election to chair the First Committee at its seventy-second session. We pledge the Chair our full support as he ably guides the important work of this body.

The United States has taken many steps to reduce the number of, and reliance on, nuclear weapons, doing so in ways that preserve strategic stability. The total United States nuclear stockpile is down nearly 87 per cent since its Cold War peak. We expect to meet the central limits of the new Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms when they take effect in February 2018. When we do, the United States and Russian strategic nuclear stockpiles will be at their lowest points since the 1950s.

The United States also ended production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons in the 1990s and has removed hundreds of tons of fissile material from weapons programmes. Those actions make clear that the United States is committed to its undertaking under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue effective measures towards nuclear disarmament. However, none of those actions occurred in a vacuum. Indeed, many landmark arms-control agreements were negotiated immediately after the Cold War, when security conditions were conducive to such steps.

Unfortunately, today's security environment is substantially more challenging. Tensions are rising in Asia, Europe and the Middle East, rogue States flout their non-proliferation obligations and several States are building up, not reducing, their nuclear stockpiles. We must address those challenges in order

to create the conditions to enable further nuclear disarmament negotiations.

The single greatest security threat the world faces today is that posed by North Korea's continued development of United Nations-proscribed nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, as well as other weapons of mass destruction. Since July alone, North Korea has tested a nuclear device it describes as a hydrogen bomb for an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), two ICBMs, and it has twice launched a ballistic missile over Japan. North Korea continues to produce plutonium and admits to enriching uranium for use in nuclear weapons. Each of those actions violates multiple Security Council resolutions, and collectively they present a security threat not just to North-East Asia, but to the entire international community.

As Secretary of State Tillerson recently articulated, the United States continues to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis and does not seek regime change in North Korea, the collapse of the regime, accelerated reunification of the peninsula or an excuse to send our military north of the demilitarized zone. At the same time, the United States remains fully committed to defending itself and its allies. We will continue to work with the Republic of Korea and Japan to take all the measures necessary to deter and defend against any attack from North Korea. North Korea's persistent and provocative actions underscore the need for every country in this room to implement our Security Council obligations and to impose increased diplomatic and economic pressures on the regime until this crisis is resolved.

The United States strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and at any time — whether by a State or a non-State actor. Such use is intolerable and those that use such weapons must be held accountable. The Al-Assad regime's abhorrent continued use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict was vividly and horrifically on display in the regime's 4 April chemical-weapon attack at Khan Shaykhun. The Al-Assad regime's actions demonstrate blatant disregard for international law, including Syria's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

The Al-Assad regime must declare fully its chemical-weapon programme and cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab

Republic, the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team, and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The OPCW fact-finding missions are still reviewing many credible allegations of chemical-weapon use in Syria. The United States supports Security Council action to renew the Joint Investigative Mechanism's annual mandate as soon as possible. A prompt renewal of the mandate will ensure that all chemical-weapon incidents can be fairly and impartially investigated. The United States will also continue to press for accountability for the use of chemical weapons through all appropriate means, including the OPCW and the Security Council.

This year, the United States is putting forward its triennial draft resolution on compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments. Ensuring and maintaining compliance with such agreements is an essential element of international peace and security, and our draft resolution intends to demonstrate and strengthen the global consensus on that important topic. We welcome maximum co-sponsorship and support for the corresponding draft resolution this year.

The United States understands and appreciates the desire to make progress on nuclear disarmament. However, as the example of North Korea makes clear, we cannot ignore the current global security challenges that unfortunately make nuclear deterrence necessary, both for ourselves and for our allies. It would therefore be irresponsible for the United States to subscribe to the recently introduced Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Indeed, we are concerned that the Treaty is not just unproductive, but even counterproductive. The Treaty serves to reinforce and widen political divisions in existing bodies while unhelpfully creating a potential alternative forum to the NPT review process. It also endorses an insufficient standard for safeguarding nuclear material, eschewing a requirement for the more rigorous additional protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Undermining the legitimacy and capacity of existing non-proliferation and disarmament institutions will not enable progress. It will hinder it.

We therefore urge all States not to sign the ban Treaty, and instead work with us on measures that have the potential to make real progress towards our shared goals. The United States will continue to work with all States through existing, consensus-based forums to address the non-proliferation and security challenges we all face. We also remain committed to pursuing

effective measures towards nuclear disarmament, as called for by the NPT. While progress is slow, sometimes dauntingly so, that is no reason to disregard the institutions and ideas that have helped us achieve success in the past, and will do so again in the future.

**Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica): Permit me, at the outset, to align my statement with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

I join other delegations in congratulating the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their elections to preside over the work of the First Committee during the seventy-second session. I assure them of Jamaica's full support.

It would be understandable were I to cast my remarks against the backdrop of a world beset by grave and destabilizing insecurity. Indeed, since we last convened we have witnessed a worrisome increase in the number and severity of threats to international peace and security. There is no question that those threats undermine the efforts we make in this forum towards disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

But this is no ordinary year. For on 7 July, 122 States Members of the Organization cast votes in support of the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As the instruments of the Treaty's passage, we acted on behalf of a grand coalition of committed activists, survivors, civil society, scholars and politicians. They were the ones who steadfastly set aside the entreaties of the naysayers — that band of sceptics who, at every turn, told us we were embarked upon a fool's errand.

It would be a misreading of that accomplishment to interpret the outpouring of emotion that greeted the adoption of the Treaty as reflective of a naive understanding of the realities of the international security environment. Quite to the contrary, we harbour no illusion that the Treaty will immediately eliminate nuclear weapons. Rather, we firmly believe that it will, over time, delegitimize such weapons and strengthen the legal and political norms against their use. Jamaica reiterates its full support for the Treaty, and we are undertaking the necessary domestic measures to join, at the earliest opportunity, those Member States that have signed that landmark instrument.

Despite the challenging security environment, my delegation is pleased that we were able to make positive strides in several other areas. We recall, for example,

the successful conclusion of the programme of work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We have long been concerned that, for almost two decades, the Commission has not been able to agree on substantive recommendations pertinent to its agenda. We welcome, therefore, the Commission's successful adoption of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We congratulate the Commission Chair, Ms. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina, and her Bureau, as well as Ms. Lachezara Stoeva of Bulgaria, who chaired the Working Group on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Another positive development that augurs well for the peace and security agenda is the successful adoption by consensus of the objectives and agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We are pleased that, following years of disagreement, the Open-ended Working Group was able to make significant strides in that regard, and we publicly acknowledge the efforts of the Chair, from Ecuador, who presided over the process.

The security challenges that confront us as an international community are compounded by the vast numbers of organized criminal networks that use the substantial resources and tools at their disposal to wreak havoc on our societies. In addition, we grapple with increasing cybersecurity threats and the multiple vulnerabilities they pose to cloud-based management platforms, critical infrastructure and the secure preservation of sensitive information. Therefore, it behoves us, as an international community, to collectively tackle the issue of transnational organized crime and strengthen global engagement on cybersecurity issues.

My delegation continues to be gravely concerned about the worsening security situation on the Korean peninsula. We encourage all parties to exercise restraint and to demonstrate measured responses in the face of heightened tensions.

We are also mindful of the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, and the destabilizing impact they continue to have on meaningful efforts to secure development based on sustained peace. We urge all parties caught in an indefinite process of protracted war to work towards lasting and meaningful solutions to those conflicts.

We must give priority attention not only to reducing the prospects for terrestrial conflict, but also to preventing the weaponization of outer space. We note with concern that, of the more than 1,400 active satellites in orbit, approximately one quarter have military applications. Against that backdrop, we encourage continued efforts aimed at improving transparency and confidence-building measures as a means to prevent an arms race in outer space.

As a concerned member of the international community, Jamaica has long maintained that more needs to be done to address the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We share that concern while noting, as the Secretary-General has done in his report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1), that while we rightly fear the use of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons are the predominant means of killing and destruction. Jamaica therefore looks forward to the convening next year of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It is our expectation that it will squarely address the diversion and proliferation of such weapons.

We also remain strongly supportive of the Arms Trade Treaty, which we continue to regard as a centrepiece for combating the illicit spread of conventional weapons. Jamaica is committed to playing its part to support the implementation and universalization of the Treaty, and is appreciative of the assistance it continues to receive from bilateral and multilateral partners in that endeavour.

The United Nations plays an indispensable role in advancing the goal of general and complete disarmament. Through the work of the regional centres for peace and disarmament, for example, Member States continue to benefit from the invaluable support that they provide. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean remains a crucial partner in our region, which has benefited from legislative, policy and capacity-building assistance in a range of areas related to the implementation of international instruments on conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction. We therefore join the Secretary-General in his call for financial and in-kind contributions to support the Regional Centre's operations and

programmes, so that increased requests for assistance can be accommodated.

I conclude by reiterating Jamaica's support for the deliberations in which we are engaged and underscore the hope that we will continue to make real progress towards our common goal of complete and general disarmament.

**Ms. Walder** (Sweden): Let me start by congratulating the Chair and the other members of the Bureau. I assure them of the full cooperation of the delegation of Sweden.

Sweden fully subscribes to the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), as well as the statement delivered by the representative of Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I will now add the following points in my national capacity.

The international security situation is unpredictable. It has certainly not improved since we met a year ago. There is an apparent lack of dialogue on nuclear disarmament between the nuclear Powers and a stalemate in nuclear-disarmament negotiations. The modernization of nuclear weapons continues, and there is a nuclear arms build-up in South Asia. North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes are horrifying. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains elusive, and the Conference on Disarmament is blocked. Chemical weapons have yet again been used, so far without accountability for the resulting atrocities. What can we in the First Committee contribute to turning this challenging situation around?

First, we must focus on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Ensuring a successful outcome of that conference is imperative. This has to be done in earnest by both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States — in cooperation and in a manner that is both ambitious and realistic. The first session of the Preparatory Committee laid a promising foundation, but the sessions in 2018 and 2019 have to reach substantive results. The nuclear-weapon States must abide by their obligations and commitments under article VI of the Treaty and must acknowledge that the NPT does not give them the right to possess nuclear weapons forever. The non-nuclear-weapon States must honour their commitments to the NPT as the cornerstone of non-proliferation and disarmament.



The provocative actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must not be emulated by any member of the international community. Its illegal and accelerating nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes constitute a clear threat to international peace and security and further heighten regional tensions.

In stark contrast to the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) demonstrates the potential of multilateral diplomacy. Its full implementation is essential, as is avoiding any action that undermines mutual trust. The JCPOA also underlines the indispensable role of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran's prompt ratification of the Agency's additional protocol, and accession by other States that are not applying the current NPT verification standards, would greatly strengthen the work of the Agency.

Secondly, critics of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should recognize that, notwithstanding its shortcomings, the Treaty is an earnest expression by Governments and civil society of their will to see a world free of nuclear weapons and to rid the world of the fear of annihilation. It was triggered by an undeniable lack of progress in existing forums. The Treaty can contribute to strengthening the norm against the possession and use of nuclear weapons. For our part, we have started a national process of comprehensively analysing the Treaty before any decision is made on possible future accession. Let us leave behind us the unproductive deadlock on the prohibition Treaty and instead focus on what unites us.

Russia and the United States must take the lead in restarting the reduction of nuclear weapons. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles must be upheld, and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms must be followed by negotiations on further reductions. Although the circumstances are not exactly the same, it was possible to negotiate important treaties in periods when the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States was severely strained. It might therefore also be possible now. A difficult relationship is no excuse for not acting. On the contrary, it makes it even more urgent. The permanent five's dialogue on nuclear issues should restart immediately.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Great progress has been made, as illustrated by Russia's destruction last month of its remaining declared chemical weapons. However, we are dismayed at the continued use of chemical weapons, particularly in the sarin attack in Idlib province in April. Sweden is engaged on the Syrian chemical-weapons issue as a member of both the Security Council and the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We applaud the important work being done by the OPCW and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, and renew our call for accountability.

We regret the failure to reach a substantive outcome at last year's Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We will continue to support training and scientific cooperation for the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

Small arms and light weapons kill half a million people every year. Armed violence and conflict attack the very basis of economic and social development in many parts of the world, destroying or damaging economic infrastructure and weakening governance. Societies are being brutalized, domestic and intimate-partnership violence is increasing and the public space for women has been reduced. We must all gain better control of these weapons and their ammunition. Next year's Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons will provide an important opportunity to strengthen our work against their illicit trade. Sweden also encourages all States to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Secretary-General, in his address to the General Assembly during the general debate, wisely said that:

"[T]here is an urgent need to prevent proliferation, to promote disarmament and to preserve the gains made in those directions" (*A/72/PV.3, p. 2*).

We could not agree more. The High Representative on Disarmament, in her statement to the Conference on Disarmament on 12 September, gave us good advice on the United Nations machinery for disarmament.

Sustainable security can be attained only through cooperation and disarmament. The lack of cooperation and disarmament has led to a more unstable and insecure world, and that must be turned around. We hope the Committee can contribute by laying a sound foundation for next year's high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament and for the 2020 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

**Ms. Zelaya** (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate the Chair and the Bureau on their election to lead the work of the Committee. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the exemplary work of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu.

Honduras associates itself with the statement delivered previously by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The General Assembly is meeting for its seventy-second session in the context of an important time for the Organization, with the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the growing recognition of the importance of preventing conflicts and their effects, with the aim of avoiding their adverse consequences and accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Honduras is proud to be part of the first of the world's nuclear-weapon-free zones, as set forth in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to which we are a signatory. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important contribution to the world's efforts to reject weapons of mass destruction and a good foundation for the development of a universal ban on nuclear weapons. We have also shown our firm support for resolutions adopted by the Security Council, and we strongly support all channels that promote diplomatic approaches to dealing with tensions and threats to international peace. The commemoration by the United Nations for the fourth consecutive year of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26 September, demonstrated the international community's broad support for the priority issue of nuclear disarmament. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on 7 July,

marks a milestone in that regard, and contributes to our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Honduras is one of the 53 Member States that signed the Treaty on 20 September of last year. The Treaty reflects the growing concerns about the risk of the continued existence and increases in nuclear-weapon stockpiles, as well as the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result if such weapons were once again put into use.

We are aware of the growing risk of the use of biological weapons by non-State actors. That is why we are calling for strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime for such weapons and urging all countries that have not yet done so to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and strictly abide by its prohibitions and obligations.

Since our region is directly affected by illicit trafficking in light weapons, we also urge countries that are not yet signatories to the Arms Trade Treaty to accede to the Treaty without delay. We call on the international community to show its commitment to the Treaty by strictly and rigorously implementing its provisions.

My country also condemns any actor's use of cluster munitions, which contravenes the spirit, aim and letter of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and can only intensify human suffering and the humanitarian consequences for the world's most vulnerable peoples. We therefore underline the Convention's importance and call on all States to accede to it so as to be able to fulfil their obligations no later than 2030.

Over the years, the Republic of Honduras has shown its support for all initiatives and actions designed to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as well as all efforts aimed at renewing the international community's commitment to working to definitively eliminate weapons of mass destruction through multilateral negotiations and the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of Honduras to pursuing the work entrusted to the Committee. We hope that this will be a productive session for our nations and for world peace, and we offer our enthusiastic support.

**Mr. Roth-Snir** (Israel): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair on his assumption of his

duties as the head of the Committee, and to assure him of my delegation's cooperation and support.

The Middle East has been fraught for many years with wars, conflicts, hostilities and human suffering. In recent times, it has grown even more unstable and volatile, with the disintegration of national territories, increasing numbers of areas that are partially or fully under the control of terrorist organizations, and conventional weapons' growing proliferation and diversion to both State and non-State actors. They include sophisticated weapons — most significantly an increase in the use of chemical weapons, in contravention of international treaties and Security Council resolutions — as well as the pursuit of nuclear-weapon capabilities by States in the region. Terrorist groups, some of which are supported by States of the region with every means at their disposal, have become part and parcel of the Middle East. They participate in Governments and other political processes and control territories and populations. Those troubling realities and threats have had devastating consequences that are not limited to the Middle East and pose a grave threat well beyond the region's geographic boundaries. Israel supports a vision of a peaceful Middle East free of hostilities, just as all of the region's inhabitants and States should. The realization of such a vision, however, is impossible without mutual recognition and reconciliation, and without an end to all hostilities and acts of terrorism and aggression, some of which are conducted or supported by States whose representatives are sitting in this very room.

Two years after the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), we see that Iran feels more emboldened to conduct its malign activities throughout the Middle East. It continues to try the patience of the international community and repeatedly tests the boundaries of the JCPOA agreement and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). This year has seen a dramatic upsurge in Iran's efforts to further develop its ballistic-missile capabilities. Since the JCPOA was implemented, it has conducted more than 20 tests of ballistic missiles, all capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The missiles tested by the Iranian regime were of various ranges up to 2,500 kilometres, which is well beyond the boundaries of the Middle East. Iran has been strongly condemned for launching a satellite launch vehicle, as it includes components used in intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Under the guise of attacking the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Iran launched multiple medium-range ballistic missiles at targets in Syria without any tactical need, thereby signalling its capabilities to the region. While another test launch was being conducted, Iranian ballistic missiles were fired at a Jewish star of David drawn on the ground. Those and other launches are all flagrant violations of resolution 2231 (2015), which calls on Iran to refrain from such activities. We urge the international community to unequivocally condemn those tests and show zero tolerance for Iran's behaviour.

Iran's ill-intentioned activities are not limited to ballistic-missile testing. Tehran continues to promote subversive activities throughout the region through its support for terror organizations, which includes supplying weapons, financial and political support and military training. Such activities contravene numerous Security Council resolutions and are cited in various reports on the application of resolution 2231 (2015).

The continuing use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, which acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention and vowed to forgo its entire chemical-weapon programme, has been clearly described in the 2016 report (S/2016/738) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), among other things. The most recent report of the Fact-Finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) clearly states that a nerve agent was used in April in the town of Khan Shaykhun. The report clearly and unequivocally identified various chemical components that exist exclusively in sarin made by the Syrian regime. The JIM reports are joined by numerous reports and statements from the OPCW Director-General regarding gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian declaration. This is a source of concern that must be addressed clearly and unequivocally by the international community in order to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons.

The use of chemical weapons is a deeply worrying development, especially in the light of the ambitions of other terrorist organizations to acquire and use those capabilities in the future. These cases continue to demonstrate the erosion of the chemical taboo and the fact that terrorists are motivated to take similar action. It is vital that the international community step up its efforts to deal with that challenge effectively and reduce

the likelihood of any future use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.

While some stakeholders in the region claim that a comprehensive security architecture can be established in the Middle East without directly engaging with Israel, recognizing Israel's right to exist within safe and secure borders, reducing regional tensions or building the necessary trust and confidence among States of the region, that position is untenable and will ruin the pursuit of a safe, stable and secure Middle East. A regional dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, must come exclusively from the region itself and strive to address the concerns of all its States on an equal footing and in an inclusive manner. That is why Israel participated, in good faith, in the five rounds of consultations in Glion, while the Arab side refused to engage in a constructive manner and ultimately withdrew from those consultations.

Conventional weapons continue to claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world every year. These weapons, especially small arms and light weapons and weapons systems such as man-portable air defence systems, have proliferated in the Middle East in the form either of commodities or know-how and expertise. Israel looks forward to the third Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and is actively engaged in the preparatory process for it.

Finally, on the topic of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Israel wishes to emphasize its view that the Treaty does not create, contribute to the development of, or indicate the existence of customary law related to the subject or content of the Treaty.

On the issue of cybersecurity, as an active contributor to previous groups of governmental experts, Israel regrets that the latest incarnation was unable to reach a consensus on the outstanding issues. We are ready to continue supporting and contributing to this important work in the future.

**Mr. Ovsyanko** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to congratulate the Chair and the Bureau on their election to their posts and to assure them of our cooperation in their work.

The many problems linked to international security are as urgent as ever and are taking on new forms and

boundaries. The past year has seen numerous events that are directly related to stability and security in many parts of the world. In the next few weeks we will have to consider seriously important issues related to the strengthening of international and regional security and agree on ways to deal with the challenges we face.

Belarus firmly believes in the supreme significance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the central element of the current global security system. Strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime continues to be one of my country's foreign-policy priorities. We believe that the NPT review process that began in April will enable us to resolve the contradictions in Member States' positions. We are prepared for open and inclusive cooperation with States parties to the NPT in order to advance the review process.

We believe that achieving the full potential of atomic energy development is not possible without a reliable system of guarantees that has the international community's confidence. We therefore support the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the most authoritative international body in the area of the peaceful use of atomic energy. We believe that the IAEA's safeguards should continue to be objective, technically based and founded on its parties' rights and obligations derived from its guarantee agreements.

Our country is firmly committed to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as the sole, quasi-universal and verifiable international agreement banning nuclear testing, and one to which we have no alternative. We are concerned about the lack of constructive advances on the part of the eight remaining annex 2 States, whose ratification is essential to the Treaty's entry into force. We urge them either to become signatories to the Treaty or to ratify it.

Belarus strongly condemns the North Korean nuclear tests, which violate Security Council resolutions. However, we are against the fomenting of military hysteria with regard to the peninsula. We call for a return to dialogue and talks on resolving the nuclear issues related to the Korean peninsula.

Belarus supports restoring the viability and activity of the work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which is our sole multilateral disarmament mechanism. We appreciate the efforts of the CD's Working Group on the Way Ahead, and we took on the role of co-coordinator

of the Group in considering items 5 to 7 of its agenda. Thanks to that discussion, Conference members were able to reopen their substantive discussion on those agenda items. However, we have still been unable to break the vicious circle that is preventing us from adopting the technical document for our programme of work. Given the current deteriorating international security system, the situation demands a response from all States.

This year, according to its tradition, Belarus will propose the draft resolution for the First Committee's consideration entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament", which was presented at the most recent session of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. This is a triennial resolution, and the current version includes only technical changes. The draft resolution is designed to advance the concept of the prevention of an arms race. We are preparing to submit it in informal consultations in New York very shortly. We believe firmly that the current international situation, with its increasing threats and the importance of finding a response to them, as well as the draft resolution's basis of compromise, will enable us to adopt it by consensus during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

The Republic of Belarus remains dedicated to the goal of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), their means of delivery and related technologies and materials. We attach major importance to the principles and mechanisms provided for in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which occupies a special place among the current universal, strong non-proliferation regimes, including the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Belarus's policy with regard to the practical implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) is responsible and clear. In our view, it is unique of its kind, providing as it does a complex and comprehensive approach to combating the proliferation of WMDs. In the first half of 2018, Belarus intends to hold a seminar on the resolution that we believe will be one of the most significant events held in the Commonwealth of Independent States on uniting international efforts to combat the proliferation of WMDs.

The gaps in the legal regulation of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes still remain. In our view, this could be remedied in part by adopting

an agreement on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, and the joint Russian and Chinese proposal constitutes a good basis for that. We believe that practical steps aimed at filling this legal gap should be carefully studied and supported by the international community.

The uncontrolled production, transfer and proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to be one of the world's greatest challenges in the area of international peace and security. 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 Tracing Instrument are central elements in the efforts to combat the illicit proliferation of such weapons at the national, regional and global levels. Belarus complies strictly with the provisions of those international documents and is prepared to work to improve their implementation.

However, we would like to point out that while Belarus was originally a recipient of financial assistance for a project related to accounting and storage of small arms and light weapons, during the time of its implementation we have been able to become a provider of technical assistance ourselves. Within the framework of that project, we developed a software programme for creating registries for small arms and light weapons that is now an integral part of national systems for managing stockpiles of such weapons. The creation of these national systems for managing stockpiles of small arms and light weapons while preventing their illegal trafficking is part of both the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the United Nations Programme of Action. In the spirit of goodwill, Belarus ready to share this with other States, both within and outside the OSCE.

Belarus has also contributed to the strengthening of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In April, we completed the destruction of 3 million PFM-1 mines remaining on our territory, a type of mine that is particularly dangerous to life and health and difficult to destroy, because it contains liquid explosives that have to be destroyed through a specific technical procedure. When Belarus became a signatory to the Ottawa Convention, we turned to the international community for assistance in destroying such mines, which was provided by the European Union and for which we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation. On 12 October, jointly with the United

Nations Development Programme, Belarus will host an event on the destruction of anti-personnel landmines in Belarus. The relevant information will shortly be published in the *Journal*.

**Ms. Granda Averhoff** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba would like to congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their election. We wish them success with the work of the First Committee, and I once again pledge the support of our delegation.

We fully associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Cuba is pleased that the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session is in a position to begin its general debate by highlighting the achievement of concrete results in our critical progress towards nuclear disarmament. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on 7 July, codifies the international law on the illegitimacy and illegality of nuclear weapons, proscribing the existence, use and threat of use of such weapons, as well as any form of nuclear testing. In keeping with its commitment to nuclear disarmament, Cuba signed the Treaty on 20 September and supports its swift entry into force.

However, we believe that there must be additional efforts to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we call for a high-level international conference to be convened in 2018 to review advances in nuclear disarmament and other relevant measures. We hope that the conference, like the recent high-level event commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, will have the support of the international community so that we can continue to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Humankind continues to be threatened by the existence of almost 15,000 nuclear weapons, resulting in the intolerable fact that millions of dollars are spent on armaments, including the modernization of nuclear weapons, when we cannot mobilize adequate resources for international efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We urge nuclear-weapon States to show the political will and commitment needed to achieve nuclear disarmament, particularly at the forthcoming tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and during

its preparatory process. The mere implementation of the principle of non-proliferation will not achieve that goal.

In the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we recognize the important contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to this issue and reiterate our firm support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Cuba neither possesses nor intends to acquire weapons of mass destruction. We firmly support banning and completely eliminating such weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner as the only effective guarantee of the prevention of their acquisition and use, including by terrorists. We also support and comply fully with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We wholly reject the use of any weapon of mass destruction by any actor and in any circumstance. In that connection, we would like to highlight the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at its twentieth anniversary. We stress the importance of ensuring the balance of its pillars in the future and of addressing pending issues. In that regard, ensuring the internationally verified destruction of all types of chemical weapons as soon as possible will be the best way to prevent such weapons of mass destruction from ever being used.

The adoption of a legally binding protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention in a comprehensive and balanced way is crucial to eliminating the possibility that bacteriological and toxin agents can be used as weapons. We reject and call for an immediate end to all limitations and restrictions, especially for developing countries, on the exchange of materials, equipment and technology for nuclear, chemical and biological activities that are consistent with the relevant international treaties.

We hope that the consensus reached by the Open-ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations on the goals and programme of work of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and by Working Group II of the Disarmament Commission on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, can reverse the current paralysis in the United Nations disarmament machinery and extend to other matters as well. With regard to the impossibility of reaching a consensus on substantive

matters within the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, we call on the First Committee to convene an open-ended working group within the General Assembly to review the issue. That is the only format that can ensure transparency, inclusiveness and participation on an equal footing by all Member States. We need to decide on urgent action within the framework of the United Nations in order to prevent the covert and illegal use by individuals, organizations and States of other nations' computer systems to attack other countries, because of its potential to provoke international conflicts.

In an international context marked by the imposition of unilateral sanctions and coercive measures, an increase in bellicose rhetoric through the threat of use of force and the announcement of increases in military spending — which already amounts to \$1.7 trillion — Cuba calls for renewed commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and for respect for the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace. Let us eradicate poverty and invest more in resources to promote sustainable development and less in the industry of war, which only kills.

**Mr. Locsin** (Philippines): Our work in the First Committee is a vital component of the grand ambition of the United Nations to end war and keep the peace, uphold rights and protect human dignity, promote justice and social progress, achieve better standards of living and eliminate the most sweeping threat to this grand ambition — the threat to humankind, whose living standards we seek to improve, posed by nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, which are capable of extinguishing large swathes of humankind, or all of it. We can only succeed in this together. We must preserve and strengthen multilateralism as the most effective means for achieving our objectives. Multilateralism, simply put, means combining our strength, progressing in step and achieving together.

The stupor that has plagued multilateralism in disarmament for decades, and that has prevented us from achieving any meaningful progress, is finally showing signs of lifting. The adoption by 122 countries of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the cure for that nuclear narcolepsy. In April, the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted recommendations for practical confidence-building

measures in the field of conventional weapons. That was followed in June by the adoption of recommendations for the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As a capstone, last July the United Nations saw the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons after a mere five weeks of negotiations marked by cooperation, mutual respect and a deep collective desire to achieve a breakthrough in nuclear disarmament and not just talk about it.

A key principle that should underpin our engagement in this work is the importance of complying with our obligations under the various non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and agreements for both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction and universalizing them. That is our highest priority. By themselves, more talk and more conferences are not progress but just more of the same. Discussions should do more than they undo; further discussion should do more than was done before. The oft-expressed unquenchable desire for disarmament has become an end in itself. Let us stop politicizing these discussions, lest we paralyse the process and dampen our chances of real rather than rhetorical progress. Human survival is not a political issue. Averting war with nuclear weapons is not debatable, though the capability for it and the availability of such weapons may increase so much as to make nuclear war compelling. Universalization requires that these instruments of peace and safety — these documented attempts to beat swords into ploughshares — be appreciated and promoted in regional and domestic settings, fully within Member States' different and unique contexts. In that area, the only alternative is a dead, post-nuclear planet that serves as humankind's coffin.

On that note, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons comes to mind. Its end goal is global nuclear disarmament. Non-proliferation is just the first step. Global disarmament will remain an elusive goal as long as the number of nuclear States keeps growing. To achieve disarmament, it is critical to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to new, possibly unstable, States, not least because from there they can spread to non-State parties of the kind we dread. The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must deliver a substantive outcome, or we run the risk of pulling out the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, causing the collapse of

the architecture of our efforts to achieve a nuclear-free world.

The tensions on the Korean peninsula, generated and sustained by the reckless and rogue behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pose a clear and present danger not just to peace, but to the survival of societies and economies in that part of the world and, therefore, to the economic stability of the rest of the world. It is more than urgent, it is imperative that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enter into force as soon as possible. As for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we continue to call for a resumption of dialogue as a first step to reducing tensions.

As a manifestation of its unwavering commitment to realizing the goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament, the Philippines signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on the first day it was opened for signature. The Treaty complements and strengthens the existing nuclear-disarmament architecture. By unambiguously delegitimizing nuclear weapons and challenging the concept of nuclear deterrence, it closes the legal gap that has outlawed chemical and biological but not nuclear weapons and sets the stage for their eventual elimination.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. I invite our representatives to support and sponsor the draft resolution on the Bangkok Treaty that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will introduce at this session.

In today's world, new technologies are developed almost by the minute. It is an immense challenge to the disarmament community when such technologies are weaponized. The United Nations must address those emerging challenges by developing new instruments and frameworks that encompass them and contain the threats they pose. We particularly want to cite the important work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in disarmament education, especially on emerging security issues relating to autonomous weapons systems and cybersecurity. We urge Member States to support its work in that regard.

**Mr. Gerschner** (Austria): At the outset, I would like congratulate the Chair and the Bureau on their election and to assure them of the full support of the Austrian delegation.

Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

A few weeks ago, the world learned that Stanislav Petrov had passed away earlier this year in Russia. We all pay tribute to that courageous man and his unique feat. His story resounds with us today in two important ways. As in 1983, today the danger of all-destroying nuclear war is still hauntingly close. But Petrov reminded us that even when catastrophe seems inevitable, it is never too late to do the right thing. It is up to us to learn from his wisdom as his legacy.

The attention not only of experts in disarmament and international security, but of the international community at large, is currently sharply focused on the urgent problem of the nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Austria has been clear and vocal in condemning the activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in that regard and in calling on Pyongyang to change course. The crisis is now racing towards its culmination. A peaceful and negotiated solution must be found, or we face disaster. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for the Iranian nuclear programme can be a source of inspiration for resolving the Korean problem. The agreement with Tehran shows that untiring diplomacy still brings the best achievable results, even when dealing with seemingly intractable problems.

Two conclusions from the North Korean developments are already evident today. The first has to do with the regrettable fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country that is still conducting live nuclear tests in the twenty-first century. All other States agree that such behaviour is unacceptable. That position would be even more credible if the States that have not already done so would sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. By taking that important step, the remaining annex 2 States would finally enable it to enter into force. The other conclusion we can draw from the North Korean situation is that the current international nuclear-non-proliferation regime, with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at its centre, has unfortunately been unable to prevent that country from acquiring a nuclear-weapon capability. The non-proliferation regime must therefore be further strengthened. The existing mechanisms designed to suppress the supply of proliferation-relevant items could and should work better.



But we must not only think hard about more effective ways to block countries from going nuclear. We should also pay more attention to the fundamental question of why a State would decide to go down the nuclear path in the first place. In the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, one reason is certainly that Pyongyang believes it needs a nuclear deterrent for the sake of its security. Recent discussions in the Security Council have included the argument that nuclear weapons jeopardize the security of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rather than strengthening it. We concur with that assessment and would like to add that it holds true for all States. The negotiators of the NPT acknowledged that non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are interdependent. The intentional prolonged existence of nuclear weapons, as manifest in costly modernization programmes and the failure to make progress in nuclear disarmament, is one of the reasons for nuclear proliferation. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the security of all States is in danger.

A large majority of the world's States, including Austria, have recently shown a way out of this security dilemma. The new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a historic achievement that Austria is proud to have helped bring about. The new Treaty was adopted by 122 States in July. Many, like Austria, have since already signed it, and some have even ratified it. In doing so, those States unreservedly reject nuclear weapons. They reaffirm the choice they once made when they acceded to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States. At the time, some of us — but certainly not Austria, to be sure — may still have felt that forgoing a nuclear-weapon option was a sacrifice in terms of national security. Perhaps they renounced that option, not without some reluctance, in exchange for the still unfulfilled promise that the nuclear-weapon States would reciprocate by disarming, in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

In the meantime, the overwhelming majority of States have come to the conclusion that their security is better served without nuclear weapons than with them. That is also why so many countries are States parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones or have nationally declared themselves nuclear-weapon-free. Based on the knowledge of the grave humanitarian consequences of nuclear explosions, more and more States have come to the conclusion that the continued existence of such weapons is not advantageous or desirable in any way, but rather poses a threat to national and collective

security, even human survival, and should end. That conviction was behind the manifestation by a clear majority of States of the political will needed to ban nuclear weapons through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, thereby finally banning the last, and most dangerous, class of weapons of mass destruction not yet outlawed. The Treaty therefore greatly strengthens non-proliferation and the NPT and thereby makes a major contribution to the implementation of the Treaty's article VI.

While the Treaty helps non-proliferation, it is absolutely ground-breaking for nuclear disarmament and a major, essential step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. It deserves more time than we have today, and we will therefore return to it later during the dedicated thematic debate.

In the area of conventional disarmament, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has been the most remarkable success of the twenty-first century so far. The clearest indicator of its effectiveness is the fact that half of the world's mine-affected countries have totally cleared their territory. Unfortunately, the sharp decline registered after the Convention's entry into force in the annual casualties caused by these particularly insidious, cruel and indiscriminate weapons has lately come to a halt, owing to the recent renewed use of anti-personnel mines, especially by non-State actors. Far too many people, most of them innocent civilians, women and children, continue to fall victim to such mines, as we have recently seen in Iraq, Myanmar and Syria.

The 2014 Review Conference of the Convention, in Maputo, agreed on a goal of ridding the world of these weapons by the year 2025. While the aim is ambitious, it is definitely achievable, but further progress in both universalization and national implementation is needed. Austria wishes to use its current presidency of the Convention and, in particular, the upcoming Meeting of States Parties in Vienna in December, to generate a strong impulse for furthering our common work under the Convention towards our shared goal of a world free from anti-personnel mines.

For lack of time, I will now skip part of my statement, which will soon be available in full in electronic form. In conclusion, I would once again like to assure the Chair of the full support of the Austrian delegation and to wish him success. Under his able leadership, we are looking forward to engaging in relevant discussions over the next few weeks, resulting in important draft

resolutions to be adopted by the General Assembly in plenary.

**The Acting Chair:** I thank the representative of Austria for his kind words addressed to the Chair and the other officers of the Committee. I would like to remind delegations to kindly limit their interventions to eight minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

**Ms. Bird (Australia):** As the Committee begins its work, it is worth reflecting on what we are trying to achieve in this forum. Our shared goal is a world where people can live in peace, security and prosperity. The threats to that objective loom large. North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic-missile development programmes pose a grave and increasing threat to global security. They directly challenge both the established disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and the authority of the Security Council. Rising tensions in other parts of the world, including the Middle East, and other challenges such as the scourge of terrorism are also fuelling global insecurity. At the same time, we also risk growing multilateral polarization, born of impatience with the pace of disarmament and disagreement over how best to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Now as much as ever we must remain committed to a cooperative and collaborative approach to that task. We must find practical ways to enhance security and deter behaviour like that of North Korea.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a historic agreement that Australia supports. We would be concerned about any breakdown of the mechanism, especially in the absence of any viable alternative. Australia continues to encourage Iran and all parties to the JCPOA to carry on implementing it and abiding by its terms.

We firmly believe that in order to advance the course of nuclear disarmament and enhance security, we must continue to strongly support the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as the cornerstone of the international community's long-term disarmament efforts. We share the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, but simply declaring them unlawful, without the buy-in of possessor States, will not bring us closer to that end. We must renew our pursuit of the essential building blocks of nuclear disarmament, including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the negotiation of a legally binding and effectively verifiable ban on the production of fissile material; and progress in nuclear verification,

including through the upcoming meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts, which we hope to join. We welcome the thirtieth anniversary year of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the Rarotonga Treaty, and also encourage other collaborative regional disarmament efforts.

Australia continues to give high priority to advancing conventional disarmament. We reaffirm our commitment to the universalization and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), particularly in our Asia-Pacific region. The ATT has a critical role to play in supporting key national security interests. It addresses a range of global challenges, from the prevention of conflict and atrocities to supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We would like to welcome everyone to our launch event on 20 October for the publication on the broader benefits of the ATT.

Australia remains concerned about the long-lasting effects resulting from the use of landmines, cluster munitions and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). We encourage States to take every possible measure to reduce the suffering caused by landmines and cluster-munitions weapons, as well as to address the broader problem of explosive remnants of war, which remain long after conflicts cease. We hope that Member States will support this year's draft resolution on IEDs, put forward by Afghanistan, Australia and France.

Australia remains deeply concerned about the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, particularly as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the formation of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We call on the international community to uphold the well-established norm against the use of such weapons and to demonstrate its resolve to hold violators accountable, notably in Syria. While Australia regretted the absence of a consensus outcome at the 2016 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, we remain committed to strengthening the Convention's provisions.

Australia welcomes the continued and growing attention to space and cybersecurity. This year's fiftieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty presents an opportunity to reflect on the importance of space to our prosperity and development. In this anniversary year, Australia has announced its commitment to launching a dedicated space agency to ensure that we have a long-

term strategic plan for our space activities. We confirm our commitment to promoting an international stability framework for cyberspace, based on the application of existing international law, agreed-on voluntary norms of responsible State behaviour and confidence-building measures. It is regrettable that the 2016-2017 Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security could not reach a consensus on its report. We will continue to promote the common understandings in the Group's previous reports, guided by our inaugural international cyber engagement strategy.

While the United Nations disarmament machinery has struggled over the years, we were heartened by this year's consensus outcome in the Disarmament Commission, breaking a near-two-decade-long impasse. This, together with the consensus outcome of the Open-ended Working Group on a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, gives us real hope that Member States can rally together and deliver tangible outcomes in our shared interests.

Australia remains committed to playing its part and is determined to work constructively and collaboratively to achieve our shared goal of enhancing global security and stability through the work of this important Committee.

**Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election. They can count on the support of my delegation in their work at the helm of the First Committee.

This year marks a turning point in the quest for a world free of nuclear weapons and in the field of disarmament in general. On 7 July, the conference convened by the General Assembly to negotiate a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, with the support of 122 States. Finally, these weapons, which pose recognized and grave threats to humankind, have been banned under a universal instrument through a process that, as has been said on several occasions, brought democracy to disarmament, and nuclear disarmament in particular. The President of the Republic of Ecuador, Lenín Moreno Garcés, signed the Treaty on 20 September. We encourage all States, including nuclear-weapon States and their allies, to sign it as soon as possible, thereby concretely fulfilling

their obligation under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

During the thematic debate, the delegation of Ecuador will present its views on the various issues on the Committee's agenda. Today, if I may, I would like to briefly reflect on disarmament and its ongoing importance for our Organization. Since the inception of the United Nations as we emerged from the horrors of the Second World War, disarmament has been among its top priorities. The first resolution adopted in the General Assembly, resolution 1 (I), was presented by Ecuador's Ambassador Homero Viteri Lafronte, then Rapporteur of the First Committee. It called for the elimination of national atomic-weapon arsenals and all major weapons that could result in mass destruction.

The late former Secretary-General U Thant spoke of the "three Ds" as the priorities of the United Nations — disarmament, development and decolonization. At the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first devoted to disarmament, the Assembly reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations in disarmament efforts and created mechanisms for that purpose. Many today are frustrated that more has not been done in that regard, because we are still far from achieving effective and internationally monitored general and complete disarmament, despite the important progress we have made. But that frustration should in no way lead us to dismiss the importance and centrality of disarmament efforts at the United Nations. We must redouble our efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and we must also redouble our efforts to advance disarmament objectives.

All States must unite to decisively combat climate change, just as we must unite to promote disarmament. We must protect our oceans and their biological resources in order to ensure the survival of humankind. We must always consolidate the gains we have made in disarmament and make further progress in that domain for the sake of our very survival. Disarmament must always be at the heart of the Organization's efforts, as it is part of its foundational DNA. That is why we must ignore the calls we hear from time to time to set aside disarmament efforts in favour of other supposedly more productive endeavours. That would run contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, which gives the Assembly a precisely defined role in disarmament and arms regulation. It would also run contrary to

the expectations of those nations on whose behalf the Organization was founded.

That is why Ecuador reiterates its firm support for multilateralism as the guiding principle in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We are therefore highly gratified by the adoption by consensus, within the Open-ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, of the recommendations of goals and programme of work for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We hope that the coming months will see continuing consultations among all States with a view to setting a date to convene the special session, which is so needed in these times.

Let me conclude with a brief reference to the current situation in which, as the Secretary-General noted in his recent statement before the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.3), global anxiety over nuclear weapons is at its highest point since the Cold War. Ecuador's constitution condemns the development, possession, use and threat of use of nuclear-weapon States. My Government has therefore firmly condemned the recent nuclear tests and fully deplores the possession of nuclear weapons by any party. In our view, there are no good and bad, responsible and irresponsible nuclear-weapon holders. We decry their very existence.

But we must also express our regret that two weeks ago in the General Assembly Hall, which should be dedicated to the promotion of peace, we heard implicit threats to totally destroy entire countries with nuclear weapons. That was a violation of the Charter's prohibition of the threat of the use of force. We strongly call for such threats, issued by any party, to cease immediately in the interest of global peace. That is why our task in the Committee is even more urgent.

**Mr. Gabriëlse** (Netherlands): Allow me first to congratulate the Chair and the Bureau on their assumption of the posts. They can count on the full support of the Netherlands' delegation. In addition to the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), we would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

As the Prime Minister of the Netherlands said a few weeks ago at the General Assembly,

“Every era and every decade has its problems, great and small. The problems we face now

seem overwhelming... But if we take a long-term perspective ... there are grounds for optimism.”  
(A/72/PV.8, p. 14)

The world today is more complex, with a multitude of actors and with technological developments that often surpass our imagination. That complexity offers opportunities, such as broader stakeholder involvement, connectivity and life-improving technologies, but we also see tensions on the rise in many parts of the world. Disarmament and non-proliferation efforts are indispensable to reducing tensions. Not only do they address root causes, they also generate trust, which in itself lowers tensions.

Looking at recent events, the need for disarmament and non-proliferation efforts is clear. Last month brought a stark reminder, with the sixth nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 3 September. That test was preceded and followed by multiple ballistic-missile tests. The Netherlands condemns that provocative behaviour on the part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the strongest possible terms. Those actions destabilize the region, are a threat to regional and global peace and security and should therefore cease immediately. The regime should fully comply with its international obligations, including relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must return to compliance with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Netherlands is fully committed to the goal of a world in which nuclear weapons have been permanently and irreversibly abolished. The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Its full implementation requires active and joint efforts; it is the legal basis for shared commitments to disarmament, including the commitment to a nuclear-weapon free world. We might disagree on how to reach it, but it is crucial to stay focused on our ultimate goal, which we all share.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) reinforces the viability of the rules-based non-proliferation regime created by the NPT. It underlines the value of multilateral nuclear diplomacy. The Netherlands welcomes the ongoing implementation

of the agreement and calls upon all parties to continue to adhere to their commitments under the JCPOA.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) concluded in its third report (see S/2016/738) that the Syrian regime was responsible for the use of chemical weapons in two cases it investigated. We reiterate that those responsible must be held accountable for those crimes. We stress the importance of the work of the JIM and strongly support an immediate extension of its mandate for another year, thereby sending a strong signal against impunity. The Netherlands calls upon Syria to fully comply with all its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, to cooperate fully with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and to be entirely transparent regarding the full scope of its chemical-weapons programme.

The international debate about the complicated subject of autonomous weapon systems is multifaceted. It is, however, crucial for future global security. We therefore regret the cancellation of the first meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts under 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. That debate should not suffer from more delays. We therefore call upon all stakeholders to actively participate in the upcoming Group of Governmental Experts meeting in November.

We strongly believe that it is possible to make cluster munitions a thing of the past. We were appalled to learn that the number of victims from cluster munitions more than doubled in 2016, as compared with 2015. The Netherlands continues to condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor.

The Netherlands is fully committed to our common goal of a mine-free world in 2025. It is a big challenge; we have to step up our efforts as the number of victims of landmines — including improvised devices — is on the rise, and immense contamination challenges as a result of Da'esh are being faced in the Middle East. We support the Convention on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction. Hence our active involvement in the Convention's machinery and our contribution, in particular, to the individualized approach. The

Netherlands has a multi-year programme, worth more than €50 million, to support mine action in 13 countries.

With respect to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), there are two important challenges: the effective implementation of the Treaty by its States parties and its universalization. To further increase the speed and quality of the Treaty's implementation, the Netherlands recently contributed to the Treaty's Voluntary Trust Fund. The Netherlands remains committed to the success of the Treaty and is proud to share a seat in the ATT Management Committee with Sweden.

The Internet has been a key technology spurring the possibilities for innovation, economic growth and enacting our human rights. However, cyberspace is also used by State and non-State actors alike to threaten international security. That development is worrisome. In order to mitigate the risk of escalation, the Netherlands promotes the applicability of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations in its entirety, and welcomes the development of additional norms of voluntary behaviour. The failure of the Group of Governmental Experts to reach agreement, especially on how international law applies in cyberspace, is regrettable. The Netherlands urges all States to be constructive and take these discussions forward.

Preventing an arms race in outer space is a difficult problem that demands a speedy solution, as an increasing number of players are active in outer space. In the long run, there may be benefits in a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, but as negotiating a treaty takes time, in the meantime we should consider voluntary guidelines that can be implemented immediately.

The Conference on Disarmament should play a pivotal role in the different disarmament discussions, many of which I just outlined. We welcome the recent substantive discussions in the Working Group on the way ahead on the core agenda items of that body, but more needs to be done. We urgently need to step up our efforts on disarmament. The current security context cannot be an excuse to sit idle. On the contrary, it should give us further encourage us to do more, using a gradual approach.

Last but certainly not least, sustainable financing is key to the sound implementation and universalization of the different conventions. The Netherlands is seriously concerned with the financial troubles of the conventions, due primarily to the structural arrears of

a number of countries. It even meant that several of this year's meetings had to be cancelled or shortened. Although there may be some light at the end of the tunnel, we are not there yet. Transparency is an important first step, and we are pleased with the efforts undertaken in that regard. We will therefore continue to work with partners on relevant measures. Lastly, we call upon all States that still have outstanding dues to honour their financial responsibilities expeditiously.

As I said at the beginning of my statement, the problems we are facing are overwhelming. Let us work together to address the challenges of today so that we may look ahead to a safer future for all. We are keen to take concrete steps towards a safer world and we look forward to working together with all present during the First Committee.

**Mrs. Nguyen** (Viet Nam): I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election and to assure them of my delegation's full support.

I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for their tireless efforts to advance disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Thailand, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Our world continues to face dire threats posed by prolonged conflicts, violent extremism and terrorism, the arms race and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), especially nuclear and chemical weapons. The danger of a nuclear war has become ever more apparent. Against that backdrop, the First Committee has the important task of moving the global non-proliferation and disarmament agenda forward. To do so, it is of the utmost importance to uphold multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations; as the only efficient and rule-based approach, in accordance with the international law and the Charter of the United Nations; and as the most effective tool for building trust among countries.

It is our firm belief that addressing WMD proliferation must be coupled with substantive progress in WMD disarmament, particularly towards the total

elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we strongly support international efforts towards that noble goal, especially the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to which Viet Nam is proud to be a signatory party. We join others in calling on nuclear States to proactively engage in that process.

We welcome the convening of the recent tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We also emphasize the need to promote substantive discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in every nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

While addressing these issues, we must also take into account the legitimate rights to the peaceful use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear technologies, materials and equipment for social and economic development. At the same time, we need to increase regional and international cooperation to assist States in implementing their respective non-proliferation obligations and commitments, developing effective strategies for countering new types of crime and prohibiting non-State actors from having access to or using such lethal weapons.

We underline the importance of regional nuclear-weapon free zones to the existing global non-proliferation regime, and call on nuclear-weapon States to promptly sign and ratify the respective protocols to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. This year, ASEAN will submit a biannual draft resolution on the Bangkok Treaty. ASEAN hopes to receive members' valuable support in that regard.

Viet Nam shares its concern over the danger caused by the illicit trade of conventional arms. Acknowledging the rights of States to manufacture, trade and retain conventional weapons for national self-defence, we fully implement our respective obligations under related international cooperation agreements, including the submission of a yearly report on arms imports and exports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We support 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.

Concerning the Arms Trade Treaty, we believe that it should strike a balance between international peace

and nations' legitimate right to self-defence and to not being abused by political manoeuvres.

As a country that has greatly suffered from cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance left over from protracted wars, Viet Nam is actively implementing its 2010-2025 National Mine Action Plan, which tackles demining and victim assistance. We support the humanitarian objectives of relevant international mechanisms to help affected countries address the aftermath of war, including the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We thank all international partners who have provided us valuable support and call on those in a position to do so to join us in this humanitarian endeavour.

We support the further enhancement and reinforcement of the disarmament machinery, particularly the revitalization of the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) to negotiate primary issues regarding the disarmament of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, as well as cybersecurity and outer space security. We note with satisfaction that the UNDC has, for the first time since 1999, adopted by consensus the report of Working Group II, with substantive recommendations on confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons (see A/72/42, annex). We also welcome the agreed outcome on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament after two decades of stalemate and look forward to its early convening.

It is Viet Nam's consistent policy to advocate total disarmament and non-proliferation, with the highest priority given to nuclear weapons and other WMDs. Viet Nam is a party to and fully complies with its obligations under all key WMD disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. We actively cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international partners to ensure nuclear safety and security. We earnestly implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325 (2016), and actively participate in related initiatives.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that it is within reach to achieve substantive and meaningful progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda with goodwill, trustworthy cooperation, and responsible collective action. It is high time for us to fulfil our

commitments and strive together for a world free of all weapons of mass destruction.

**Mr. Hattrem** (Norway): The global security landscape is unpredictable and challenging. Fundamental norms are coming under pressure. We are deeply worried about the inadequate protection of civilians in conflict and the destruction of critical infrastructure such as housing, schools and hospitals. We are today witnessing the use of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture is being challenged.

Norway is fully committed to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To achieve that, we must foster the confidence needed for balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable reductions of nuclear arsenals in the future. That will enable us to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, regulated by a legal framework. This is a long-term goal, and success will depend on the active participation and cooperation of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. Achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons will require persistence, realism and patience. For that reason, Norway will not sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and stands firmly behind the NATO statement of 20 September.

We must uphold and further strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We must consolidate existing disarmament agreements such as the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to seek further reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons.

Credible verification tools can ensure the necessary assurances that disarmament obligations have been fulfilled and can help to build the confidence needed to make new and deeper cuts. Nuclear disarmament verification will remain a Norwegian priority.

Norway remains committed to further diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, in ways that promote international stability and

security. Norway fully supports a fact-based approach to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Norway is urgently advocating the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. There is an urgent need to negotiate and conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty, which could also include a phased approach to the elimination of existing stocks.

Achieving a world without nuclear weapons will require a robust and credible non-proliferation regime. That means having the highest possible standards for International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and nuclear security. Norway has a particular focus on minimizing and eventually eliminating the use of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector. We are convinced that this will facilitate peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

The deplorable nuclear and missile tests recently carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute a threat to the non-proliferation agenda and to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea clearly undermines the prospects for nuclear disarmament. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take the necessary steps to facilitate a diplomatic solution to this crisis.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) shows that it is possible to achieve important results through diplomacy, even when the point of departure is difficult. It is essential that all parties live up to their commitments and obligations and refrain from any action that undermines the integrity of the JCPOA.

Twenty years after the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, we are, regrettably, seeing the continued use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Government and by terrorists. We must address this as a matter of urgency. The perpetrators must be held accountable. At the same time, we welcome the completion of the verified destruction of Russia's chemical-weapons programme. It is an important milestone in the history of the Convention.

Norway was disappointed with the outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their

Destruction (BWC). We hope and anticipate that the forthcoming Meeting of States Parties will enable us to improve preparedness for suspicious outbreaks of disease, address relevant developments in the life sciences and consider emerging challenges. The credibility of the BWC is at stake.

Let me also reiterate Norway's commitment to the peaceful use of outer space. Norway is seeking to participate in global forums such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Moreover, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament's deliberations on this matter could be valuable.

Armed violence carried out using conventional weapons continues to constitute a threat to peace, security, human security and development. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Over the past 20 years, 51 million landmines have been destroyed and countless civilian lives have been spared. A mine-free world by 2025 remains our ambition. Sadly, over the past few years we have seen an increase in the use of improvised landmines as tools of war. The number of civilian casualties from landmines is once again increasing.

Next year, the global community will commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which is another instrument that has made a substantial difference to human security. However, we are unfortunately also seeing the continued use of those weapons in a number of conflicts.

Small arms and light weapons kill more than half a million people every year. We must therefore intensify our efforts to combat any irresponsible and illegal trade in or use of such weapons, including ammunition. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) establishes fundamental norms for responsible trade in conventional arms, including with regard to assessing the potential for gender-based violence before an arms export is authorized. We are pleased that the ATT is gaining ground.

We must also seek to further strengthen the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The third Review Conference of the Programme of Action will provide us with an opportunity to do so.



This year's session of the First Committee should give us an opportunity to strengthen multilateral cooperation in the areas of arms control and security. We must seize that opportunity.

**Mrs. Martinic** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election and to assure them of the full cooperation of my delegation.

I also welcome the President of the General Assembly and the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and thank them for the statements made yesterday.

In an international context that could lead us to adopt a more pessimistic outlook, primarily as a result of the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but also due to the determination that chemical weapons were used in the Syrian conflict, we understand that it is our duty to uphold the decisions that the international community as a whole has made — decisions that have reflected time and again the desire to seek a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

A good example of that was the commemoration in April of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, one of the most successful instruments of universal disarmament of all time. In that connection, we welcome the news issued by the Russian Federation on 27 September of the total destruction of its chemical arsenal.

This year Argentina, along with the 137 States that have acceded to The Hague Code of Conduct, is commemorating its fifteenth anniversary, and we reaffirm its importance as a transparent confidence-building instrument. Argentina would like to highlight two particularly significant developments for the disarmament machinery — events that took place in the first quarter of the year and that demonstrate that dialogue is possible and that today, more than ever, consensus must be the basis for universal agreements. First are the recommendations adopted by the Disarmament Commission on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons (see A/72/42, annex). The second event is the issuance of recommendations on the goals and agenda for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to

disarmament. Those successes renew our hope in breaking the deadlock in disarmament.

At the regional level, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have celebrated the adoption of the declaration of the States members of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean on the fiftieth anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The issue of nuclear disarmament has always been a priority for Argentina. That is why it has participated in every discussion, forum or negotiation on the subject in the conviction that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international legal non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The next NPT Review Conference will be particularly significant, as it will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. As members know, Argentina, with the endorsement of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, has presented the candidacy of Ambassador Rafael Grossi to preside over the Conference.

On nuclear disarmament, Argentina echoes international calls demanding the renewed political commitment of nuclear-weapon States and their adoption of specific measures to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Internationally verifiable and irreversible complete and general disarmament is a challenge that the international community must address in a constructive manner on the basis of broad consensus if our efforts are to be effective.

Argentina's commitment to continuing to work towards the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons was what led my country to participate in the negotiating process for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We share the spirit that underpins the Treaty, which is why my country voted in favour of its adoption on 7 July. Argentina welcomes the impact that the Treaty might have in other relevant areas of the current non-proliferation regime and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the cornerstone of which is the NPT.

Additionally, in November we will host the fifth International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We are participating in that initiative convinced that in order to advance towards a world free of nuclear weapons, it is critical to maintain a

constructive dialogue between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

There are many painful cases of international terrorism that amply demonstrate its destructive capacity. The use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors is no longer an abstract theoretical problem, and reveals the need for Member States to redouble our efforts to prevent terrorist groups from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, related materials or their means of delivery. Due to its scope and legal nature, resolution 1540 (2004) is the clearest response possible by the United Nations to the problem of weapons of mass destruction and access to such weapons by non-State actors.

It is illusory to believe that we live in security as long as such materials not being duly protected and until current international regulations are universally implemented. Indeed, in Argentina the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials entered into force more than a year ago. Moreover, Argentina has participated in the Proliferation Security Initiative since 2005 and in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism since 2010. In the framework of the Initiative, we, along with Chile, developed two exercises to be conducted in preparation for potential radiological emergencies. The first was carried out in 2014 and the second, dubbed Paihuen, took place just one week ago in Bariloche.

It is estimated that more than 1,500 people die every day as a result of armed violence and that 60 per cent of all human rights violations are committed with small arms. The consequences are devastating for our societies and are a frontal attack on sustainable development. In order to confront this scourge, we stress the need to combat the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and the need to explore existing synergies between current international instruments, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Argentina welcomes the recent holding in Geneva of the third Meeting of States Parties to the ATT, an instrument that addresses three crucial dimensions in a comprehensive and coordinated manner: human rights,

development and production, and the responsible trade of conventional weapons. At the regional level, Argentina will continue to work intensively in all diplomatic arenas to support the brotherly nation of Venezuela, on the basis of the principles of non-intervention, peaceful settlement of disputes and the protection of human rights. Meanwhile, and in accordance with the Lima Declaration, my country urges States parties and non-States parties to the ATT to abstain from transferring weapons, pursuant to articles VI and VII of the Treaty.

Next June will see the convening of the third Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My country attaches great importance to that issue, as our national plan for firearm control is one of the Government's top 100 management goals.

In conclusion, I wish to once again reaffirm Argentina's commitment to the work of the Committee. We hope for a fruitful session.

**The Acting Chair:** I would like to remind delegations to kindly limit their interventions to eight minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): My delegation hereby congratulates Mr. Bahr Aluloom on his election as Chair of the First Committee at this session and wishes to assure him of our full support and cooperation.

We further wish to associate ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of African States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). In the interests of time, this statement will be limited to general comments on key issues that will be covered more extensively in our statements during the thematic debates.

As we meet again for yet another First Committee session, this platform provides us an opportunity to reflect on progress achieved during the past year. While we welcome the progress made in some areas, we are deeply aware of the daunting work that remains in strengthening international security and disarmament, in general. We remain concerned about the continuing impasse in the United Nations disarmament machinery. The 20-year stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament

has impacted negatively on multilateralism and the multilateral system of governance.

The disarmament and international security landscape has seen progress over the past year with the adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This is indeed an achievement and demonstrates the resolve of the international community to see the early entry into force of the Treaty. On behalf of South Africa, President Jacob Zuma signed the Treaty on 20 September. However, more still needs to be done, particularly by nuclear-weapon States, in the area of nuclear disarmament. The argument that nuclear weapons are indispensable to the security of some States but not of others lacks credibility.

We call upon all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to honour all their obligations and to faithfully and without precondition implement all commitments agreed to in 1995, 2000 and 2010, including the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free from nuclear weapons and other weapon of mass destruction. Those obligations need to be honoured. We will also endeavour to prevent the weaponization of space, which could destroy strategic balance and stability, undermine international and national security and disrupt existing arms-control instruments.

In the area of chemical weapons, South Africa welcomes the progress made by the relevant possessor States to destroy their chemical-weapons stockpiles, abandoned chemical weapons and old chemical weapons. We also commend the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in deploying fact-finding missions to Syria, Iraq and all countries where alleged use of scheduled chemicals has been reported. In the area of biological weapons, South Africa is concerned that the Review Conference that took place in December 2016 did not achieve an outcome that would strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and its implementation.

Regarding conventional weapons, South Africa, as a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, will play its part on the journey towards a world free of anti-personnel mines

and cluster munitions alike. We encourage those States that have not yet done so, particularly those possessing such weapons, to join those instruments. We also call on those States in a position to do so to assist requesting States in their national implementation efforts and to provide assistance to the victims of these weapons.

South Africa continues to believe 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 represents the central, universally agreed set of undertakings to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Apart from national implementation efforts, the full implementation of the entire Programme of Action, including those provisions related to international cooperation and assistance, remains of critical importance. Likewise, we welcome the outcome of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and look forward to the full implementation of the Treaty in regulating international trade in conventional arms and in contributing towards curbing illicit transfers.

My delegation stands ready to participate actively in the work of this year's session of the First Committee and to join the Chair and other delegations in making our work a success.

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

**Mr. In Il Ri** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Before making my right of reply, I would like to congratulate Mr. Bahr Aluloom on his election to preside over the First Committee.

Our delegation categorically rejects the provocative allegations made by the United States representative in reference to our nuclear and ballistic-rocket programmes. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea persists in its nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic-missile programmes in response to the actual threat posed by the United States as a legitimate option for self-defence.

The United States is the country that first produced nuclear weapons and the only country to have ever used them, massacring hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. It is the United States that threatened to

use nuclear weapons against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during the Korean War in the 1950s and that first introduced nuclear weapons into the Korean peninsula after the war.

The United States started large-scale joint military exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during the Cold War period and further increased their scope and aggressive nature after the Cold War by staging exercises several times a year and mobilizing more nuclear strategic assets. If the United States had never threatened our Republic with nuclear weapons, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula would not exist in the first place.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a responsible nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile State, both in name and reality. For our people, who suffered during the Korean War on the peninsula at the hands of the United States, a powerful nuclear war deterrence for international self-defence is a necessary strategic option and a precious strategic asset that can be neither reversed nor bartered away for anything.

Our nuclear weapons and ballistic rockets will never be bargaining chips under any circumstances, and never shall we budge even an inch from the road of bolstering our nuclear weapons. We will choose nuclear weapons for ourselves unless the United States fundamentally abolishes its hostile policy and ceases its nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. There is nothing more to say about it.

During the statement delivered by the United States representative, the United States responded with an excuse for its rejection of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, blaming the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea consistently supports the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the entire world's denuclearization efforts. However, as long as the United States consistently threatens and blackmails the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons and rejects the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not in a position to accede to the Treaty.

Some representatives have spoken of the situation on the Korean peninsula during their statements. They must have a proper understanding of the nuclear issue within the Korean peninsula. The real reason why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must persist in its nuclear-weapons programme is because of the

United States. It has to develop its nuclear force to cope with its current rival, the United States. No country in the world has ever been subjected to such extreme and direct nuclear threats from the United States for so long or experienced a nuclear war exercise in front of its own gate that is so vicious and brutal in scale, form and purposes. If the goal is the real peace and security of the world, it is necessary to see through the nature of the aggravating situation of the Korean peninsula in order to develop an independent view.

**Mr. Seifi Pargou** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would first like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election and to assure them of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

As usual, today the representative of the Israeli regime made unfounded allegations against Iran. I have no intention of dignifying them with an answer. The allegations are used as tools to divert attention from the expansionist policies and brutalities of that regime. As my delegation has stated in the General Assembly this year, these are other types of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of that regime — weapons of mass deception. Just as it is skilful in committing brutality and all core international crimes — genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression — the Zionist regime is also very skilful at deception. It is no accident; it is in their DNA.

However, nothing can cover up the realities about that regime — neither accusing others like Iran, insulting international organizations, drawing cartoons nor even asking penguins to help them, as the Prime Minister of that regime did in his statement before the General Assembly during the present and previous sessions (see A/72/PV.4).

These are some truths about that regime. It has waged more than 15 wars during its very short lifetime. It continues to occupy territories belonging to its neighbours. It has invaded all of its neighbours without exception, and even countries beyond the region. It continues to commit and sponsor terrorist acts. The living example of that is its support for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The Israeli regime continues to possess all types of weapons of mass destruction. It continues to refuse to become a party to treaties banning weapons of mass destruction. It is the only non-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East. Its nuclear

facilities and activities are the only non-safeguarded facilities in the Middle East. Finally, it is the only party rejecting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East.

I conclude here as time does not permit me to continue reading this blacklist.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The statement made by our colleague the representative of the United States of America is filled with contradictions in form and substance. With respect to form, her statement did not refer in any way to terrorism or the use by terrorists of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq. Those are facts, documented in the reports of the Security Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague. Furthermore, our colleague closed her eyes to her Government's use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in Japan, Viet Nam, Iraq and other countries. Consequently, the introduction of her statement lacks realism and has nothing to do with her allegations pertaining to the fact that the United States strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons everywhere in the world.

As for the substance, our American colleague believes that the words fabricated by the Government of her country go above and beyond any international resolution and cannot be refuted. Our colleague therefore concluded that the Syrian Government used chemical weapons within the framework of what she called "the Syrian conflict". In that connection, I have several comments to make.

First, the Government of the United States of America should await the end of the inquiry conducted by the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which has carried out several visits to my country and is preparing for a new visit in order to complete its investigations.

Secondly, if the Government of the United States wants to impose its opinion on the so-called international community, it would be better for it to call for the dissolution of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and stop making efforts and spending substantial amounts of money on the activities of the OPCW, of which the United States claims to be a part.

Thirdly, our American colleague complained that the actions taken by the Syrian Government demonstrate blatant disregard for international law.

Now, whoever knows the answer to the following riddle will win a substantial prize. Which State most violates the principles of international law and the provisions of the Charter of our international Organization? What has that State done in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Nicaragua, Cuba, Venezuela and other States?

Fourthly, members should have noticed that I have never used the term "American regime" in my statement. Rather, I have used the term "American Government". This is a clear proof that my country, Syria, respects international law and proper manners in addressing representatives of Member States, including our political adversaries.

We are surprised at the fallacious allegations made by the Israeli entity against others. The Israeli entity, as we all know, is responsible for the emergence of terrorism in all its forms — nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological, inter alia — in our region. Without the support of some influential countries in the Security Council, the nuclear, chemical and biological programmes and weapons of Israel would have ended long time ago.

It is ironic that the representative of the Israeli entity should make accusations even as the entity that he represents rejects the calls of the majority of Member States for adherence to all conventions and treaties dealing with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, all reports, studies and researches affirm unequivocally that Israel has used biological and chemical weapons on many occasions against the peoples of the region — in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine — since 1948 and to this day, including white phosphorus and depleted uranium.

True to its habits, the Israeli entity violates all Security Council resolutions concerning the fight against terrorism and continues to provide all types of assistance and support, including arms and munitions, as well as intelligence — in particular chemical and toxic substances — to terrorist organizations in Syria, especially Da'esh and Jabhat Al-Nusra, as well as affiliated terrorist groups.

The Netherlands' involvement in efforts aimed at preventing the acquisition by Israel of certain substances cannot mask certain realities. We had called on the Netherlands to provide all of the relevant information on the substances that the Israeli regime

had obtained and that had helped it to build its nuclear programme.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Let me first respond to the remarks made by the representative of the North Korean regime. First and foremost, this is a regime that has violated countless Security Council resolutions with regard to its proscribed nuclear -weapons and ballistic-missile programmes. We gather here year after year and listen to representatives of that regime claim that they are no threat to international peace and security, when the Council has made very clear that the regime is a threat to international peace and security — not once, but many times.

It is that regime that is threatening security, not only on the Korean peninsula, but globally. Its repeated missile and nuclear tests are a threat to humankind. We need to be very clear on the matter. The regime has no interest in dialogue. All it wants to do is to continue its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, and it has made very clear that it wants to threaten the United States. We have said many times that we pose no threat to North Korea. We have tried to engage its leaders repeatedly, and they have even signed agreements that they have subsequently broken. They have been intent on wreaking havoc not only on that peninsula and in that region, but globally.

So it is interesting to sit here and listen to the representative of that regime claim that it is a nuclear-weapon State. The United States will never recognize the regime in Pyongyang as a nuclear-weapon State — let me be very clear about that — and we will defend our allies in that region. That commitment is iron-clad. The representative of North Korea also raised the issue of blackmail. It is North Korea that is blackmailing the international community with its continued development and testing of long-range missiles.

To respond to the comments made by the representative of the Syrian regime, we are dealing with a regime that has absolutely and fundamentally no credibility whatsoever to accuse anyone of anything. This is a regime that has, in this century, used chemical weapons against its own people. Everyone in this room knows that the regime has used chemical weapons against its own people. It has violated a convention that it signed and needs to be held accountable.

As I have said, this is the twenty-first century. Chemical weapons are dastardly, and to use those types of weapons against one's own people defies any

sort of logic. The regime needs to cooperate with the United Nations, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. We want to see the Mechanism renewed as soon as possible. It is necessary. We must keep the pressure on the regime to stop committing those types of atrocities with chemical weapons.

**Mr. Méndez Graterol** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Venezuela is taking the floor to emphatically and categorically reject the comments made by the representative of Argentina with respect to the political situation in my country.

We believe that the remarks made by the representative of Argentina are not relevant to the work of the First Committee. Argentina has inappropriately used a political declaration in an attempt to curtail Venezuela's sovereign rights to acquire weapons to meet its legitimate rights to self-defence and protection of its sovereignty. We believe that the raising of a matter relating to the internal political situation of Venezuela in the general debate of the Committee in no way contributes to its goal. We firmly reject that interventionist statement, which eschews the spirit of dialogue and cooperation that should prevail in the Committee.

The instrument that was referred to — the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects — is one to which Venezuela is certainly not a signatory. Nevertheless, our decision not to accede to that instrument is based fundamentally on our ongoing fear about the use or misuse of such an instrument as a pretext for the sale of weapons to States Members of the Organization.

False allegations have been made about the internal political situation in Venezuela that we reject. The internal political situation in Venezuela is being resolved by the people of Venezuela within the framework of the rule of law, with the support of important Latin American countries. We Venezuelans must find the solutions to our own problems. As we have pointed out, we emphatically reject the statement of the representative of Argentina.

**Mr. Yuvan** (Israel): I am compelled to briefly take the floor in reply to the comments made by the

Syrian and Iranian representatives. I will not delve too deeply into those absurdities, as neither warrants serious consideration.

Regarding Syria, we should not expect to hear the truth from a State that has repeatedly violated its international obligations and has shown that it sees no merit in sticking to truth and facts. That country has violated its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and is cooperating in the commission of war crimes against the Syrian people, including through the use of chemical weapons.

Regarding Iran, that country is the world's main sponsor of terrorism. Its forces and proxies spare no time and effort in training, financing and executing terror acts all around the world, primarily in the Middle East. Iran directly, and through its proxy Hizbullah, is committing atrocities against the people of Syria while supporting the Al-Assad regime, which massacres its own people, women and children alike. Iran spreads extremism, threatens its neighbours and destabilizes the region.

**Mr. In Il Ri** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Just now, the representative of the United States regime made provocative allegations once again about our country. I want to inform him that we do not need the United States regime to recognize our status as a nuclear-weapon States or our capability of carrying out a nuclear strike.

If the United States regime truly desires peace and security for the world, I think it must first eliminate all of the nuclear weapons it possesses within and outside its country. Our national nuclear force is, for all intents and purposes, to serve as a deterrent to the nuclear threats of the United States regime and to prevent its military from invading our country. Our ultimate goal is to establish a balance of power with the United States regime. We will certainly defend the peace and security of our country with our powerful nuclear deterrent and will contribute to safeguarding world peace and security.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is regrettable that I have to request the floor for a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

The representative of the United States has attempted yet again today to evade the issue of the involvement of his country's administrations in the chemical-weapons attacks that took place in my country. Instead, he accused my country. The United States, as has been confirmed by American authors — including Seymour Hersh — researchers and research centres, is guilty of transferring chemical substances from laboratories in certain countries, especially in the Caucasus, to Syria via neighbouring countries. Those chemical substances have been used against Syrian civilians and military.

In the past in this Committee, we have posed a question to the representatives of the United States and have not, as yet, heard their response to our question. The question is about the existence of 100 barrels of napalm — manufactured in the United States — in Sarakeb in the province of Idlib, hidden there and in warehouses in the Al-Ghawshi area. Those areas have been controlled for some time by terrorist groups, as is known to all. We ask once again: how could the napalm contained in an estimated 100 barrels reach those areas? Various United States Administrations have been involved in training terrorists by having them attend courses on the use and preparation of chemical substances.

The representatives of the Israeli entity — or more aptly, the Israeli protectorate — always try to run from reality and from the myriad resolutions taken against that entity — or rather, protectorate — by levelling accusations against other countries.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I will be very brief. The charges just made by the representative of the Syrian regime are preposterous.

**The Acting Chair:** I would like to remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers in the general debate will close at 6 p.m. today. All delegations interested in taking the floor should make every effort to inscribe their names on the list before the deadline.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*