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Seventy-second session

First Committee

8th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

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

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

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: I would like to remind all delegations before they take the floor to kindly limit their statements to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity.

Before proceeding further, I wish to inform delegations that I have received requests from the delegations of Belarus and Slovenia to make statements today under the general debate segment on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to the First Committee. Members will recall that the list of speakers for the general debate closed on Tuesday, 3 October at 6 p.m. In view of the flexibility traditionally shown by the Committee in scheduling its meetings to accommodate its rolling list of speakers, with the indulgence of the Committee, may I take it that the Committee is willing to allow statements to be made today by the delegations of Belarus, on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and Slovenia, as part of the general debate?

It was so decided.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by wholeheartedly congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your well-deserved election to lead this important Committee. I am confident that your able leadership will help the Committee conclude its business successfully. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and

to assure you and them of my delegation's full support and cooperation. And I thank the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Boukadoum of Algeria, for his successful stewardship of the work of the Committee.

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

Since the Committee's last session, we have witnessed disarmament developments both promising and unpromising. The first promising one was the Disarmament Commission's adoption of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, achieved thanks to the flexible position taken on the issue by NAM. That should be complemented by the adoption of recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which will undoubtedly require nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate major political will and flexibility.

The next and more important development was the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It was a strong collective reaction to nuclear-weapon States' violations of their nuclear-disarmament obligations. As an active participant in the negotiations, Iran voted in favour of the Treaty and will continue to support its overall objective. It represents a step forward for nuclear disarmament that should be complemented by the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as the General Assembly has been calling for for years. We should also include the

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successful conclusion of the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention among the promising developments.

Nevertheless, in the past year we have regrettably also witnessed alarming trends in a new nuclear arms race, as well as a new race to modernize nuclear arms. These are real setbacks in our efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free world. They will negatively affect international peace and security generally, as well as the existing legal regime on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and must therefore be stopped. In that context, I should also mention the continuing stalemate in the efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the result of the Israeli regime's stubborn policies. The only way to get the process started is through Israel's immediate and unconditional accession as a non-nuclear-weapon party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and its placement of all its nuclear installations and activities under the full scope of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Since Israel's nuclear weapons continue to threaten the peace and security of the region and beyond, it is urgent that we see the establishment of such a zone, as proposed by Iran in 1974 and supported by the General Assembly's consensus adoption of annual resolutions over the past 40 years.

Regrettably, while United Nations reports show that conventional arms are the predominant means of killing and destruction around the world, their overproduction and export by major arms-producing countries to regions of conflict continue unabated. A vivid example of such alarming developments is the excessive level of imports of conventional weapons, most of them used for death and destruction in Yemen, by certain oil-rich countries in the Persian Gulf.

This year we have also witnessed the continued implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), whose conclusion by the P5+1 group and Iran put an end to a manufactured crisis. As many members of the Committee have rightly mentioned, its conclusion exemplified the important role that diplomacy can play in international relations. I would therefore like to sincerely thank all members who have acknowledged the JCPOA's significance and called for its continued and full implementation by all participants. For its part, Iran has fully implemented all its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, as verified and confirmed by the IAEA in eight consecutive reports.

Iran will continue implementing its commitments under the JCPOA as long as it continues to receive all the intended benefits, which necessarily also requires that all the other JCPOA participants implement it fully and consistently.

To be clear, any continued and significant non-implementation of the JCPOA commitments by one of its participants will definitely receive a proportionate response from Iran. Expectations for the implementation of the JCPOA should be proportionate and adjusted to its limited scope. As acknowledged by the international community, the conclusion of the JCPOA was a win-win achievement, and if it is to remain so, its full and continued implementation by all its participants is essential. Diplomacy and a principle of international law as cardinal as *pacta sunt servanda* — agreements must be kept — would be the main losers and victims of a possible withdrawal from the JCPOA or continued significant failure to implement it by one of its participants. Any party doing so must bear the responsibility and be aware of all the ramifications of its actions.

In conclusion, I want to stress that we have a special collective responsibility in addressing the alarming trends in the realm of disarmament and international security. For its part, my delegation stands ready to cooperate with the Bureau and Committee members in fulfilling that responsibility and creating a safer world for present and future generations.

Mr. Ngoulou (Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the Congolese delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of our Committee. I would also like to commend the outstanding work done during the seventy-first session by your predecessor.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered last week by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I would also like to make a few comments in my national capacity.

While we must duly appreciate the measure of progress made in the field of disarmament, the major challenge to date remains the fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Our Committee is taking up the debate on this issue in the wake of recent developments that we have all observed on the international scene. Now more than ever, the threat

posed by nuclear weapons is a troubling reality that calls for an appropriate response. Now more than ever, we feel the need for and urgency of effective measures, particularly given the danger that these weapons may fall into the hands of non-State actors. That is why my delegation attaches such importance to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20 September, my country enshrined its commitment to contributing to the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Overall, the current atmosphere should guide us towards a positive conclusion of the next Review Conference in 2020. I want to take this opportunity to invite all countries listed in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty that have not yet signed and ratified it to do so in order to ensure its prompt entry into force.

My delegation welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament to help raise the Conference on Disarmament from the impasse it has endured for a number of years. We also recognize the inalienable right of all Member States to manufacture and use nuclear energy for civilian purposes, and reaffirm our commitment to the objective of general and complete disarmament and adherence to the policy of dismantling all nuclear arsenals.

Humankind is also facing another threat — that of chemical and bacteriological weapons, which inflict suffering and destruction on civilian populations. In that regard, the Congo has been working hard to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, to which we have been a party for several years. We have established a national focal point that has carried out a number of awareness-raising activities on the dangers of such weapons and on measures to be taken to combat them effectively.

With regard to conventional weapons, 2016 saw the convening of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It took place at a time when international efforts were being undertaken to combat destabilizing proliferation and control transfers of weapons in this category. Based on all of this, my delegation is awaiting

the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, scheduled to take place in 2018, with optimism.

In the context of facilitating the implementation of that important instrument and many others, the Congo has created a national committee to follow up the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The Committee serves as the national commission for combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and was established by decree No. 2000-3007 of 3 November 2000. The Congo will also fully implement the measures adopted by the commission in promoting disarmament and arms-control programmes in the Central African subregion.

I need hardly recall that the Congo is a party to the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition, Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, known as the Kinshasa Convention. My country is also involved in the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and a number of additional protocols to the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We are also a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty, the ratification of which under way.

As Member States can see, my country is determined to assist in the disarmament and international security efforts of the international community. With these current challenges, multilateralism, through the platform offered by the United Nations, remains the appropriate framework for cooperation and dialogue. That is what we believe.

Mr. Gourou-Osmond (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I join those who have taken the floor before me to extend to you, Sir, our sincere and warm congratulations on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We wish you and the entire Bureau every success in the discharge of your duties.

The Central African Republic associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

My country believes that the issues of disarmament and international security that we debate in this Committee are of vital importance, since the seventy-second session of the General Assembly is being held at a time when the world is facing a number of security challenges, among which are the threat of the use of nuclear weapons and the use of chemical weapons, as well as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Central African Republic, which has not been spared from this scourge, vigorously condemns any attempt to halt progress towards world peace and considers that the risk of the use of such weapons against innocent populations should be taken seriously.

The proliferation of nuclear arms is a real threat to our planet. The resolve clearly expressed by the majority of Member States to rid the world of nuclear weapons should therefore be encouraged. To that end, on 20 September the Central African Republic was the second country to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is now open for ratification. In that regard, the Central African Republic urges all States possessors to agree to the principle of the non-use of such destructive weapons. That is why we call on the entire international community to redouble its efforts and pool its strengths and resources to put an end to this scourge.

On the subject of promoting disarmament and arms-control programmes, my country is close to the theatre of operations of the terrorist group Boko Haram, which has established itself in the Lake Chad basin and committed murderous attacks. We are also surrounded by other hotspots, such as the Pool region in the Republic of the Congo, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, whose problems have had harmful repercussions for my country as it struggles to emerge from a long-term crisis, a situation that facilitates the trafficking of small arms and all sorts of munitions in Central African territory.

Where disarmament is concerned, therefore, aligning efforts and resources is the most effective solution to arms proliferation. The Central African Republic welcomed the entry into force on 8 March of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition, Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, also known as the Kinshasa Convention, after the Republic of Angola on 6 February deposited its instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General. The Central African Republic,

which was one of the very first countries to ratify the Convention, calls on other countries of Central African subregion to do the same.

We believe that the Convention's entry into force represents a significant achievement, because it creates obligations for the involved parties, which must now establish international coordination and implementation bodies for the Convention. The Kinshasa Convention also requires the Secretary-General, the depositary of the treaty, to hold the first conference of States parties one year after its entry into force. The conference is scheduled to be held in March 2018. The Secretary-General must hold a conference of States parties every other year after the holding of the first such meeting, so the second conference should be held in March 2020. A review conference must be convened five years after the Convention's entry into force and is scheduled for March 2022.

With respect to the Arms Trade Treaty, my country has already ratified it and encourages States that have yet not done so to sign or ratify it. The Central African Republic also welcomes the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa related to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation linked to Central Africa, and encourages it to support the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, which has already entered into force. The First Committee can rely on my delegation's support.

Mr. Yaakob (Malaysia): I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau. Please be assured of my delegation's readiness to support your work.

Malaysia associates itself with the statements made 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).

The estimated total size of the inventory of global nuclear warheads for 2017 is still 15,000. This figure has not fallen in the past year as we continue to witness, with dismay, how States are neglecting their commitments and agreements reached under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), despite the fact that they continue to claim that they attach great importance to all the pillars of the Treaty.

Malaysia continues to believe firmly that as long as nuclear weapons exist, there is no guarantee that they will never be used — and if they were used, the outcome would be catastrophic. We continue to reaffirm the importance of the NPT and its three pillars. No effort must be spared in working constructively towards a successful outcome for the current review cycle. Let us build on the momentum created by the successful adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and engage in the same spirit in this review cycle.

Malaysia has joined other Member States in signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons because we are convinced that its political and legal impact will help to steer the international community collectively towards achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons and maintaining a world free of such weapons. The Treaty is legally sound and implementable, and sends a powerful political message that nuclear weapons are categorically unacceptable. We therefore call urgently on Member States that have yet to do so to sign the Treaty and work together to achieve its entry into force.

We want to commend the efforts of civil society in its steadfast and unwavering support, commitment and determination to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we wish to warmly congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 6 October.

Malaysia welcomes the positive achievements by consensus made by the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We welcome the recommendations made, which include, among other things, support for convening a United Nations high-level conference on nuclear disarmament in 2018. We would also like to recognize the progress made by the Disarmament Commission in achieving the adoption by consensus of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. These developments bode well for the disarmament discourse.

Malaysia remains committed to its international obligations in the field of disarmament and international security through various international, national and regional approaches. We continue to strengthen and enhance legislative and collective enforcement

capabilities in confronting the international security threat, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, specifically to non-State actors.

Malaysia has always been consistent and principled on the issue of nuclear disarmament and proliferation. It is in that context that we strongly condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches, which seriously undermine the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We join other Member States in recognizing the urgent need for the relevant parties to resume peaceful dialogue and negotiations in order to find a durable solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, it is deeply regrettable that despite the fact that the Treaty opened for signature more than two decades ago, it has yet to enter into force. In the light of the recent recurrent incidents of nuclear testing, we view its entry into force as crucial and call on Member States, particularly the annex 2 States, that have yet to sign and ratify it to do so without delay.

Malaysia believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthen peace and security, since they promote greater transparency and dialogue among States regionally and indirectly reduce the risk of regional tension and conflict. We believe that it is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons to all States in nuclear-weapon-free zones.

My delegation is firmly committed to the full and effective implementation of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone). We believe in the value of engagement for resolving all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty, and look forward to the continued support by consensus of the joint biennial draft resolution on the Treaty that will be introduced by ASEAN this year.

Malaysia will continue its efforts this year to address the destructive nature of nuclear weapons related to the threat or use of nuclear weapons. In that context, as in previous years, Malaysia will submit a draft resolution on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. We will introduce the draft resolution during the upcoming thematic discussion, and I would like to invite all Member States to support it and to consider joining the growing number of States as sponsors.

On conventional weapons, Malaysia remains supportive of efforts to universalize the Arms Trade Treaty. We also 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 is important to halting the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and will work constructively with Member States at the upcoming third Review Conference in June 2018 in that regard.

Malaysia is also supportive of universal adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and compliance with its provisions. We are committed to our obligations under articles IV and X of the Convention and are currently adopting a national biological weapons bill that will be part of Malaysia's legislative framework contributing to the implementation of the BWC.

In conclusion, let us be resolute in fulfilling our collective obligations and be encouraged by the developments in disarmament this year in our efforts to achieve substantive progress in the First Committee. My delegation stands ready to work with you, Mr. Chair, and all Member States in the global effort to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan): On behalf of the Uzbekistan delegation, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We pledge our full support as you ably guide the Committee's important work.

It is obvious that in the contemporary world, the issue of non-proliferation is one of the key topics of international cooperation both within the United Nations and in international security policy in general. In that regard, it is important that we not only talk about current non-proliferation challenges but also share the positive experiences that our countries have achieved in that area. Today I would like to remind representatives of Uzbekistan's practical and effective contribution to promoting nuclear non-proliferation, particularly through the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The initiative to establish such a zone in Central Asia was first announced by Uzbekistan in the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, in 1993, and has been successfully implemented with the active and constructive cooperation of other countries in Central Asia — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It also received consistent support

within the framework of various General Assembly's resolutions, as well as in the documents of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia entered into force in 2009. That important event occurred following the ratification of the Treaty by all States parties. In 2014, for the first time since the establishment of the United Nations, the representatives of the five nuclear States unanimously and simultaneously signed the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. That served as the completion and full realization of the initiative 21 years after its first announcement, and made an enormous contribution to consolidating regional security and reinforcing the global regime on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

With respect to regional security in Central Asia, we note that the new Government of Uzbekistan, in addressing such matters, is working to actively engage with its neighbours. In April, Uzbekistan hosted a first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Central Asian States, at which all participants expressed full support for Uzbekistan's proposal to establish a regional mechanism for consultations at the Foreign Minister level. That initiative should ultimately serve as the basis for establishing regular consultations and meetings at the level of Heads of State.

In November, Uzbekistan is planning to hold another high-level international conference on security issues in Central Asia under the auspices of the United Nations, intended as a logical continuation of the regional policy of Uzbekistan. The upcoming forum will enable participants to thoroughly discuss security and stability issues in the region and effective ways to address them.

For the outcome of the conference, the Uzbekistan delegation plans to propose the General Assembly's adoption of a special draft resolution of that would show support for Central Asian countries' efforts on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby ensuring security and stability in the region. In that regard, Uzbekistan looks forward to working closely with other Member States in bringing that initiative to fruition.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): The Armenian delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau, on your election, and assures

you of our full cooperation in working for the successful outcome of our session.

Armenia is a strong supporter of international non-proliferation regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and other related documents. We view the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear-non-proliferation architecture.

Armenia strongly supports the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the global nuclear security architecture and its leading position in facilitating and coordinating nuclear security activities among Member States, as well as international organizations and initiatives. As a newly elected member of the IAEA Board of Governors for the years 2017 to 2019, Armenia will contribute to the activities of that important body and work closely with all partners to that end.

Capacity-building and strengthening institutional set-ups at the national level are necessary prerequisites for dealing with the existing threats and emerging challenges associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and countering the growing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorist and other criminal groups. We strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons as reprehensible and a violation of the norms and principles of international law.

With a view to strengthening the international legal framework for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Armenia has supported the initiative of establishing an international convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. That universal draft document will complement the activities of the international community in combating chemical-, biological-, radiological- or nuclear- (CBRN) related terrorism threats. We are also active in counter-proliferation initiatives such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Proliferation Security Initiative. The latter has been an important and useful platform for facilitating cooperation related to the detection and forensics of nuclear material and to responding to and mitigating it.

Armenia attaches great importance to further strengthening the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention and its instruments at both the national and international levels. We consider

enhanced international cooperation a key prerequisite for developing a range of specific measures in order to increase the BWC's operational capabilities through relevant arrangements. In this regard, we support the idea of drafting an additional protocol on strengthening the provisions of the Convention.

Armenia, with the valuable assistance of its partners, has been consistently strengthening its national capacities and capabilities in the area of biological safety and security. In particular, the Government of Armenia has set up an interagency working group to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, and a national programme on the implementation of the BWC was adopted in 2016.

Armenia has taken a number of steps aimed at safeguarding radioactive and nuclear material, strengthening border security against the smuggling of hazardous materials, and enhancing capacities for investigating and prosecuting such incidents. Appropriate legislative and administrative measures have been adopted on the licensing and physical protection of nuclear and radioactive material. We have also made several amendments to Armenia's criminal code, substantially increasing the term of sentences for the illicit trafficking, import, export or re-export of CBRN materials. In November 2016, Armenia adopted a CBRN national strategy, outlining the threats and risks in this area and measures to address its emerging challenges.

We recognize and support the role of regional organizations and arrangements in strengthening the global non-proliferation and arms control regimes. We have continued to take steps within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to ensure our full and unreserved compliance with arms control regimes. We are committed to working to achieve an environment that is conducive to reinvigorating conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures in Europe as integral parts of comprehensive and cooperative security.

Armenia is currently an active contributor to international peace and security through its involvement in various peacekeeping missions. Our engagement in peace operations has enabled us to become a security contributor. Armenia has participated in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon since 2014 and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali since 2015. Our

contribution to international peace and security is also reflected in our long-standing participation in peace operations in Kosovo, since 2004, and in Afghanistan since 2010. We also welcome the expanding cooperation of the United Nations with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Within the CSTO, Armenia has been investing its experience in strengthening our preparedness for peacekeeping.

The peaceful resolution of conflicts, based on the norms and principles of international law in their entirety and within internationally agreed mandates, is especially important. Preventing the use or threat of use of force and introducing confidence- and security-building measures to that end constitute an important foundation of peace initiatives. Only through an unambiguous commitment to the non-use of force and to comprehensive and open dialogue between all parties to conflicts will it be possible to avoid resumptions of hostilities, establish confidence and trust and achieve genuine, lasting and sustainable peace.

Mr. Corbafo (Timor-Leste): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and assures you of Timor-Leste's full cooperation and support. We are certain that the Committee's work will be successful under your capable leadership.

We also join other delegations in expressing our condolences to the Government and people of the United States for the terrible events that took place in Las Vegas last week, and to the Caribbean region and Mexico for the recent loss of life due to natural disasters.

Timor-Leste also aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries (A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Nuclear disarmament remains a global concern, owing to the continued risks to humankind posed by the possible threat of nuclear weapons. We look forward to a world that is safer, secure and free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction so as to preserve the existence of humankind and our generations to come. The world we live in today is facing numerous challenges. War, terrorism, the race to acquire weapons of mass destruction, inequality, exploitation and injustice are still part of our daily reality. Efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons have spanned decades and have yet to be fully realized. We have witnessed the catastrophic effects on humankind of

the use of nuclear weapons. The race to develop and own nuclear weapons has also contributed to a rise in tensions at both the regional and global level.

Our collective efforts and commitments are needed to advance negotiations in good faith among all parties involved, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, in order to realize a world that is safer and more secure for all humankind. In this regard, Timor-Leste welcomes the efforts of world leaders and leading disarmament institutions to find common solutions to the problems of reducing the numbers of nuclear weapons, preventing their use and bringing the world closer to their total elimination. We also congratulate the 50 States that signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20 September. Timor-Leste is currently conducting an internal process for signing and ratifying the Treaty, which we hope to finalize shortly.

Since 2002, Timor-Leste has made significant progress in its efforts to comply with the international legal framework on nuclear and chemical weapons. Timor-Leste has ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Chemical Weapons Convention, in a clear testament to our sincere and serious commitment to fulfilling the stipulations of the Charter of the United Nations and to our country's Constitution regarding our collective responsibility for global peace, stability and prosperity — indeed, for safeguarding the existence of humankind.

Timor-Leste supports non-proliferation and negotiated nuclear disarmament. We call on the signatory countries to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to continue their joint efforts aimed at disarmament and non-proliferation in preparation for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, scheduled for 2020, in order to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

The process that led to Timor-Leste's referendum under the United Nations-organized ballot and the subsequent restoration of our independence remind us that the United Nations and international law can be powerful and decisive forces for settling conflicts and restoring peace when used for the greater good. The United Nations has the ability to save lives and help make the world a safer place. We therefore believe that the United Nations and our collective efforts within the Organization can also lead ultimately to total nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. In awarding the Prize, the Nobel Committee recognizes ICAN for its work in drawing attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. This is indeed a timely reminder, as the world faces rising tensions on the Korean peninsula, that there would be no winners if nuclear weapons were ever to be used again.

Ms. Bartolini (San Marino): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau, on your election and for steering our important deliberations.

The Committee does indeed have a vital role to play in addressing our current situation. This year the international community is facing even greater and more threatening challenges, among them nuclear tests, unprecedented numbers of people displaced by armed conflict and the increasing risk of terrorist attacks. The nuclear and ballistic-missile activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute an extremely serious threat to international security. San Marino strongly condemns them and calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its programmes. We also urge all States to effectively implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. It is urgent and essential to seek a political solution aimed at decreasing tension in a situation whose consequences are unpredictable and potentially horrific. Any nuclear detonation would have catastrophic consequences for the present and future generations and for our planet.

San Marino welcomed the adoption in July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This historic Treaty bans the only category of weapons of mass destruction that has still not been subject to a global prohibition, and while in the short term it may not bring us to our final goal, it remains a step in the right direction and a big contribution to safeguarding humankind. We hope that after decades of paralysis in the existing forums, the Treaty will be the first success of many.

San Marino reaffirms the indispensable role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We look forward to the 2020 NPT Review Conference and to a successful outcome for it, for which

all States must fully commit to working in an open and constructive way during the review cycle.

While this year we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we have also unfortunately once again witnessed the use of chemical weapons in Syria. San Marino condemns such deplorable and unacceptable acts regardless of who commits them and in what circumstances, and we reiterate that those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable.

Civilians continue to be innocent victims of conflicts. Regrettably, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is growing and causing unnecessary suffering and resulting in the displacement or death of many civilians, including children. Vital infrastructure and services have also been targeted, causing forced displacement and creating additional problems for reconstruction. We must address this alarming situation effectively. 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, and unfortunately, despite the results it has achieved, we have seen a worrying increase in the use of improvised landmines as tools of war in recent years.

We must also tackle the scourge of small arms and light weapons, which kill half a million people every year. The irresponsible circulation of such weapons fosters violence and violations of human rights, including killing, rapes, enforced disappearances and the recruitment of children by armed groups. The illicit trade in them fuels conflict, organized crime and terrorism, creates destabilization and undermines development. In that regard, we emphasize the link between disarmament and development, while we note with concern the growth of global military spending at the expense of new development initiatives. The 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, to be held in 2018, will be a good opportunity for us to continue to work together to strengthen the Programme of Action against this scourge. We also call for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty, which should continue to be a priority on our agenda.

As I have said, the current global environment does not look promising. What can we do to deal with these

challenges? We have proved that by working together with a strong political will and in a constructive way, we can make progress and create and enforce new norms to promote disarmament. Multilateralism is vital to peace and security. We will therefore continue on this path, which is the only way forward for achieving a more peaceful and secure world for everybody.

Mr. Akiapo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair our Committee. We believe firmly that your experience and leadership will be invaluable in the conduct and success of our work. I would also like to thank your predecessor and his team, whose untiring efforts enabled us to do our work during the seventy-first session.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria, respectively, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

As at the previous session, this year the work of our Committee is taking place in a very worrying global security environment. The resurgence of acts of terrorism, the constant tramp of the feet of every kind of combatant and the near-constant flow of small arms and light weapons continue to hinder the pursuit of collective peace and security. The military activity in many parts of the globe suggests that the world is once again engaged in a new Cold War and an arms race. All this is a challenge that must force us to emerge from the immobility that many States are mired in and work urgently for disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament.

As if a reminder were necessary, the political and military tensions that the world is witnessing on the Korean peninsula show how urgent it is that all States Members of the United Nations address the issue of nuclear disarmament responsibly. We must do our utmost to find peaceful solutions to these grave tensions, since any use of nuclear weapons in the region would signal civilization's moral bankruptcy and the end of our era. We must realize that these tensions pose the risk of sparking a nuclear conflict with unpredictable consequences.

That is why, in his recent speech in the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session (see A/72/PV.8), the Head of State of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara,

urged all stakeholders in the situation on the Korean peninsula to engage in dialogue, with a view to creating the conditions for lasting de-escalation and the establishment of a permanent framework for consulting on and discussing the maintenance of peace and stability in this important region in a way that can reassure the world.

With regard to the nuclear issue, Côte d'Ivoire, based on our President's policies, signed the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20 September, making it one of the first countries to do so. Even if the Treaty can still be improved in the eyes of some, we must recognize that its adoption constitutes a giant step forward and a major affirmation of the choice of many States Members of the United Nations to guarantee a world free of nuclear risk for the peoples of our planet and future generations. My country therefore congratulates the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017, and is delighted that through this gesture the Nobel Committee has underscored the importance of the fight to eliminate nuclear weapons.

More than 20 years after its adoption, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has yet to enter into force. Despite its signature and ratification by 184 and 166 States, respectively, its entry into force remains subject to the ratification of the remaining eight States listed in annex 2. The nuclear tests that have been observed in recent years, particularly in 2017, are causing serious concern, as they violate the long-standing moratorium on such tests. Similarly, reports of experimental explosions of nuclear weapons in laboratories are not reassuring. There can be no denying that these practices run contrary to the objectives and purpose of the CTBT.

This is why my country welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), which calls on all States to refrain from carrying out any experimental explosions of nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosions, and to maintain the moratorium on testing, as agreed. My delegation calls on all States to once again break the deadlock, as we did at the 2017 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission after more than 15 years of impasse.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which not only brings non-State parties to the table

to commit but also considers the potential civil and scientific consequences, with a view to better promoting the third pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to assure the Committee that Côte d'Ivoire, which was elected by Member States on 2 June as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the term 2018 to 2019, is committed to supporting and paying particular attention to all initiatives conducive to international peace and security. Among other things, we intend to act decisively in combating the proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism — the scourge of our time — and the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which claims more than half a million victims worldwide every year.

Mr. Laouani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Tunisian delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and to assure you of our full cooperation in the successful work of this session. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Algerian chairship of the previous session.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States and Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

In the current context, marked by heightened threats to international security, Tunisia would like to express how important it considers multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and conflict prevention. We reaffirm our commitment to continuing to support all initiatives to promote the non-proliferation and elimination of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the control of conventional weapons.

From the outset, given the devastating consequences for humankind that would result from the use of nuclear weapons, Tunisia supported the process that led to the adoption in July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Tunisia considers it a step in the right direction that can only strengthen the non-proliferation regime. In that regard, we reiterate our call for the balanced implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), based on its three pillars, and we hope for an early resumption of negotiations on nuclear disarmament and the establishment of an effective verification regime.

Tunisia deeply regrets the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, especially considering the impasse on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Tunisia reiterates its call for all necessary measures to be taken to ensure that the long-awaited conference to negotiate the establishment of that zone takes place as soon as possible. We once again express our concern that the prolonged lack of action on this issue will seriously undermine the credibility of the NPT and risk losing the countries of the region to a perilous arms race. The urgency is even greater today, owing to the threats of terrorism and the importance of preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological or chemical. Tunisia would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its hope for the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, and its condemnation of any use of the weapons they prohibit.

The devastating humanitarian, economic and social impact of the excessive and uncontrolled presence of small arms and light weapons is undeniable. Our African continent, where these weapons promote internal conflicts of all kinds and fuel traffickers and the activities of terrorist groups, is unfortunately a sad testimony to this fact. In that regard, Tunisia emphasizes the importance of 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 will fully support the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action, to be presided over by France in June 2018. Tunisia, which voted in favour of the Arms Trade Treaty, also welcomed the holding of the third Conference of States Parties to the Treaty in Geneva in September and the progress made in its implementation.

Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair, and the other members of the Bureau at this session. My delegation is fully committed to the successful fulfilment of the Committee's work and assures you of its full support and cooperation.

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

My delegation reiterates its commitment to multilateral diplomacy as a crucial principle for advancing the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The proliferation of nuclear weapons is a pressing issue for the world, and we must unite to act multilaterally against the threat that nuclearization poses to global peace and security. In this regard, Afghanistan maintains its position regarding the P-5+1 and Iran's Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and believes that the commitment of all parties to the agreement and its implementation is crucial.

Afghanistan reaffirms its commitment to denuclearization, advancing disarmament and non-proliferation and, ultimately, moving towards a nuclear-free world. My delegation strongly condemns the recent nuclear tests conducted by North Korea, and urges all States to sign, ratify and support the various multilateral treaties relating to non-proliferation and disarmament. We fully support the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and are strongly in favour of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Afghanistan is concerned about the current state of affairs in which the possibility of a nuclear attack by both aggressor States and non-State actors unfortunately appears very real. We are also troubled about the use of biological, chemical and radiological weapons. In that regard, we welcome the Russian Federation's recent elimination of its chemical-weapon arsenal. Afghanistan remains concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction. We therefore supported Austria's Humanitarian Pledge on the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. More recently, we continued to demonstrate our commitment to strengthening nuclear disarmament through our support for the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in an agreement made at the United Nations in July.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular its Goal 16, acknowledges the link between arms regulation and development, as well as between illicit trafficking in arms and organized crime. The abundance of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons across the Durand Line gives terrorists, violent extremists and other organized criminal groups in our region easy access to weapons. This mass illicit trafficking in arms, mainly small and light weapons, has caused Afghans tremendous suffering for decades. It must end. The nexus of illicit weapons, drug trafficking

and money-laundering funds the purchase of weapons by non-State actors. We therefore call on all the relevant parties to further strengthen their rules and regulations designed to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. I would like to inform members that, on 9 August, Afghanistan ratified and acceded to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, including Protocol I, Protocol III, amended Protocol II, Protocol IV and Protocol V.

The presence of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explosive remnants of war and landmines poses a severe threat to humankind. According to some surveys, in 2016 there were approximately 20,000 deaths and injuries from IEDs around the world, of which the vast majority were civilian casualties. Furthermore, the harm caused to civilians by IEDs in the past six years has outweighed that done by every other kind of weapon. There were more than 1,500 Afghan civilian casualties of IEDs in the first half of 2017, and Afghanistan remains one of the countries worst affected by the problem. That is why the resolution aimed at countering the threat posed by IEDs is so critical to Afghanistan and many other countries in the world. I would like to thank all the Member States that supported resolutions 70/46 and 71/72, entitled "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices", which were adopted by consensus in the First Committee and in the General Assembly in 2015 and 2016, respectively. With regard to resolution 71/72, on 29 March my delegation held the first informal consultations in coordination with the Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in New York, at which panellists from UNODA, the United Nations Mine Action Service, the World Customs Organization, Interpol, the Mines Advisory Group and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research were present. My delegation will present the follow-up draft resolution to resolution 71/72 and will hold informal consultations with Member States today at the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan. We seek members' full support for the draft resolution.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on assuming your offices, and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation. We also thank the Secretariat for its support.

The international security situation is deteriorating. Mistrust between States is growing. Old disputes continue to fester, while new conflicts are on the rise.

The quality and quantity of armaments is steadily increasing. More sophisticated and deadlier weapons are being regularly developed and deployed. An insatiable desire for military domination by a few countries is affecting strategic stability at the global and regional levels. Discrimination and double standards are putting the non-proliferation regime under a great deal of stress.

Outside any formal military alliances, Pakistan has had to take steps to ensure its security. However, we remain open to any bilateral or multilateral initiative on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament that is equitable and results in undiminished security for all the States concerned. Our conduct continues to be defined by restraint and responsibility and the avoidance of an arms race. Following Pakistan's long-standing tradition of bilateral engagement on strategic issues and undeterred by the lack of a favourable response, in his address to the General Assembly last year (see A/71/PV.11), our Prime Minister expressed Pakistan's readiness to agree on a bilateral arrangement in South Asia on a nuclear test ban. The proposal was guided by our commitment to the principles of non-proliferation, with the aim of maintaining regional peace and stability. We renew our commitment to that proposal. Our proposal for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia based on reciprocal measures for nuclear and missile restraint and instituting a balance between conventional forces also remains on the table. Peace and stability is our objective.

The growing dissatisfaction with the inactivity of the United Nations disarmament machinery due to the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament is reaching a tipping point. The self-serving attempt by some States to divert attention from their non-fulfilment of their nuclear-disarmament obligations by proposing additional non-proliferation measures that are completely cost-free for them but carry huge implications for other States' security is no longer going to work. At the other end of the spectrum is another divisive approach that trivializes security considerations and excludes them altogether by banning nuclear weapons on humanitarian and ethical grounds. While we understand the sense of frustration that propelled that initiative and empathize with its supporters, the fact is that nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated without addressing the concerns of States that rely on them for their security. We need approaches that unite us in our common endeavour towards a nuclear-weapon-free world based on the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security

for all States, enshrined in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

Pakistan remains committed to the conclusion of a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Pakistan also supports the commencement of negotiations in the CD on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on negative security assurances, as well as on contemporary issues such as chemical and biological terrorism, lethal autonomous weapons systems and cyberweapons.

While progress on nuclear disarmament remains deadlocked, the relentless pursuit of selective and cost-free non-proliferation measures persists. After failing to develop consensus on a genuinely equitable and non-discriminatory treaty on fissile materials in the CD, attempts are being made to force progress on the issue outside the CD. The proponents of such approaches should accept the reality that major differences continue to exist on the very objectives and scope of the treaty based on fundamental security concerns. Those concerns cannot be wished away by creative drafting but must be tackled up-front. Pakistan did not accept the conclusions and recommendations produced by the ill-advised Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in 2015, nor will we accept any recommendations that might emanate from the so-called high-level expert preparatory group. The substantive work on a fissile material treaty must be undertaken in the CD on the basis of a universally accepted mandate that explicitly addresses the asymmetries in existing material stocks and genuinely contributes to nuclear disarmament. Pakistan's detailed proposal in that regard remains on the table. We must reconsider the negative effects on the treaty's prospects generated by the misguided exercise of double standards that are manifest in the conclusion of discriminatory bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreements, the granting of inequitable waivers and the continued pursuit of the establishment of additional country-specific exceptions in multilateral export-control regimes.

Progress on CD-related issues can be achieved neither by changing the format or forum nor by imposing solutions that exclude major stakeholders. The challenges to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament should be tackled on the basis of certain fundamental requirements, which I elaborate on in

my detailed statement, the text of which is available on PaperSmart.

Pakistan has positioned itself as a mainstream partner in the international non-proliferation regime and the global efforts to strengthen nuclear security, safety and strategic export controls. We were an active participant in the Nuclear Security Summit process and have fulfilled all the requirements of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In fact, we hosted an international workshop on resolution 1540 (2004) in Islamabad earlier this year and will host another one on the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, of which Pakistan remains an active member.

Pakistan meets the international standards for gaining access to civil nuclear technology for meeting its growing needs in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner. Through a series of actions in diverse areas, we have demonstrated our credentials for joining the Nuclear Supplies Group (NSG), and expect to see the NSG's membership expanded in a non-discriminatory manner.

Pakistan is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. By banning entire categories of weapons of mass destruction, those two instruments make a valuable contribution to international and regional peace and security. Pakistan is actively engaged in strengthening both their regimes. We were also proud to preside over the fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention Certain Conventional Weapons, held last year, which resulted in a robust and forward-looking outcome document. I shall address those issues in detail during the forthcoming thematic debate.

Mr. Matt (Liechtenstein): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee.

The First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session is meeting in critical circumstances. Geopolitical tensions are high, the threat of nuclear destruction is more tangible than it has been in a long time and a new arms race risks spiralling out of control. The international community is at a crossroads, as our collective disarmament efforts need urgent revitalization and redirection. We owe it to future generations to take our responsibility as diplomats seriously, help avert escalation and find constructive ways to revive dialogue and rebuild trust. Multilateral agreements are the bedrock of disarmament. They

come with important collective security gains — for example, in the case of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — that must be preserved and further increased. Liechtenstein is confident, Sir, that under your able guidance we will make sure that the Committee can be a positive force for disarmament. We are particularly honoured to support such efforts as a member of the Bureau.

The Secretary-General, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and many of our leaders have placed the nuclear threat at the top of our priorities. The world is indeed at a concrete risk of living the horrors of a nuclear war. At the same time, one of the founding purposes of the United Nations — the total elimination of nuclear weapons — is as far from being achieved as ever. The solemn promise enshrined in the disarmament obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has been left unfulfilled by the nuclear-weapon States, which have mistaken privilege for responsibility. Our established formats have long been blocked from meaningful progress towards irreversible, verifiable and transparent nuclear disarmament.

Against that background, Liechtenstein has strongly supported the establishment of a clear legal norm against nuclear weapons, both as a complement to the existing disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and as a way to reinvigorate nuclear-disarmament discussions. Liechtenstein welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and signed it at the first opportunity. The normative reach of the Treaty's clear prohibition provisions will become stronger and more compelling over time and, as a consequence, will provide an additional incentive for States to reduce stockpiles in their possession or on their territory. The Treaty extends a hand to those States while strengthening and complementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The sixth nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in clear and repeated violation of international law, has put the spotlight on another area where privilege has for too long been mistaken for responsibility — the moratorium on nuclear testing. Respect for the prohibition on nuclear testing by all but one country is an achievement of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). At the same time, it is evident that the CTBT's current status cannot be a permanent substitute for a *de jure* prohibition on nuclear testing. The annex 2 States that have not

ratified the CTBT are responsible for the fact that the Treaty continues to be prevented from exerting its full legal and political potential. In that connection too, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, with its clear ban on testing, can contribute to an incremental strengthening of the current CTBT regime.

The clear legal prohibition of weapons of mass destruction is an important step towards their elimination. Unfortunately, prohibition does not guarantee the non-use of such weapons, as we have painfully witnessed in the repeated chemical-weapon attacks on the Syrian people. The use of chemical weapons is a blatant violation of international law and constitutes a grave breach of Syria's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. There must be accountability for those responsible in order to provide justice to the victims and to deter future atrocities through the use of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, Liechtenstein appreciates the important work being done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. While the Security Council continues to remain silent on Syria, we welcome the prospects for justice that the General Assembly's International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on accountability provides in gathering and processing available information of mass atrocities, including through the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Liechtenstein is concerned about the growing disrespect for international humanitarian law worldwide. The indiscriminate and disproportionate use of conventional weapons against civilian populations and the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and ports, cause appalling suffering among civilian populations. That points as much to an accountability crisis as it underlines the need for stricter conventional arms control measures. Today's conflicts are often fuelled by uncontrolled supplies of weapons. We call on States that have not done so to join the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The obligations enshrined in the ATT with regard to transparency, non-diversion and respect for international human rights law and humanitarian law provide an important, albeit minimum, standard for States trading in conventional arms. We should continue to build on them and use their potential to establish confidence and trust among States.

Our region, Europe, used to be a positive example of how military confidence-building can reduce tensions,

even at times of deep political and ideological divisions. Nowadays, we face an obvious deficit of trust. We have lost a number of valuable mutual commitments to transparency and military restraint and find ourselves in a new arms race. In such a sensitive security environment, Liechtenstein supports ongoing efforts in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to re-engage in a structured dialogue on common security challenges. We hope that those efforts will eventually translate into de-escalation on the ground, in particular for ongoing and protracted conflicts, and give way to a new security consensus based on the common set of principles that has successfully underpinned European security for decades. A new commitment to conventional arms control and disarmament could be an important building block in that regard.

Mr. Lynn (Myanmar): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as the Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. I would also like to pay tribute to the other members of the Bureau. You can be sure of our full support and cooperation.

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 (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

We meet here today amid growing tensions and threats to regional and international stability, peace and security. That is a source of concern for my delegation. Myanmar shares the international community's concern about the growing tension threatening regional peace and security on the Korean peninsula. We are against any nuclear or missile test carried out by any nation. At the same time, we believe that there is still room for diplomacy and dialogue to play a pivotal role. All parties should work together for the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and a resumption of dialogue.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, Myanmar also believes that the integrity and credibility of the NPT depend on a balanced implementation of its three pillars. We must pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to ending the nuclear arms race as soon as possible, as well as to nuclear disarmament and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international

control. The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be a welcome opportunity to do just that.

We recognize the progress achieved so far under the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and encourage States parties to the Treaty to make every effort to meet the Treaty's targets on all categories by 2018. Closer cooperation and mutual confidence are needed in order to make the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty more effective. Nuclear disarmament continues to be Myanmar's highest priority. All parties to the NPT, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, must take swift and bold steps, in line with their obligations under article VI of the NPT.

The United Nations disarmament machinery has experienced dark days for too long. The fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament constitutes an opportunity to comprehensively review the current situation in the field of disarmament and international security, as well as the revitalization of the existing disarmament machinery. During its 2017 session, the Conference on Disarmament was able to conduct substantive informal consultations in the Working Group on the way ahead on all the items of the Conference's agenda. My delegation hopes that we can further build on the better understanding that we have achieved in the past year.

While recognizing national strategic security concerns and the continued existence of differences, Myanmar believes that we should further explore the possibility of initiating, without preconditions, negotiations on a treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices in the Conference on Disarmament. Both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives can be pursued in that negotiation process. In the light of technological advancements, security issues that warrant our serious consideration include the prevention of an arms race in outer space, cybersecurity and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Universalization and early entry into force are keys to an effective Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call on all States that have not signed or ratified the Treaty, particularly the remaining annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

It is heartening to note that almost 96 per cent of declared chemical weapons have been destroyed under the verification of the Organization for the Prohibition

of Chemical Weapons. We welcome the completion of the verified destruction of Russia's chemical-weapon programme, which took place last month. However, we should not tolerate the use of such horrible weapons by any State or non-State actors.

For many developing countries, the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) can be facilitated through technical assistance and capacity-building.

We should also to close gaps in implementing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, making every effort to narrow or close gaps in its universality and implementation, as well as with regard to response and institutional status, at the next Review Conference of the Convention.

Myanmar looks forward to working closely at the upcoming third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, to be held in March 2018.

In order to end world hunger sustainably by 2030, we need an additional \$267 billion annually to invest in rural and urban areas and social protection. If for 15 years we could redirect just 16 per cent of total annual military expenditures — which stand at approximately \$1.69 trillion — we could achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, enabling us to leave a more just, peaceful and prosperous world to future generations. Wisdom is better than strength.

Mr. Rosselli Frieri (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join preceding speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election. We wish you success in your work and assure you that you can count on the full support of our delegation.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Uruguay is committed to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and supports the strengthening of multilateralism with a view to achieving complete and universal disarmament.

At a time when the threat posed by the use of nuclear weapons is visible and is putting international peace and security in jeopardy, it should be borne in mind that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons constitute crimes against humankind and serious violations of international law, including international

humanitarian law, as well as the Charter of the United Nations. The possession of nuclear weapons, and delays in disarmament on the part of the nuclear-weapon-possessing States, endanger world stability and the safety of humankind. Far from abandoning their nuclear programmes, the nuclear Powers continue to actively improve and modernize their arsenals. The only guarantee against the use or threat of use of those weapons is their express prohibition and total elimination.

In that regard, Uruguay welcomes the success of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination, which concluded with the adoption of the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to which Uruguay is a proud signatory. Uruguay also stresses the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. However, we regret the lack of results at the latest Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, in 2015, which ended without a final document. Further work is needed to achieve a balance among the three pillars of the NPT — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Uruguay emphatically condemns North Korea's nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, while urging that country to abandon its existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible way. We also urge North Korea to respect the relevant Security Council resolutions and return to the NPT and the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. At the same time, we also reiterate our call for dialogue, as we see no solution to the North Korean issue other than that which is generated through negotiation and political commitment between the parties.

My country wishes to emphasize once again the decisive importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We therefore urge annex 2 States to promptly ratify it. We also urge all States of the international community to maintain their moratorium on carrying out tests of nuclear or other explosive devices.

Uruguay has consistently promoted the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world. As an active member of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone on the planet, through its membership

of the Tlatelolco Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Uruguay advocates recognition of all such agreements. We again urge the nuclear weapon-possessing States — and any other States mentioned in the relevant protocols of the treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones — that have not yet signed or ratified the protocols to do so as soon as possible. We also urge that any unilateral reservations or interpretations expressed by the nuclear-weapons States that affect the denuclearization status of a zone be modified or withdrawn without conditions.

Uruguay regrets the continued lack of commitment to holding a conference on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear-weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In that regard, we urge all parties to hold the conference as soon as possible.

Strengthening the regime on general and complete disarmament requires the effective implementation, under strict and effective international control, of conventions that advocate the prohibition and elimination of other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we reiterate that the total elimination of chemical and biological weapons is a priority for Uruguay in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Our country is striving for the speedy universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In that regard, we urge all States possessing such weapons to comply with the obligations stipulated by the Convention and destroy their arsenals. Uruguay condemns the use of toxic chemicals as weapons against civilians in any armed conflict, which constitutes a war crime, and for which the people responsible must be brought to justice. In that connection, Uruguay supports the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism with a view to clarifying accountability for the incidents that have occurred in Syria.

The growing threat of terrorism and the challenge posed to the international community by the potential risk of terrorist groups using weapons of mass destruction, as well as the acquisition or use of conventional weapons and their links to transnational crime, have become one of the major threats facing humankind and are therefore also a matter of deep concern. Uruguay wishes to emphasize the importance of halting the proliferation of conventional weapons to areas of conflict. Conventional weapons

are genuine weapons of mass destruction, and the trade and trafficking in such weapons to warring parties in armed conflicts contribute directly to the suffering and death of civilians.

We are talking about disarmament, and there is data available that speaks plainly and resoundingly for itself. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 74 per cent of the total arms export volume in the period from 2011 to 2015 was carried out by the five permanent members of the Security Council. In addition, world military spending in 2016 totalled \$1.69 trillion, which was higher than the amount for 2015. When it comes to disarmament, therefore, Uruguay is convinced that the Arms Trade Treaty is a major step towards international regulation and more responsible international trade in conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons and their parts, components and ammunition. Regulation of that trade would have fundamental consequences in armed conflicts, primarily for civilian victims of armed violence.

Ms. Yusuf (Ethiopia): Let me to join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. I assure you of our full support and cooperation in discharging the Committee's responsibilities.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

It is self-evident that the global peace and security situation has become increasingly worrying. While on the one hand we see increasing modernization and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, on the other, there are new attempts to undermine the non-proliferation regime. All of that is taking place in the context of a global situation that is characterized, as the Secretary-General says, by power dynamics that are very much in flux. At no time since the end of the Cold War have wisdom, diplomacy and the careful handling of security issues been as critical as they are today. In our view, that is how the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be viewed. The danger of the potential use of nuclear weapons must be definitively removed.

We would like to stress once more that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its three pillars remain the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on 7 July, is indeed an important milestone towards achieving the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and we believe it complements and reinforces the NPT.

Ethiopia underscores the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones in enhancing global peace and security, and particularly their contribution to realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we share the concerns expressed by several delegations about the delay in convening a conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We call on all stakeholders to proactively engage in that process in the spirit of mutual understanding. The establishment of a nuclear-free Middle East is essential for global peace and security and for the stability of the region.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, reaffirms Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of such weapons, among other things. Ethiopia remains committed to it.

In reiterating our strong support for the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we also welcomed the convening of the tenth ministerial Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 20 September. We believe the CTBT provides the appropriate framework for further halting the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons. We call on States that have not yet signed or ratified it to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call on the States listed in annex 2 to the Treaty, whose ratifications are crucial to its entry into force.

We join other Member States in reaffirming the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We are concerned about the impasse that has prevented the Conference from fulfilling its mandate. The United Nations Disarmament Commission also serves as an important platform to achieve the

objective of nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we welcome the conclusion of its work on the agenda item “Recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons” at the 2017 substantive session. As the Commission begins its next cycle, it is our hope that that success will be emulated with regard to the agenda item on nuclear disarmament.

We would like once again to reiterate that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We also reiterate our call for unconditional negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States, pending their total elimination.

The illicit trade, transfer, manufacture and possession and circulation in small arms and light weapons, as well as their excessive accumulation, remain a source of great concern in many parts of the world. It is for that reason that the implementation of international and regional commitments and treaty-based obligations with respect to combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is very critical. In that regard, we remain committed to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and look forward to its third Review Conference, to be held in March 2018.

Ms. Abdullah Sitau (Brunei Darussalam): On behalf of the delegation of Brunei Darussalam, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on assuming your role as Chair of the First Committee, as well as to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Brunei Darussalam 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).

For decades we have been witnessing an extraordinary evolution in the ways by which countries address emerging security challenges. Multilateral organizations such as the United Nations play an important role in coordinating and promoting global responses to increasingly global threats. In the face of such challenges, disarmament conventions provide a vital foundation in the maintenance of international

peace and stability. Brunei Darussalam, like many other States, understands that the full potential of disarmament conventions cannot be realized without cooperation between Member States and partners. We emphasize the importance of peaceful dialogue and negotiations, capacity-building, intelligence-sharing and the exchange of experiences and best practices in dealing with security threats and the maintenance of overall peace and security.

It is important that we continue to mobilize the growing recognition of the dangerous consequences of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) on global peace, security, stability and development and translate it into actionable measures. As part of its contributions to regional efforts to maintain regional peace, security and prosperity, Brunei Darussalam remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. To ensure the full implementation of the Treaty, Brunei Darussalam, together with other ASEAN member States, will continue to work with all the parties concerned to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty.

In addition, we would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and for facilitating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We take note of the progress under way with the approach to the next review process of the Treaty, in 2020, and look forward to the strengthening of the NPT and the principles of non-proliferation in general.

Brunei Darussalam is also committed to working with regional and international partners in achieving the objectives and goals of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As this year is the twenty-first anniversary of the Treaty, we encourage the remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify it at the earliest opportunity, so it can enter into force and further our collective pursuit of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons this year is also very welcome. With the unpredictable and dynamic nature of our security environment, the Treaty is an important step towards our common aspiration for a world without nuclear weapons. Above all, its adoption sends a powerful message that nuclear weapons are

unacceptable and should be categorically rejected. We commend the countries that signed the Treaty last month. Brunei Darussalam looks forward to joining them in the near future.

Brunei Darussalam also recognizes the great importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and acknowledges the good work that has been carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons over the past 20 years to achieve the vision of a world free of chemical weapons. However, it is deeply worrying that there are still attempts to use chemical weapons, especially by non-State actors. In that regard, Brunei Darussalam joins the international community in condemning the use of chemical weapons wherever and whenever it may occur and by whom. We reiterate our support for the effective implementation of the Convention through national legislation and regulatory bodies, as well as multilateral capacity-building initiatives and cooperation.

We would also like to reaffirm our commitment to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention as a key element underpinning every effort made by the international community in confronting the threats posed by WMDs, particularly in a world of revolutionary technological and scientific advancements. Brunei Darussalam believes that stronger global collaboration on the Convention would enable us to jointly mitigate and eliminate the threats of biological attacks, while pursuing our development objectives peacefully for the benefit of humankind.

Terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to global security. To address it in a comprehensive manner, we recognize the paramount importance of strengthening regional and international cooperation. In that context, Brunei Darussalam would like to reiterate its strong support for the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2325 (2016), which calls for a framework to keep terrorists and other non-State actors from acquiring WMDs. Brunei Darussalam has put in place a broad and integrated national counter-terrorism strategy, which is further reinforced by close cooperation and exchanges among various security agencies.

We also welcome the establishment of the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the appointment in June of Mr. Vladimir Ivanovich Voronkov as its Under-Secretary-General. We are confident that the Office will enable greater

coordination and capability across the United Nations system and among Member States for implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We also welcome the Office's focus on capacity-building assistance to Member States.

In conclusion, Brunei Darussalam would like to reiterate the importance of the work of the First Committee as part and parcel of the overall goal of the United Nations of promoting sustainable development and building a better future for all. To that end, we will continue to work constructively with all countries and relevant bodies to help achieve positive and tangible outcomes in the Committee.

Ms. Fofana (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): First of all, let me warmly congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the Chair of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I would like to assure you of my delegation's support and full cooperation in the smooth execution of our work.

Burkina Faso associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Given that peace, security and development are at stake, addressing the issue of disarmament requires the entire international community to work as one. And considering the scope of the goals, the same goes for weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons alike.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a scourge for all humankind in terms of the number of victims they cause each year throughout the world. It is a source of genuine concern for Burkina Faso, as such weapons pose a threat to peace, security and stability in Africa, in particular in West Africa. Even if they are not the direct cause of crises and conflicts, they fuel and encourage them. Also, in a context of terrorism and transnational organized crime, small and light weapons inflame armed violence and compromise the socioeconomic development of States.

I would like to commend States' political will and determination in adopting the Arms Trade Treaty, thereby providing an appropriate collective response to regulating the transfer of weapons. We also welcomed the convening of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, from 11 to 15 September

in Geneva. We call on all actors, particularly States, to demonstrate their responsibility and commitment by fully implementing the Treaty and ensuring its universalization. We are confident that the Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Tracing Instrument, can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing instruments in our subregion, including the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, adopted on 14 June 2006.

Establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones is a disarmament and non-proliferation measure that contributes to strengthening the regime established by Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as well as international peace and security. My country therefore welcomes the establishment of such zones in various parts of the world, of which Africa is one by virtue of the Treaty of Pelindaba. We call for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the 1995 resolution and the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

More than two decades after its adoption, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force. My delegation is concerned about this and reiterates the importance of the role and place of the Treaty in the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. In that regard, we welcomed the holding in New York on 20 September of the tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. My delegation calls on the States whose signature and ratification are required to work to achieve them as soon as possible in order to enable the Treaty to enter into force.

My delegation welcomes the progress made this year by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which, after nearly two decades of deadlock, adopted consensus recommendations on concrete confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. In addition, we welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Open-ended Working Group of the objectives and the agenda for a fourth special session of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Lastly, we welcomed the adoption by 122 States on 7 July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons and its opening for signature on 20 September. The Treaty will complement the legal architecture prohibiting weapons of mass destruction.

The international community has long been aware of the destructive effects of the accumulation of weapons, both conventional and of mass destruction, and we have long called for disarmament. That appeal has become more relevant than ever owing to the number and complexity of the threats and challenges facing humankind.

In conclusion, Burkina Faso reaffirms its faith in general and complete disarmament, which is beneficial to the well-being of humankind. To that end, strict and effective compliance by all with their obligations under international disarmament instruments is an inevitable necessity if we want to live in a peaceful world and build a better world for future generations.

Mr. Idrizi (Albania): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of your role as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-second session. You can count on the full support of the Albanian delegation.

Albania aligns itself with the statement made previously by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

The complexity of the security environment is increasing at a pace that requires an immediate and strong multilateral reaction through both political and diplomatic channels. The threats posed to the security landscape in South-East Asia are clearly a concern for the entire international community. As Prime Minister Edi Rama of Albania said in his address at the general debate,

“a prolonged and recently exacerbated crisis sparked by the policy of a stubborn totalitarian and paranoid regime ... has brought back the dreadful fear of nuclear confrontation.” (*A/72/PV.15, p. 17*)

The unacceptable nuclear and ballistic programmes advanced by North Korea remind us of the importance of maintaining the momentum of the Security Council's unanimous actions and of engaging and complying with all its resolutions, including resolution 2375 (2017). In addition, we must focus on the vital implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in order to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, promote cooperation in the

peaceful uses of nuclear energy and further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.

Albania joins others in calling for universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its early entry into force, as it continues to be a major contribution to world peace and security. The signature and ratification of the Treaty, especially by the member States listed in its annex 2, is of paramount importance and would be an undeniable contribution to the credibility of the CTBT and its effectiveness for world security, as reaffirmed in Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). Albania also aligns itself with others in seeking the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible.

At the national and international levels, we support the long-term goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and an approach based on step-by-step global nuclear disarmament. Albania strongly supports the NPT as a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, capable of enabling tangible progress to be made towards the goal of total nuclear disarmament and therefore stability. However, nuclear disarmament will be neither trustworthy nor effective if certain States in possession of nuclear arms are not part of that approach and if they do not allow for a verification mechanism.

The achievement that we witnessed in the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action prove that multilateralism can similarly work in reaching long-lasting agreements. If multilateralism is to be effective, we should commit to keep working on the peaceful solutions that are already comprehensively in place. Historic diplomatic achievements such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, endorsed by the Security Council, require the engagement of all parties in achieving full implementation.

Any further reduction in nuclear arms programmes also involves the crucial role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), whose safeguards system is fundamental to the non-proliferation regime. Albania has a comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA and has signed and ratified its Additional Protocol. Nuclear security and combating the illicit traffic in nuclear and radioactive materials are very important. Albania is a participating State of the IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database and is also taking part in the IAEA's global action plan to fight nuclear terrorism. In that regard, we have drafted a strategy and implemented all measures necessary to strengthen our

capacities for fighting the illegal trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials.

My country attaches great importance to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, as well as to export control regimes as a means for preventing such proliferation. We therefore provide no support or assistance of any kind to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transfer or use weapons of mass destruction. We fully support all international efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Albania is concerned about the use of chemical weapons in the twenty-first century and supports Member States that adhere to the Chemical Weapons Convention and make it a high priority.

In that regard, the Albanian Government remains permanently committed to further cooperating with the international community in interdicting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the materials required to develop such weapons by States and non-State actors of concern. We also welcomed Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery. In that framework, we are working on a national strategy to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which should be approved in 2018 by the Council of Ministers.

People all over the world are facing the scourge of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through illicit trade. The Government of Albania is committed to implementing and adhering to the pacts and international agreements related to small arms and light weapons, which have become part of our national legislation and which we are constantly enhancing.

The Republic of Albania considers that regional cooperation and regional ownership are not only prerequisites for European integration but also essential to transforming our region's image. That direction in our foreign policy is reflected in our proactive participation in all initiatives and multilateral organizations operating in South-East Europe and beyond.

Aware of all the negative consequences of the violence caused by the uncontrolled circulation of arms and weapons, Albania has shown its commitment to the universalization and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and was among the first countries to commit to it. We believe it will contribute to making the world a

safer place and help establish global standards for the regulation of the international arms trade.

The world deserves our diligence in transforming it from an unpredictable and threatening theatre to a peaceful and secure place for its population. We the Member States are here at the United Nations to resolutely resolve the problems that arise in different corners of the world, and our agendas are interconnected and co-dependent. There can be no development without human rights and peace.

Mr. Bai (Fiji): As this is the first time we are taking the floor, we would like to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Committee at the seventy-second session. We also warmly congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that you will lead the work of the First Committee to success, and we assure you of Fiji's support.

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

We adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Sustainable Development Goal 16 has special relevance in its call for peaceful and inclusive societies. The relationship between disarmament and development has been widely recognized for many decades. Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, for example, places an obligation on the Security Council to facilitate disarmament,

“[i]n order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources”.

Despite those provisions, the likelihood of being left behind looms over us now more than ever with the continued presence of nuclear weapons threatening our very existence. Fiji is a small island developing State, and that further compounds the already mounting challenges we face on a daily basis from the effects of climate change.

Fiji has been a strong advocate in bringing to the fore the challenges posed by climate change not only to small island States, but to all of us represented here today. As the representative of Dominica alluded to, Fiji is also having to consider topics such as the resettlement of entire populations, the possible loss of our cultural identities, the consequences for global and

regional security and the possible conflicts that could arise with respect to climate refugees. For us, as a small island developing State, the battle has been an uphill one as we have constantly had to respond to challenges that have not originated from our own actions.

Just as we are at the mercy of the international community's reduction of its carbon emissions, Fiji is also at the mercy of nuclear-weapon States when it comes to eliminating the threat of a nuclear conflict. Fiji reiterates its principled position that nuclear disarmament is vital to the survival of all and shares the global concern about the continued possession of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

A review of Pacific history will show the devastation left by nuclear tests that were conducted on over 300 of our islands. What is more upsetting is that, quite apart from the long-lasting environmental impacts, the people who suffered as a result of those nuclear tests have not been compensated or at least provided with redress to this very day. I echo again what has often been repeated by the Fijian Government in various forums, which is that the silence of some of the offending States is deafening. They take no responsibility for the past, do not agree to legal steps that enforce change or provide redress in the present, and make no commitments for the future. That attitude shows utter disregard for humankind.

Fiji is playing its part. We support the strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones and encourage States to create such zones in their respective regions. As a step towards complete nuclear disarmament, Fiji joined Pacific island countries in keeping the Pacific free of nuclear weapons through the creation in 1985 of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Rarotonga. In addition, Fiji was also an early signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We urge countries that have yet to ratify those treaties to do so.

Fiji was among the first 50 States to sign the instrument of ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons when it was opened for signature on 20 September. During the negotiation period, Fiji, along with other small island developing States, fought for the adoption of that legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, with the goal of their total elimination. We encourage other States to sign the Treaty, as we

believe that it will help to create a world free of nuclear weapons. The people of Fiji and the Pacific want nothing less than a complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and of the trade of such weapons, and concrete steps to provide effective redress for those who suffer the effects of nuclear testing, as this is both a moral and legal issue.

Fiji stresses again the importance of including women in all nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control negotiations, particularly as women and children are often the most vulnerable victims of such conflicts. Fiji therefore fully supports the participation of women in disarmament negotiations.

Before I conclude, we would like to recall those who have fallen and sacrificed in the past in the pursuit of this initiative. We also pay special tribute to the lives of innocent victims, families and individuals who have suffered as a result of nuclear testing. Fiji is ready to engage constructively for the advancement of the United Nations disarmament agenda. With political will and a cooperative attitude, Fiji believes that the First Committee can come together to ensure a peaceful world.

Mr. Moldogaziev (Kyrgyzstan): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to your high positions, and to wish you success in your work.

Today we are facing unprecedented threats in the area of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, the First Committee has a number of very important tasks, whose fulfilment will help to ensure peace and stability throughout the world. Kyrgyzstan remains committed to the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and actively advocates the idea of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Kyrgyzstan also regards the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as one of the fundamental and effective instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Nevertheless, the Treaty has not yet entered into force, due to the fact that some countries have not signed or ratified it. We call on those States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible. We observe 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, a day on which educational events, activities and messages aim to capture the world's attention and underscore the need for unified efforts to prevent further nuclear-weapons testing.

Despite the fact that the Treaty has not entered into force, all States other than the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are adhering to the moratorium on nuclear tests. We condemn the underground nuclear test that was conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in September, breaking the global norm against nuclear test explosions and defying the Security Council and the international community.

Considering the increased activity of terrorist organizations, we would like to note the related danger of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We must take all necessary measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

One of the important steps in nuclear disarmament is implementing the initiatives on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities, the no first placement of weapons in outer space, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We consider the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones an effective approach to achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Kyrgyzstan welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and the ratification of its Protocol concerning negative security assurances. We call on all countries that have not yet done so to ratify it as soon as possible.

Nuclear tests have harmed some of the world's most vulnerable peoples and ecosystems. My delegation attaches great importance to the issue of mitigating the environmental consequences of uranium mining and the associated nuclear-fuel-cycle activities in the production of nuclear weapons.

Ms. Luts (Estonia): While fully aligning ourselves with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), we would like to highlight some specific issues to which Estonia attaches particular importance at this session of the First Committee.

We live in a world with a multitude of conflicts and tensions; some are emerging, others are raging or frozen, but all are more complicated than ever in the context of the current security challenges. What we have seen in recent years in Syria and Libya, and especially in the conflict in Ukraine — which is the clearest example of hybrid warfare waged against a sovereign State — is a reminder that we should all be alert. No society is completely immune to hybrid threats. Hybrid

threats, cybersecurity and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists raise a pressing need for the international community to respond with increasing resolve. We must therefore make efforts and progress towards the universalization, effective implementation and the strengthening of existing international law, including disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation instruments and regimes. Our citizens expect nothing less from us.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remains a very serious threat. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the repeated nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the ongoing activity to further develop its nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change course and return to complying with its international obligations.

We also condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. We are gravely concerned about the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria, which has been confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. If chemical weapons are used by State or non-State actors, accountability for those horrendous attacks must follow.

The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) is vital to identifying those responsible, which is why we strongly believe that the JIM mandate should be renewed immediately. The Security Council has a special responsibility in that regard. We expect a strong draft resolution from the First Committee on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the true cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Estonia shares the ultimate goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and a world without nuclear weapons, and continues to support the progressive approach towards nuclear disarmament, which should be pursued in a pragmatic and responsible way. To that end, Estonia supported General Assembly resolutions 71/259 and 71/258, on a fissile material cut-off treaty and on nuclear-disarmament verification, respectively. Estonia

is actively participating in the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, and it is our hope that the process will bring us another step closer to the start of official negotiations.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a multilateral instrument that is vital to international disarmament and non-proliferation. We urge all States, particularly those whose accession is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Estonia is pleased to see that progress is being made on the goals of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), as was shown by the outcome of the Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva. We should not hesitate in pursuing the Treaty's universalization and promoting transparency and cooperation around it. Estonia, which contributes through the European Union's outreach programmes and by sharing its individual expertise in arms and export control, continues to be a committed party to the ATT.

We support the efforts to universalize and strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Although financial constraints have prevented the holding of expert meetings, it will be important to ensure that the upcoming conferences of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention are substantive. As President-designate of the Convention's Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, Estonia considers it important to maintain momentum in promoting and implementing the Protocol. On a more general note, we are concerned about the financial problems of the various Geneva-based disarmament conventions and call on all Member States to honour their financial responsibilities in order to ensure that the conventions can operate effectively.

Estonia recognizes that security in the cyberworld has become a very important issue in the context of wider international security. The role and involvement of the United Nations generally, and the First Committee in particular, are therefore becoming increasingly relevant. It is regrettable that the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security was unable to achieve a consensus report in 2017 or make any further progress. All in all, it is our view that the Group of Governmental Experts has been a productive working format. Over

the years, the Groups have reached a consensus on a number of recommendations that the General Assembly has repeatedly endorsed. It is our task as States to fully implement them.

Finally, we are determined to contribute to the international community's efforts to strengthen the implementation of the existing disarmament and arms-control instruments. We also want to offer our know-how on inclusive development to the global discussion. Estonia is aspiring to become an elected member of the Security Council for 2020 and 2021. Our announcement of our candidacy testifies to Estonia's long-term commitment to taking more responsibility in a globalized world and offering the Council a small State's perspective.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and my own country, Belarus, in a joint statement by the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) on ensuring global stability throughout the world.

The CSTO member States are seriously concerned about the growth of instability, risks and threats in the world, increased conflicts in international relations and the weakening of the principles of equal responsibility for peace and stability, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs. The factors that harm our general stability have continued to grow. The ongoing deployment of a global missile defence system, the development of long-range non-nuclear high-precision strategic weapons, the threat of the emergence of first-strike weapons in space, quantitative and qualitative imbalances in the area of conventional weapons and the lack of progress in ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty represent increasingly serious threats to international peace and security and an obstacle to further progress on disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.

In the circumstances, the CSTO member States are once again affirming their commitment to the concept of comprehensive stability based on cooperation and equal and indivisible security. We support restoring confidence and re-establishing constructive dialogue with a view to preventing the risk of an arms race and the further escalation of dangerous military activity, to the detriment of our long-term security interests. The CSTO member States affirm their willingness to

help to improve the military and political climate in every possible way and to work to resolve conflicts by exclusively peaceful and political means, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the universally recognized norms and principles of international law. The CSTO member States reaffirm their commitment to the goal of building a nuclear-free world and their belief that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the foundation for advancing towards nuclear disarmament through strengthened international stability and equal and indivisible security for all States, without exception. We call for preserving its integrity and viability within the framework of our international obligations. While we welcome the conclusion of international treaties on reducing and limiting nuclear weapons, we want to emphasize the importance of ensuring that all parties strictly abide by them. We urge all States with military nuclear capabilities to join the discussion of possible ways to make the process of reducing and limiting nuclear weapons more multilateral in nature.

The CSTO member States would like to highlight the importance of preventing the emergence of weapons in outer space and the transformation of space into an arena for armed conflict. In that regard, we support developing a legally binding international instrument as soon as possible that guarantees the preservation of outer space as a weapon-free zone, on the basis of the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force with regard to objects in outer space. We especially emphasize the importance of an international initiative and political commitment to the non-first placement of weapons in outer space as a first step towards the draft treaty, an important transparency and confidence-building measure for space activity and a continuation of the efforts to universalize it.

We are very concerned about the growing danger of the acquisition of chemical and biological weapons by terrorist organizations and criminal groups in order to use them for terrorism, violent extremism and other criminal activities, as well as their efforts to get access to the technologies and components for such weapons. If we are to counter that threat, it is vital to improve the relevant international legal framework. We consider this to be a very urgent issue and we support using the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to develop an

international convention on combating acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

Arms control is an important instrument for strengthening international security and stability. All measures in that area should comply with the fundamental principles enshrined in the final document of the first special session on disarmament of 1978 (A/S-10/4), which remain fully relevant. It is crucial that any measures regarding arms reduction and limitation should be fair, balanced and genuinely designed to help to strengthen the security of all States, and not remain mere words on paper.

The CSTO member States remain committed to taking effective measures to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems for such weapons. We support uniting the efforts of all States in the struggle to strengthen global stability in all its aspects as a foundation for lasting peace and reliable, equal and indivisible security for all. To that end, we once again call on the international community to begin working on an integrated programme based on the following principles.

On the political front, that includes strict observance by all States, associations of States and international organizations of all of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the generally recognized norms and principles of international law regulating, among other things, issues related to the use of force and the adoption of enforcement measures, respect for the legitimate interests of States and peoples in settling urgent international problems and considering regional situations, as well as the inadmissibility of unauthorized interference in the internal affairs of other States. On the military front, it is about consistently limiting military capabilities, providing measures for building confidence, security, transparency and predictability, refraining from the use or threat of use of force and from any steps to build up military strength that other members of the international community might perceive as threatening their national security, thereby compelling them to respond with measures designed to restore the balance of power.

The CSTO member States once again urge all members of the international community to act based on those principles, which are aimed at strengthening international peace, security and stability, and we intend to promote dialogue and cooperation with all

interested States and international organizations on that basis, including with a view to strengthening the viability of the key multilateral instruments in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): Let me start by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee during this session, and by wishing you every success in your endeavours.

Besides aligning myself with the statement delivered previously by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), I would like to add some comments in my national capacity.

The global security situation today is being challenged by unprecedented proliferation crises, as recently exemplified by the sixth nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which Slovenia firmly condemns. It was a grave violation of numerous Security Council resolutions and highlights the importance of the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We firmly believe that we have to achieve our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons progressively, through the full implementation of the NPT. For Slovenia, the NPT remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the development of nuclear-energy applications for peaceful purposes. We believe that progress has been made in all three areas. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action clearly shows that even the most difficult issues can be resolved by diplomatic and peaceful means. Slovenia therefore counts on continued compliance with the nuclear deal by all sides and commends the International Atomic Energy Agency for its important monitoring role with regard to Iran's nuclear programme.

At the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we agreed on a step-by-step action plan with practical measures, including in the area of disarmament, to which we are all committed. Slovenia has supported resolutions and activities focused on delivering concrete, tangible results related to a progressive approach to disarmament. They include nuclear test bans, transparency in the area of ballistic missiles, nuclear-disarmament verification, banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear

weapons and establishing and maintaining nuclear-weapon-free zones. We believe that significant progress has been made in all those disarmament areas, and we encourage all nuclear-weapon States to participate in these initiatives. In our view, effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament requires not only appropriate technical and security conditions but also the active engagement of States possessing nuclear weapons. Let me also point out that it is precisely because of my country's attachment to disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of atomic energy that we devoted a panel discussion to global nuclear governance at this year's Bled Strategic Forum.

With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, I would like to reiterate our strong condemnation of all use of chemical weapons, especially their confirmed use in Syria. Slovenia supports the work and extension of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism as well as the work of Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons itself and its Fact-finding Mission and Declaration Assessment Team, and we call for their unconditional access to all relevant areas. On a positive note, we would like to welcome the completion of the verified destruction of Russia's remaining declared chemical-weapon stockpiles, which is indeed a significant step towards delivering a world free from chemical weapons.

I would like to continue by reiterating our strong concern about the rising numbers of victims of mines and cluster munitions. Slovenia has always attached great importance to victim assistance, which for us represents a true embodiment of the spirit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. A commitment to all victims and their families often means lifetime care, and we must ensure their social and economic reintegration and full participation in all areas of society on an equal basis and in a sustainable way. Slovenia has been active in the area of assistance to victims of mines and cluster munitions through the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF), which the Slovenian Government established in March 1998 to help deal with the humanitarian crises caused by anti-personnel mines and other unexploded remnants of war in our region of South-Eastern Europe. The outstanding results that we have achieved in countries of the region have encouraged its further engagement, and today the

ITF is actively engaged in many other mine-affected regions and countries around the world.

Through the ITF — together with other donors, to whom we are sincerely grateful — Slovenia has responded to the needs of children and adults affected by conflicts in various States and regions. More than 1.3 million items of excess ammunition have been destroyed, with more than 277,000 dangerous pieces of ammunition and 91 tons of unexploded ordnance removed after ammunition depot explosions. Almost 1,300 mine survivors have received rehabilitation treatment in Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon, while more than 17,000 mine survivors and other disabled persons have received psychosocial assistance. More than 1,400 child mine survivors have attended summer and winter rehabilitation camps and more than 880 mine survivors enrolled in socioeconomic programmes have received economic assets, loans or scholarships. The ITF has also been focused on the destruction of conventional weapons, risk education, capacity-building, training and regional cooperation. More than 1,100 experts have received training in the areas of humanitarian demining, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and mine-action management.

Slovenia strongly condemns the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions and calls for the related conventions' universalization, as well as for full respect for international humanitarian law. We also urge all sides to refrain from the use of weapons that do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. We were disturbed to learn that our cluster munitions stockpiles, which were sent for destruction to an implementing partner country in 2011, were not completely and irreversibly destroyed by the service provider. Slovenia remains fully committed to its obligations under the Convention and is doing everything in its power to ensure the irreversible destruction of its remaining munitions elements before the deadline. We were recently informed that the service provider will shortly be able to continue destroying the remaining elements.

Slovenia supports efforts to universalize the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which remains one of the leading instruments in that area. We support the decision to discuss and move forward on regulating the emerging field of lethal autonomous weapons systems in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, and we look forward to the Group's November meeting.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate my delegation's full commitment to actively participating in the First Committee's discussions and our absolute support for its work.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We assure you and the other members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support as you discharge your responsibilities.

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

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is anchored in our Constitution and remains a fundamental pursuit of our foreign-policy objectives. That perhaps explains why Bangladesh has usually been one of the first to come forward in South Asia in assuming obligations under all major multilateral disarmament treaties. Similarly, Bangladesh supported the adoption on 7 July of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and signed the Treaty at the special ceremony on 20 September.

For obvious reasons, we remain gravely concerned by the egregious political rhetoric and brinkmanship that we have witnessed once again with regard to the possible threat of the use of nuclear weapons. We join others in reiterating our serious concerns over the repeated nuclear and ballistic missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. We underscore the paramount importance of de-escalating tensions and the indispensable role of dialogue and diplomacy in paving the way for the pursuit of lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

Bangladesh remains convinced that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be ensured only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We therefore share concerns regarding the pace and progress of nuclear-arms-reduction efforts by major nuclear-weapon-possessing States, and more so against the backdrop of the continued qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. From our perspective, the notion of security assurance provided by nuclear weapons pales in comparison to the possible humanitarian problems resulting from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

It is crucial to recognize that without universal, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament, threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism are likely to persist, notwithstanding all efforts to find solutions, impose sanctions or build firewalls. Bangladesh has therefore always joined others in advocating the mutually reinforcing implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with matching priority given to both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

We feel encouraged by a number of positive developments in the United Nations disarmament machinery this year. The adoption by consensus of the objectives and agenda for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament; substantive discussions in the Working Group on the Way Ahead in the Conference on Disarmament; and the continued work by the high-level expert preparatory group on the fissile material cut-off treaty have been some of the notable bright spots.

The aforementioned adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the adoption by consensus at the United Nations Disarmament Commission of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, breaking a 17-year deadlock, have renewed the international community's faith in the multilateral disarmament agenda. The first meeting of the 2020 NPT Review Conference cycle this year also looks promising. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons has been a timely endorsement.

Bangladesh has consistently supported the call for a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that addresses the entire spectrum of the issues concerned. Pending such a development, we have signalled our readiness to explore other possibilities that can essentially serve as building blocks towards that goal and also complement the existing legal regime, particularly the NPT provisions. We believe that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons constitutes such a crucial building block and should not be undermined by any future legal or normative exercise, unless for the evident purpose of further strengthening its provisions.

The chilling prospect of terrorists and other non-State actors seeking and obtaining access to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is perhaps becoming more real than previously assumed.

With rapid progress in new technologies, including in artificial intelligence, there is potential for such threats to be further aggravated. It should be considered a priority to further mainstream those issues into our discussions in the First Committee and other relevant forums towards undertaking a far-reaching normative exercise. We see merit in a recent proposal for the Conference on Disarmament to consider negotiating an international instrument on suppressing acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

Bangladesh remains concerned about reports of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic earlier this year, and we want to emphasize our abiding support for any constructive initiative to investigate such reports, eliminate any remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles and ensure accountability for those responsible for such use, if proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Bangladesh expressed grave concern about several reported casualties due to anti-personnel mines being laid along the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar, against the backdrop of the massive exodus of Rohingyas from Myanmar's Rakhine state. 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, adopted in Ottawa, we consider such acts and reports to be serious threats to our national security and stress the need for immediate measures to be taken by Myanmar authorities to ascertain the veracity of such reports in a transparent manner.

Bangladesh underscores the importance of preventing an arms race in outer space, and in that regard sees merit in the proposal to set up a group of governmental experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As we enlarge our initiatives to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development purposes, we remain committed to working with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international partners in ensuring due diligence in nuclear safety and security.

In conclusion, as a nation in transition, Bangladesh has a legitimate interest in aligning itself with the cause of general and complete disarmament and advocates channelling the massive resources deployed for an arms build-up to the deserving concerns of sustainable development and sustaining peace. We will share the full version of this statement on PaperSmart.

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

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, and your associates on leading this session of the First Committee, and pledges its full cooperation in advancing our work.

At the outset, I would also like to extend my delegation's heartfelt congratulations to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and the many civil-society organizations associated with it, on having been awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. My delegation wishes them every success in meeting the coming challenges.

Our hopes for a more peaceful and secure world are severely threatened by the ever-increasing production of weapons and their great destructive firepower, including nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The arms trade, both licit and illicit, keeps expanding. More and more countries have become arms manufacturers. The proliferation of arms, including weapons of mass destruction, among terrorist groups and other non-State actors has led to a very threatening situation.

Those deeply disturbing trends increasingly threaten the existing architecture of arms control and non-proliferation, with the effect of rendering the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament even more remote. They place greater obstacles and barriers in the way of the achievement of peace and security, the full enjoyment of fundamental human rights and integral human development. Those trends reveal that the chasm that separates commitments and action in the field of disarmament and arms control has been growing deeper and wider.

The Holy See signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the 20 September signing ceremony, because we believe that it is an important contribution to the overall effort towards complete nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and a step forward towards the fulfilment of the commitment of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to ending the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.

The adoption of the Treaty shows that an overwhelming majority of States and many other

stakeholders want swifter progress towards a world free of the threat of nuclear destruction. But while the Treaty constitutes a landmark in the field of global security, much work remains to be done if it is truly to make a difference and achieve its full promise, particularly in engaging the nuclear-weapon States and States under extended nuclear deterrence, and in establishing a competent international authority to oversee the dismantling of nuclear weapon systems. We must continue to pursue these objectives and move towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

We must not, however, ignore the halting pace of progress under other treaties and the work needed to advance the objectives of article VI of the NPT. The Holy See notes with concern the lack of attempts to maintain existing agreements, such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, or to bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), with regard to which a conference dedicated to attaining this objective just took place here on 20 September. It is difficult to envision further steps or establish additional building blocks in the edifice of nuclear-arms control when an existing agreement is under duress and the required ratifications to bring laboriously negotiated treaties are not being sought.

In the context of the continued nuclear testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Holy See reiterates its encouragement to those States whose ratifications are required for the entry into force of the CTBT to act swiftly to ratify the Treaty.

In this regard, the Holy See welcomes the continued successful implementation of the New START treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, and the recent high-level bilateral meeting in Helsinki and expert-level consultations to deal with nuclear-weapon control. Likewise, we hope that further steps towards nuclear disarmament will be acknowledged in the 2020 Review Conference of

the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the same time, the use of cluster munitions and toxic chemicals against civilian populations has not stopped, in spite of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Indeed, this has been on the rise in some areas, as, for example, the frequent attacks on civilian populations have demonstrated.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 71/62, on the relationship between disarmament and development. It is encouraging that this Committee has gone on record to stress

“the importance of the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development and the important role of security in this connection, and concerned at increasing global military expenditure, which could otherwise be spent on development needs” (*resolution 71/62, seventh preambular para.*).

The resolution's operative paragraphs are very much in line with the position of the Holy See, particularly with regard to devoting resources saved through disarmament and arms-limitation agreements to economic and social development.

We live in momentous times. The Holy See therefore fully supports the work of this Committee, and encourages it to be more determined than ever in working to achieve with ever-greater urgency and sense of purpose its ultimate objective of a peaceful and stable world.

The Chair: I have a request from the representative of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to make an statement in the general debate. May I take it that the Committee is willing to allow that statement to be delivered today?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.