



# General Assembly

Seventy-second session

## First Committee

**10**<sup>th</sup> meeting

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Official Records

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

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

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

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

**The Chair:** In keeping with the timetable indicated for this phase, as contained in document A/C.1/72/CRP.2, and with the decision contained in document A/C.1/72/CRP.4, we will first hold a high-level exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field.

It is now my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to our panellists for today: Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Mr. Michael Møller, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, who is joining us today via video link; Mr. Xolisa Mabhongo, Personal Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Director of the IAEA Office in New York; Mr. Gareth Williams, Head of the Safety and Analytical Chemistry Cell of the Inspectorate Division of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; Mr. José Rosemberg, Senior Liaison Officer at the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; and Mr. Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Secretary-General of the Agency for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I will first give our panellists the floor to make their statements, after which we will change to an informal mode to afford delegations an opportunity to ask questions. I urge our panellists to kindly keep their statements concise so as to ensure that we have adequate time for an interactive discussion on the subject.

I now give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

**Mrs. Nakamitsu** (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): First of all, I would like to welcome my colleagues from across the United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation system. It must be quite late in Geneva, so I thank Mr. Møller for joining us today. I also thank my colleagues and representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Our topic today is one that is increasingly moving to the forefront of our thinking and deliberations. As the Secretary-General noted in his address to the General Assembly last month (see A/72/PV.3), technology will continue to be at the heart of shared progress, but the dark side of innovation is also a threat that we must confront and that has moved from the frontier to the front door.

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In discussing emerging technological developments, we are considering a range of technological innovations that are already revolutionizing transportation, health care and manufacturing. However, the same innovations can also have military applications or be repurposed for malicious use. Technological innovations with possible implications for peace and security include such enabling technologies as machine learning and information and communications technologies (ICT). Others, such as biotechnology and additive manufacturing, are dual-use, and then there are specific weapon technologies, such as new types of long-range precision delivery vehicles and armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Together, these innovations have long-term potential to change how wars are fought and increasingly place civilians in harm's way. Take, for example, the enabling nature of cyberspace, which means that ICT-enabled critical infrastructure, ranging from health-care facilities to power grids to nuclear facilities, is vulnerable to attack because it relies on computer networks to function.

On the military front, long-term effects could include destabilizing arms races, as when advanced States seek to build or negate perceived advantages. We can already see echoes of this in recent statements about artificial intelligence and defence strategies based on unmanned and autonomous technologies. In future, technological innovations could potentially lower the threshold for armed conflict due to perceptions of casualty-free warfare or because the accelerated pace and enhanced scale of conflict can lead to a failure of escalation control.

In the near term, questions are being asked as to the impact that such innovations could have on stability and the degree to which they can conform to international humanitarian law and human rights law. Serious concerns have been raised about attribution and accountability, especially in the context of cyberattacks and autonomous weapon systems. It is also conceivable that, due to the portability and commercial availability of some of these technologies, these innovations could increase the risk of proliferation, including to non-State actors. Unlike in previous military technological revolutions, such as the advent of nuclear weapons, it is often the cognitive impact of largely civilian technology that we must now be aware of. I have mentioned before the possibility that an autonomous drone network could use space-based systems for guidance and facial-recognition software for targeting.

There are two other aspects of this technological revolution that should be highlighted. First, these innovations are being driven largely by the private sector, not by Governments, and the technologies they are developing are largely ungoverned. If we are to address the challenges they pose, we must devise mechanisms for bringing industry inside the tent. Secondly, the technological revolution is occurring at a time of growing geopolitical instability and inflamed regional disputes. The combination of this combustible situation with potentially revolutionary new weapons could have grave consequences for peace and security.

The United Nations system is already attempting to deal with some of these innovations across various forums. The Secretary-General has repeatedly expressed his concerns about what he calls frontier issues, which include lethal autonomous weapon systems, cyberattacks and the developments in biotechnology, and has tasked the United Nations system with developing the best possible strategies for helping the world — “we the peoples”, as the Charter of the United Nations has it — to address them. Action is already being taken in the disarmament machinery. In November, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will convene a formal intergovernmental expert process for deliberating on approaches to lethal autonomous weapon systems. As many Committee members know, there have also been five General Assembly-mandated groups of governmental experts on information and communications technology. Even the United Nations Disarmament Commission, recently best known for its inability to fulfil its mandate, held an informal exchange this year on the proposal for a new item on the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities for the purposes of preventing an arms race in outer space.

The Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has also proven to be a valuable incubator for ideas on how to address the challenges posed by emerging technologies. It was the Advisory Board that examined the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems in 2013, recommending coordinated efforts in an existing forum such as the CCW. In 2014, the Board considered armed unmanned aerial vehicles, leading to a study by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs that presented ideas for improving transparency, oversight and accountability in the development, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and use

of armed UAVs. I welcome the follow-on initiative by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to carry forward multilateral dialogue on this issue, and look forward to its recommendations on how it could be taken forward in a formal setting.

In 2016, just last year, the Board considered the development of conventional long-range weapons. Noting that such weapons could eventually disturb the balance of strategic stability, the Board called for a study to inform further Member State deliberations, including on possible recommendations for arms-control measures. Work on the study is under way. Most recently, the Board discussed the impact of artificial intelligence on international security, including highlighting the need for further study of the issue. As various parts of the United Nations system grapple with these issues, I think we all agree that we should step up the pace of our work, achieve greater depth of analysis and come up with broad and strategic overviews on the interlinkages of the challenges that we face.

Normative considerations must keep pace with technological developments. However, it is equally important to ensure that once norms are developed, they are fully implemented. In that context, the importance of preventing the potentially destabilizing effects of cyberattacks should be of paramount concern. It is estimated that by 2020 the number of people online will double to 4 billion, with approximately 30 billion devices connected to the Internet. Incidents such as the one involving WannaCry ransomware, which reportedly affected about 200,000 systems in over 150 countries, demonstrate the international and interconnected impact of cyberattacks.

Deliberations on these issues at the United Nations are at a critical juncture, as the most recent Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security was not able to reach consensus on a final report. However, it is important to keep in mind that we already have three substantive reports from previous groups with key assessments and recommendations on which to build our work. Those consensus reports have laid the foundation for a non-binding framework that can help prevent and mitigate the prospect of offensive cyberoperations. Chief among those norms is an enduring commitment to an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment. What matters now is that all States

seek to respect this framework through their actions in cyberspace.

Today's briefings should make it clear that we are making progress within the United Nations framework in our attempts to deal with the challenges posed by emerging technology. But we cannot afford to rest. The pace of technological innovation outstrips that of international deliberations, arguably by orders of magnitude, while the pace of investment in innovation dwarfs investment in norm-building. As I noted earlier, many of the potentially game-changing innovations affecting our work are currently ungoverned.

As we move forward, I would like to ask Member States the following questions. First, do we have a sufficiently clear understanding of the ramifications of these new weapons, including their combined effects and how they might be used? Secondly, what is the scope of the governance or regulation required to ensure that they do not become destabilizing and that they are not used either for unintended purposes or in contravention of international law? Thirdly, in this context, is the current system fit for purpose, or should we consider new instruments and initiatives? What new confidence-building and transparency measures can we develop? Are we making proper use of all the tools at our disposal? Fourthly, how can these technologies be governed without stifling innovation or inhibiting technology transfers that could be helpful to sustainable development? Fifthly, what opportunities do these technologies present for our work? The benefits for verification stand out, but there are others, such as enhanced detection of the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the ability to mark and trace conventional weapons. Lastly, are we moving fast enough, and are we doing so in a way that addresses these challenges strategically and holistically?

The emergence of lethal autonomous weapon systems, cybersecurity issues, synthetic biology, UAVs and other new challenges adds to the already immense load borne by the international disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. These issues will only become more central to our work, especially as they begin to affect such traditional areas as conventional and WMD arms control. However, it is vital that we keep pace with new challenges in ways that are open, transparent and based on inclusive dialogue.

In that regard, I feel obliged to end my remarks today by repeating some of the messages I had for the

Committee in yesterday's informal exchange. Our work on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament has become more critical than ever in the face of the ongoing fundamental changes in the international security environment. Various parts of the disarmament machinery must function effectively as an integrated system contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security in the twenty-first century. The Conference on Disarmament has to come out of its long stalemate. I hope that every Committee member will take up the important responsibilities of Member States well beyond the confines of this room and the Committee's traditional draft resolutions and create dynamism for innovation and momentum. I look forward to working with the Committee on all disarmament and non-proliferation challenges, including ensuring that rapid advances in technology work for the benefit of humankind, and not against it.

**The Chair:** I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her statement.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, who is joining us via video link.

**Mr. Møller** (Secretary-General, Conference on Disarmament): I am very pleased to be part of this timely discussion alongside my colleagues from the disarmament community on the current state of affairs in the field of international security and disarmament. I am particularly pleased that we have a dedicated debate on the impact of new technologies on disarmament, the international security architecture and the non-proliferation agenda. It is high time that we did.

At the international level, Geneva continues to be an important hub for disarmament issues. Home to an array of disarmament bodies, scientific research centres, civil-society organizations and governance-innovation initiatives, Geneva is a major and growing centre for conversations about the impact of new and emerging technologies. It is also an incubator for creative thinking about governance and regulatory regimes. Geneva holds tremendous promise for addressing the challenges that the world's disarmament regimes are currently facing. The Conference on Disarmament is currently underutilized but central to that role.

When the Secretary-General took office, he reminded us that the United Nations was born out of war but that today we must be here for peace. Key to any discussion on peace, disarmament and the

prevention of conflict is the question of how to channel scientific advances, technical processes and progress for the common good. Innovations in technology have always shaped the international security landscape, but technologies are now evolving and converging at an unprecedented speed, bringing into view a future that we have only begun to imagine and that we do not yet know how to govern. Our current tools of governance are not fit for today's challenges, much less for tomorrow's. We are reaching new levels of interdependence in which the global security landscape resembles a vast and complex web, where something in one corner of the globe can have significant impact everywhere else, whether it is a microorganism, a line of code or a single algorithm.

When the Secretary-General addressed the General Assembly earlier this month (see A/72/PV.3), he said, as the High Representative just mentioned, that the dark side of innovation had moved from the frontier to the front door. It is a development that none of us is fully prepared for, and one where traditional forms of regulation simply do not apply. It requires not only a global intellectual reboot but also a new generation of thinkers and doers. But as a technical optimist, I firmly believe that the recent wave of technological change has the clear potential to bring vast benefits to humankind. Access to science and knowledge is boundless and transcends borders. Technology is instrumental in delivering on our commitments on sustainable development. However, in a governance and ethical vacuum, even the most positive and inspiring technological advances that bring our societies together can be repurposed with dangerous consequences. That presents significant challenges that could permanently alter the international security landscape, destabilize fragile balances of power, entrench disparities between countries and herald chaos with profound humanitarian impact.

The future of warfare will likely be guided by technologies that will dramatically increase the speed of a battle, define how it is fought, where it takes place and who is involved and affected. Too often, arms deliberations are held on the basis of narrow mandates in separate disarmament bodies within the United Nations. That disjointed approach is increasingly detrimental to any meaningful global oversight and arms-control regime. If we are to develop a meaningful governance model, we must always remember that technology is not neutral. It is the basis for human development, but



it can, and will, be misused. Ultimately, technology is a magnifier of human intentions, aptitudes and biases.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament set up a disarmament machinery that was meant to deliver better results. The relationship between deliberative and negotiating bodies and the General Assembly was carefully calibrated. Today there is a general sense that that balance has been lost and should be reassessed. Increasing global tensions and divergent interests have led to fragmentation and discord, which in many instances have undermined the work of multilateral institutions. Moreover, in a fraught situation, where many are wondering where we go from here, maintaining the status quo seems for many the safest option.

Progress in science and technology is outpacing the speed of discussions in international forums. Industry should play an increasingly important role, and it is sometimes doing so. The United Nations family has to meaningfully engage with industry players and encourage responsible innovation and data management in order to ensure that scientific advances and technological developments are helping to create a world of equal rights and access to social progress, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. Meaningful interaction also requires us, the United Nations, to stay true to our purpose, clear as to the value we add and frank about the achievements we have made, while remaining honest about where we could, and still can, do better. That is the only way to establish partnerships that will yield sustainable results.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is a unique body with clear untapped potential. Over the years, but in the increasingly distant past, it has proved its important role and capacities beyond serving as a treaty-making factory. We have seen how it has contributed to effective measures on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control that have played a crucial role in conflict prevention, risk mitigation, de-escalation and the reduction of tensions. When the High Representative spoke to the CD in September, she pointed out that it had reached an important point of convergence in recognizing that something must be done to bring it back to where it should be. I saw the great commitment of many States members of the CD during the serious and in-depth discussions that took place within the Working Group on the Way Ahead at the Conference's 2017 session. It has given me some measure of hope that it can be reinvigorated and become

the effective primary disarmament body that the world so urgently needs.

If we are to achieve that, the time has come for us to really consider if the CD's current set-up has become more of a roadblock than a vehicle for advancing disarmament. Rather than trying to fix it piece by piece, can we agree on a new approach, in which we ask what our priorities are going forward, what we want to achieve and where we go from here. How do we remedy the current stalemate arising from the all-powerful notion of consensus? Consensus means finding a solution that we can all support, even if it is not our first or favourite option. Moreover, innovative ways of consensus decision-making have been proven to be effective and efficient, such as, for example, those put in place by another international organization headquartered in Geneva, the International Organization for Standardization. It had the same problem as the CD, which was that consensus had morphed into unanimity and blocked all of its actions. It has now come up with a solution that enables it to work again. We ourselves should also ask if consensus is really needed for all decisions in the CD.

As the fortieth anniversary of the CD is quickly approaching, I would like to ask Committee members if the Conference can once again become a place where we deliberate and negotiate on some of international security's most pressing challenges, as envisioned in the 1978 founding document and demonstrated time and again. Can it become an incubator for ideas and dialogue, a source of knowledge for conversations that continue or even move beyond the confines of this meeting room? Armed with a renewed sense of urgency, can we jointly identify a different path forward? In the light of today's game-changing technological developments, the Conference on Disarmament could become the place that the world desperately needs in order to come together and address the impact of emerging technologies on international security and the existing disarmament architecture. We have already had several discussions on frontier issues and the increasing weaponization of new technologies that have proved very valuable. With reports of the heightened risks of cyberattacks on nuclear facilities, States should consider existing and potential avenues within the CD for further dialogue and confidence-building measures, building on the excellent work done by the groups of governmental experts on the issue.

The last time we met I referred to the importance of achieving progress on a fissile material cut-off treaty (see A/C.1/71/PV.10). Ably led by Canada, the work of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group is promising. With States possessing such thorough knowledge of the issue and a clear understanding of their national security interests, it is my hope that negotiations could in fact start soon in the Conference on Disarmament. I fully recognize that the divergences and positions remain deep, particularly on the issue of stocks. However, the very notion of negotiations would never have existed if it was only like-minded States that developed international legal instruments.

Engagement with civil society is important. I initiated the first informal Conference on Disarmament Civil Society Forum in 2015, followed by a second, in 2016. Time and again, civil-society organizations have proved to be key contributors to disarmament debates, and in the light of ongoing technological advances, their participation is needed more than ever. In other disarmament forums, such as the discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and on synthetic biology in the context of the Biological Weapons Convention, civil society has shown that it is working at the forefront of technological change. I will therefore continue to work for formalized and more transparent and constructive engagement among the CD, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

In that context, I would like to warmly congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. ICAN has been a strong and tireless proponent of nuclear disarmament during the past decade. This Nobel Prize is timely, since nuclear disarmament is again at the forefront of global concerns. It is also welcome and strong validation of the importance of civil-society organizations as key partners in our collective effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons, and a call for action to the Conference on Disarmament to stop nuclear issues from continuing to divide the Conference and to recommit to the issues that it should urgently address, including the threat of nuclear build-up and confrontation. I am convinced that together we can make the CD a place where we ignite the vision of global peace put forth by our predecessors and where we think and act with an unrelenting commitment to international security. I urge the Committee to take

up the tasks entrusted to it with the sense and urgency they deserve. We can build on the mutual trust we have developed over all these years and continue to move forward with a shared vision and renewed purpose.

It is time for us to make full use of our disarmament machinery and the potential it holds. The onus is on the First Committee to reassume the leadership that is necessary and to act on it. As Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, I assure the Committee that it can count fully on my support and engagement.

**The Chair:** I thank Mr. Møller for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Personal Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Director of the IAEA Office in New York.

**Mr. Mabhongo** (International Atomic Energy Agency): On behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I am pleased to participate in this timely discussion on the implications of emerging technological developments for disarmament and non-proliferation. As is the case with many technologies, nuclear technology can be used to benefit or harm humankind. For more than 60 years the IAEA has promoted the peaceful applications of that technology, while simultaneously guarding against the spread of its use for military purposes. In doing so, it is making a vital contribution to international peace and security.

The IAEA is the competent authority entrusted by the international community with verifying States' compliance with their non-proliferation obligations to maintain exclusively peaceful nuclear programmes. We do that by implementing safeguards, which are internationally approved legal and technical measures, in 181 countries. Over the years we have dealt with some of the most critical issues on the international agenda, including nuclear verification in Iraq, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are currently verifying and monitoring Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Hundreds of Agency inspectors visit nuclear facilities around the world to account for nuclear material and ensure that it is not being diverted from peaceful applications. They examine and verify records, confirm physical inventories of fuel and spent fuel, take measurements and samples of nuclear material for analysis and verify the functioning and calibration of IAEA-installed containment seals and cameras, the equipment that

monitors access to and movement of nuclear material within a facility.

Environmental sampling and nuclear material analysis is another important aspect of safeguards. The IAEA has analytical laboratories in Seibersdorf, near Vienna, and its network of analytical laboratories around the globe conducts nuclear-material analysis of samples. Their work is tightly coordinated.

Continued access to state-of-the-art verification technologies that enhance our detection and nuclear forensic capabilities is crucial to the performance of our work, particularly as demands on safeguards continue to increase and become more complex. At the same time, the transfer to medium- and long-term storage of increasing amounts of spent fuel and the decommissioning of nuclear facilities are verification-intense activities that add to our workload, and therefore demand greater productivity. Technology is one means by which we can potentially achieve such improvements.

Safeguards have evolved continually since their inception, taking into account changes in technology and practical experience in order to become more effective and efficient. Currently, as part of its strategic planning, the IAEA regularly assesses its operating environment and looks for technological developments that could enhance its verification capabilities. Some of the new and emerging technologies being considered to assist in implementing safeguards include gamma-imaging cameras, robotics and laser technologies. In order to help automate and reduce repetitive tasks, such as processing safeguards data, for example, technologies that embrace artificial intelligence and machine-learning may prove helpful. We could also take advantage of autonomous platforms, automatic systems and other technologies for enhancing productivity and detection capabilities. All of those technologies, and others, will have to be carefully assessed to see if they can be applied successfully to safeguards implementation.

In conclusion, when and whether the Agency decides to make use of any of the technologies I have mentioned will ultimately depend on their cost-effectiveness. The IAEA is continually required to make the best use of scarce resources. Nevertheless, with the continued support of our member States, we are confident that we can continue to exploit new technologies to deliver

more effective and efficient safeguards, and thereby ensure that the world is a safer place.

**The Chair:** I thank Mr. Mabhongo for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Head of the Safety and Analytical Chemistry Cell of the Inspectorate Division of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

**Mr. Williams** (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): Exactly a week ago, the winners of the Nobel Prize in chemistry were announced. The Prize was awarded for the development of cryo-electron spectroscopy, a technique that not only gives us new insights into the chemistry of life but that will be pivotal in the development of new medicines and pharmaceuticals.

Such scientific advances and technological breakthroughs continue unabated. Indeed, the Chemical Abstracts Service numbers — the metric for new compounds discovered — has seen exponential growth. Currently, approximately 15,000 novel chemicals are registered daily. Some interesting new discoveries that are relevant to our exchange today and have received widespread attention in the scientific literature and broader media include antibody-drug conjugates, a new generation of highly toxic pharmaceuticals designed to beat cancer that are so toxic that only minute doses can be used and must target cancer cells directly; micro-reactors, or miniaturized chemical plants, which have found application in the manufacture of toxic chemicals; and synthetic biology, in which cells can be designed to produce new chemicals.

Some of those emerging developments represent important advances for humankind, but some will also present risks to disarmament and non-proliferation. The key is in finding pragmatic and practical solutions for managing such risks proportionately without hampering or stifling the progress of States that are party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, an approach that is enshrined in article XI of the Convention. But of course with every challenge comes an opportunity. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the enormous contribution that such developments make to the implementation of the Convention. This progress includes advances in analytical science that enable us to detect ever-smaller quantities of important chemicals, from microgram down to picogram levels, which is important for investigating alleged uses of toxic chemicals. The Organization for the Prohibition

of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has been a beneficiary of scientific and technological development, and our scientists have seized opportunities to harness that development in their daily work.

States parties to the Convention are required to ensure that chemistry is used for peaceful purposes within their jurisdictions, an important pillar of the Convention's implementation. It is a regime for shifting chemistry and related applications away from potential misuse and towards beneficial use. In a technical organization such as ours, we are fully cognizant that scientific advancement must be mediated by a continual strengthening of the law and the promotion of ethical norms and practices. Promoting such a culture of responsibility and responsible conduct to guard against the misuse of chemistry is embodied in The Hague Ethical Guidelines, which were formulated by a group of chemical practitioners from around the world.

In order to deal effectively with emerging developments in science technology, there are a number of practical steps and initiatives that can be undertaken. I will now outline how the OPCW is meeting that challenge.

First and foremost is ensuring collaboration among policymakers and scientists, which is essential for addressing the problems associated with rapid advances in science. At the OPCW, both sides work together on a daily basis, notably through the Scientific Advisory Board, which is composed of experts representing 25 States parties. Their advice is important in helping us to keep abreast of such developments and understand how we can better use them for fulfilling our mandates. In that way, the independent advice provided by the Board can be seen as an early-warning mechanism, enabling the OPCW to identify breakthroughs that could affect the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Of course, we cannot and should not seek to control every new chemical. As an organization, the OPCW must strive to find a balance between prevention and promotion in relation to applications that have both malevolent and beneficial uses.

Secondly, we can meet future challenges by engaging with key stakeholders, particularly industry and academia. The maintenance and cultivation of partnerships bring about a number of important outcomes. On the technical side, talking with the scientific community helps us establish a baseline for distinguishing between malevolent and benevolent

science, because, more often than not, we are dealing with materials and technologies that are dual-use in nature. They can render great benefits for human and economic development but they also have the potential to cause great harm if misused.

Thirdly, raising awareness of the dangers posed by the possible misuse of dual-use technology is a critical component of the OPCW's overall strategy. To be successful, we will have to reach out and instill a sense of ownership and responsibility in the next generation of scientists, lawyers and policymakers. As such, the recently formed Advisory Board on Education and Outreach will be a key enabler in supporting the OPCW as it tackles those future challenges.

But we should of course remind ourselves that, despite the advances in science and technology that we are discussing here today, we must not lose sight of the reality that most of the recent confirmed uses of chemical agents — chlorine and sulphur mustard — are the chemistry of a century ago. As we try to keep our eyes on the ever-moving horizon of science, we must also remain practical in our approach. We must not make the mistake of focusing solely on new science and its dual-use potential at the expense of being prepared for threats from well-known and less sophisticated chemical agents.

**The Chair:** I thank Mr. Williams for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Senior Liaison Officer of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

**Mr. Rosenberg** (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): On behalf of Mr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), I would like to once again congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee for the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. I would also like to express Mr. Zerbo's appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for convening today's important exchange.

I am particularly pleased to address the Committee on the theme of the implications of emerging technological developments on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its verification regime are built on scientific and technological progress and cooperation. One reason that it took until the 1990s for



the Treaty to be negotiated was the lack of agreement in earlier decades on the technologies and techniques for monitoring and detecting nuclear explosions under a comprehensive test ban. But years of painstaking work by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events paved the way for the worldwide International Monitoring System (IMS) network now in place, which constantly transmits data to the International Data Centre in Vienna.

What we should take from this history is that emerging technological developments can be approached in a positive rather than just a negative light when it comes to disarmament and non-proliferation. The key is finding the means for channelling knowledge and research in the right direction. In essence, the members of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts, who came from countries across the then-Cold War divide, educated each another on the four technologies — seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide — that are the backbone of the IMS. While seismic monitoring was already a fairly mature technological process 20 years ago, when CTBT verification was being established, the other three were at an earlier stage. In fact, the CTBTO has played a significant role in advancing global knowledge about how to access and make use of data from those technologies.

Our verification regime continues to be informed by scientific progress. Through ongoing meetings of our Working Group on Verification and our series of biennial science and technology conferences, we keep abreast of the latest developments in monitoring technologies. The science and technology conferences in particular connect us with cutting-edge research in the academic and practitioner communities, and have helped advance alternative applications of our verification regime, such as in the areas of tsunami early-warning systems and even climate monitoring. All of that keeps us nimble, as well as confident in our ability to provide accurate and reliable data to CTBT States signatories in the event of a potential nuclear explosion. In that regard, I would like to share our most recent experience with Committee members.

Early on the morning of 3 September, the IMS detected an unusual seismic event in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Thirty-six seismic stations contributed to the initial automated detection, while more than 130 seismic stations were used in the reviewed analysis carried out by CTBTO analysts.

Two hydroacoustic stations and one infrasound station even detected signals associated with the event. We measured the explosion at a magnitude of 6.1, which is estimated to be several times larger than any previous test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Although our role is to provide States with the data they need to draw their own conclusions, subsequent analysis seemed to lend credence to the country's claim that it had successfully tested a two-stage thermonuclear weapon. A weapon of that power would be more than 10 times stronger than the bomb that destroyed the city of Hiroshima in a matter of seconds.

It is clear that nuclear testing drives proliferation both horizontally — spreading nuclear-weapon capabilities from country to country — and vertically, as in the observed advances in the North Korean nuclear-weapon programme. That is why putting an end to nuclear-test explosions is so important. Understandably, there is great nervousness about what might happen next. There have been claims that an atmospheric test is under consideration, and if such a test were conducted, it would be the first anywhere on the planet since 1980. The consequences of such an action could be very grim indeed. A couple of weeks ago, on Saturday, 23 September, that nervousness became uncertainty when two further seismic events were detected in North Korea. While the seismic signals were unusual, CTBTO analysts quickly inferred that the events were probably not human-made.

Therefore, where do we go from here? It is clear that everything must be done to prevent the current crisis from spiralling out of control. What is needed is a peaceful settlement of differences through dialogue and negotiation. In identifying a way forward, a nuclear-test moratorium and eventual ratification of the CTBT should be part of any long-term solution. The CTBTO and its science-based verification regime can provide independent, trustworthy verification of the commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to halting its nuclear-testing programme. In that way, the CTBT can play a key role in de-escalating the conflict even before the Convention's entry into force.

That leads me to reiterate the point that the CTBT, while in many respects operational, is not yet in force. That is despite the fact that the Treaty now has 183 State signatories, 166 of which have completed their ratification procedures. We all share the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, even if there are different views on how to reach it. However, we should

remember that we do not yet have a nuclear-test-free world. But that objective, a vital, concrete step towards nuclear disarmament, is within reach. National and international security objectives are simply better secured in a world without nuclear testing. And the CTBT provides the legal and operational framework for achieving that nuclear-test-free world.

We have done our part at the CTBTO to provide States with trust and confidence in the Treaty and its verification regime as an effective measure for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We now urgently need the States Members of the United Nations to make the CTBT's entry into force a top priority. Doing so will require both leadership and political resolve, but history has shown us that it can be done. We have to muster both the spirit of technical cooperation that drove the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts and the spirit of political cooperation that led to the negotiation of the CTBT. We have to move together to finally end nuclear testing and secure the full benefits of the CTBT verification regime. That is the most practical and achievable step that all Member States can take towards a world free of the threat of nuclear weapons. I look forward to an interesting discussion.

**The Chair:** I thank Mr. Rosemberg for his statement.

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

**Mr. De Macedo Soares** (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean): I would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, and the First Committee for inviting the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) to take part in this panel. I would also like to convey my compliments to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and to express my pleasure at sharing this rostrum with my colleagues from other international organizations.

According to the First Committee's organizational document, A/C.1/72/CRP.2, we are here to exchange views on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament. But I am also aware that we should address the implications of emerging technological developments for disarmament and non-proliferation. Where disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are concerned, the impact of technology is closely related to verification. As those here know, the control system established by

the Treaty of Tlatelolco is based on two main aspects or mechanisms. The first is the semi-annual affidavit notifications by State parties that no activity prohibited by the Treaty has taken place in their respective territories. The second is the full-scope safeguard agreements that each party has concluded with the International Atomic Energy Association. I should also mention the role of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, which covers the two States with the largest nuclear programmes in the region. Needless to say, the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been fully complied with in the 50 years of its existence.

Secondly, I should also mention resolution 71/67, on nuclear-disarmament verification. It updates previous resolutions on the matter and establishes a group of governmental experts of up to 25 members to discuss the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, which will meet in 2018 and 2019. VERTIC, the non-governmental Verification Research, Training and Information Centre, recently organized a series of regional workshops to discuss the need for scientific support from a specialized group to help the work of the Group of Governmental Experts.

Thirdly, we have noted in the discussion that a majority of the efforts to detect and verify prohibited activities concerning nuclear weapons are directed at the non-nuclear-armed — the have-nots. Those non-armed States represent a risk that they could become armed. But what about verification of the nuclear-armed States — the haves? That is a matter of grave concern and the object of many recommendations by the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. For example, are nuclear-weapon-possessors fully satisfying expectations regarding transparency?

The member States of OPANAL are concerned about the development of technology for the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons. They are demanding that the nuclear-weapon States end their development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, as well as related infrastructure. With regard to the overall theme of this exchange of views on the current state of affairs in arms control and disarmament, OPANAL member States had an opportunity to express themselves in a comprehensive manner through two declarations this year. The first was in February, on the fiftieth anniversary of

the conclusion of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the second was just a few days ago, on 26 September, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Both declarations have been circulated as General Assembly documents, and in them we can see that the views of the Caribbean and Latin American States on the current state of affairs are rather negative.

**The Chair:** I thank Mr. De Macedo Soares for his briefing.

In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to hold an interactive discussion with our panelists through an informal question and answer session.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.35 p.m.*

**The Chair:** The Committee will now proceed with its scheduled thematic discussions, which will be held from today, 11 October, until Wednesday, 25 October, for a total of 12 meetings. In accordance with established practice, our discussions during this segment of our work will focus on specific issues grouped under the following seven agreed clusters: “Nuclear weapons”, “Other weapons of mass destruction”, “Outer space (disarmament aspects)”, “Conventional weapons”, “Other disarmament measures and international security”, “Regional disarmament and security”, and “Disarmament machinery”.

Before I open the floor, and as I announced during our organizational meeting on 28 September (see A/C.1/72/PV.1), I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes for statements delivered on behalf of a group. We will continue to use a buzzer to remind delegations when the time limit is reached. Delegations taking the floor are encouraged to introduce draft resolutions and decisions, where applicable, during the thematic discussions. In that regard, I would like to remind delegations that the deadline for submitting drafts for processing to the Secretariat is tomorrow at noon.

As delegations are aware, the sponsoring and co-sponsoring of draft proposals are done through the e-sponsorship tool on the e-Delegate portal. Representatives are once again reminded to upload their draft proposals on sponsorship as soon as possible

in order to enable the Secretariat to reflect as many sponsors as possible in the draft documents. Please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat regarding any questions.

In keeping with the timetable indicated for our thematic discussions, the Committee will now take up the cluster “Nuclear weapons”.

**Mr. Tene** (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which is one of its top priorities, and remains extremely concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The situation in the area of nuclear disarmament continues to be characterized by an alarming impasse. The nuclear-weapon States have made no progress in eliminating their nuclear weapons. The role of nuclear weapons in the nuclear-weapon States’ security policies has not diminished. They are modernizing their nuclear arsenals and planning research on new nuclear warheads, or have announced their intention to develop new delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons. The Movement is deeply concerned about the dismal state of affairs resulting from nuclear-weapon States’ non-compliance with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings.

The international community has waited too long for the realization of the goals of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the launching of negotiations on effective measures for ending the nuclear arms race without delay, and nuclear disarmament. It has become obvious that the approach taken by the nuclear-weapon States — the so-called step-by-step approach — has failed to make concrete or systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Despite the tangible and indisputable positive developments on nuclear non-proliferation in recent decades, forward movement on nuclear disarmament continues to be held hostage to misguided notions, including that of strategic stability. It is time to take a new and comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament.

NAM reiterates that the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened in 2018, in accordance with various General Assembly resolutions, will provide an important opportunity for reviewing the progress

made in nuclear disarmament and further promoting that noble objective. The Movement takes note of the adoption on 7 July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading to Their Total Elimination. It is hoped that when the Treaty enters into force it will help to further the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. While taking note of the Treaty's recent adoption, the Non-Aligned Movement, which has always remained at the forefront of disarmament, calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on further nuclear disarmament measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, in particular on the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as called for in resolution 71/71.

NAM stresses the importance of enhancing public awareness of the threat posed to humankind by nuclear weapons and the necessity of their total elimination, including through the observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the great threat to peace and security posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and by those military doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States and NATO that outline rationales for the use or threat of use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon-States. Such doctrines cannot be justified on any grounds.

NAM once again renews its strong call to the nuclear-weapon States to fully and urgently comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings so as to accomplish the total destruction of their nuclear weapons without further delay, in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. We also call on them to immediately cease any plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lifespan of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

NAM reaffirms, as a high priority, the urgent need to conclude a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, until the total and irreversible, transparent and verifiable destruction of nuclear weapons — which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use — is achieved. NAM is concerned about the fact

that, despite non-nuclear-weapon States' long-standing requests for such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been made. We also reaffirm the fact that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again are the only absolute guarantees against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would arise from their use. Furthermore, we call on the nuclear-weapon States to immediately reduce the operational status of their nuclear weapons, including by ensuring their complete de-targeting and de-alerting, in order to avoid the risks of their unintentional or accidental use.

The Movement reaffirms its principled position on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. It believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and essential to strengthening international peace and security. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. Pursuing non-proliferation alone while ignoring nuclear disarmament obligations is both counterproductive and unsustainable. NAM emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through agreements that are multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory.

The NAM States that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regret the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite the efforts of NAM delegations, and call on the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate the political will needed to enable the 2020 Review Conference to make concrete recommendations on achieving nuclear disarmament, which is the NPT's ultimate objective.

NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of every State to develop research on nuclear energy and its production and use, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. The Movement once again reaffirms the sovereign right of each State to define its national energy policies. NAM stresses that any decision on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle shall be made by consensus and without prejudice to the inalienable right of each State to develop such a cycle. We firmly reject any limitations or restrictions on exports to developing countries of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, consistent with the provisions of relevant multilateral



treaties, and call for such restrictions to be removed immediately. In that regard, NAM stresses that the technical cooperation and assistance provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency in meeting the needs of its member States for material, equipment and technology for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should not be subject to any conditions incompatible with its Statute.

NAM also stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, including by all the nuclear-weapon States, which should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament, among other things. We reiterate that if the objectives of the Treaty are fully realized, the continued commitment to nuclear disarmament of all State signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, will be essential.

This year the Movement will once again submit an updated version of the annual draft resolution entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”, and we hope that all members will support it.

Finally, the Movement would like to stress that it remains ready to engage constructively with all countries to help fulfil our collective vision of a world free of all nuclear weapons. That vision can be realized only if the required political will and action are clearly demonstrated by all parties.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.19.

**Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Mexico.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its tireless work leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. At the same time, I want to express our determination to continue working alongside civil society to further advance the noble agenda of nuclear disarmament.

As mentioned in the general debate, the New Agenda Coalition once again submits the draft resolution entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments” (A/C.1/72/L.19). The text

has been circulated to all delegations, and I would like to take this opportunity to discuss its key elements.

The NAC firmly believes that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We are committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world and actively contribute to achieving that goal. The NAC draft resolution therefore addresses a number of nuclear-disarmament issues on which progress is essential for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In introducing the draft resolution, I would like to emphasize that, given the lack of progress in implementing long-standing nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments, much of the text is unchanged from previous versions. Although we look forward to a time when that will no longer be the case, for the time being we are obliged to continue to focus on fulfilling existing obligations.

The draft resolution reiterates that each article of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is binding at all times and in all circumstances, and that all States parties should be held fully accountable for strictly complying with their obligations under the Treaty. The draft resolution calls on all States parties to comply fully with all decisions, resolutions and commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. It reiterates deep concern about the potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, including their gendered impact, and it calls on Member States to give due weight to the humanitarian imperatives that underpin nuclear disarmament and to the urgency of achieving that goal. The draft resolution recommends that measures, including through disarmament education, be taken to increase civil society’s awareness of the risks and catastrophic impact of any nuclear detonation.

The draft resolution calls on the nuclear-weapon States to take all the steps necessary to accelerate the fulfilment of their commitments, including to making further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons. It urges the nuclear-weapon States to decrease the operational readiness of their nuclear-weapon systems as an interim measure, and encourages them to make concrete reductions in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, pending their total elimination.

The draft resolution also encourages all States that are part of regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their collective security doctrines, pending their total elimination. The draft resolution highlights concerns about the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and calls on the nuclear-weapon States to take steps in that regard. It encourages further steps by all nuclear-weapon States to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material that each nuclear-weapon State designates as no longer required for military purposes. It calls on all States to support, within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the development of appropriate nuclear-disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements, thereby ensuring that such material remains permanently and verifiably outside military programmes.

With respect to the Middle East, the draft resolution urges the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to present proposals and make every effort to ensure the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as soon as possible, as outlined in the 1995 resolution.

The draft resolution stresses the fundamental role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and calls on all States parties to spare no effort to achieve the Treaty's universality. It urges India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay or conditions, and to place all their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. It also urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, among other things, to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, and to return to adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as soon as possible. The draft resolution urges all States to work together to overcome the obstacles within the international disarmament machinery that are inhibiting efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context.

The New Agenda Coalition draft resolution highlights an area of focus for us in the current NPT review cycle, which is our efforts to ensure that the nuclear-weapon States implement their nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments, both qualitative and quantitative, in a manner that enables States parties to regularly monitor the progress being

made. That includes using a standard detailed reporting format and including concrete and detailed information on their implementation of their nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments in the reports. The draft resolution also encourages States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to discuss options, including tools such as a set of benchmarks or similar criteria for improving the measurability of the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments, in order to ensure and facilitate objective assessments of progress.

My statement will be uploaded on PaperSmart so that the Committee can have the full version.

**Ms. Walder** (Sweden): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the De-alerting Group — Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Switzerland and my own country, Sweden — to speak on the issue of reducing the operational status of nuclear-weapon systems, also referred to as de-alerting.

Both in the General Assembly and at the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, our Group has consistently called on States with nuclear weapons to take practical steps to address the significant number of nuclear weapons that remain on high alert. The contribution that lowering the operational status of nuclear weapons can make to nuclear disarmament has been recognized for a long time. In the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the 13 practical steps outlined in 2000 included concrete agreed measures designed to further reduce the operational status of nuclear-weapon systems. The 2010 NPT Action Plan further recognized the legitimate interests of non-nuclear-weapon States in the issue. Those clear commitments have so far not been met.

Support for de-alerting has grown significantly in the General Assembly in recent years. Resolution 71/53, its latest on de-alerting, obtained its highest level of support yet, as 175 countries voted in favour of the resolution, with a significant number of States sponsoring it, among them one group covered by extended nuclear deterrence. That sends a clear message about the importance of renewing our efforts to ensure that commitments to take nuclear weapons off high alert are fulfilled.

It is true that some nuclear-weapon States have lowered their non-strategic nuclear weapons' level of operational readiness, while others do not keep their

nuclear weapons on high alert. Those are positive and encouraging steps, but more must be done. We continue to believe that progress is needed for a number of reasons. Lowering alert levels is a key element in nuclear-risk reduction, since high alert levels significantly multiply the risks posed by nuclear weapons, which include inadvertent launches due to technical failure or operator error; the possibility of early-warning data being misinterpreted, leading to intentional but erroneous launches; failures of, and false reports by, early-warning systems; and the use of nuclear weapons by unauthorized actors such as rogue military units, terrorists and cyberattackers.

De-alerting is a core element in diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. As such, it is not only a disarmament measure but also a significant contribution to non-proliferation, since continued emphasis on the importance of keeping nuclear weapons on high alert could lead to false perceptions that they are desirable security instruments. Nuclear-weapon-possessor States should consider de-alerting as a strategic step in de-emphasizing the military role of nuclear weapons. The link between high alert levels, associated risks and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences posed by nuclear weapons is clear. De-alerting should be pursued as an interim measure for diminishing risks and thereby increasing human and international security. The nuclear-weapon States should implement their previously agreed commitments on de-alerting as soon as possible and take steps to rapidly reduce operational readiness unilaterally, bilaterally or otherwise, with a view to ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high-alert status.

Our message is by no means new. We have worked persistently to convey it for years, both, as I said, in the First Committee and within the framework of the NPT and other multilateral disarmament forums. The growing support for de-alerting is encouraging, but it must be translated into real changes in alert levels. The nuclear-weapon States should regularly report on their implementation of these commitments. The De-alerting Group will continue to focus its efforts on concrete elements that we believe can be achieved, not least in the ongoing NPT review cycle.

The De-alerting Group believes that concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament are essential. They are also long overdue, particularly in the current security climate. Risk-reduction measures, including

de-alerting, should feature prominently on our agenda. Let us all use the growing support for de-alerting and other measures aimed at risk reduction to make sure that they are implemented. It would make us all safer and contribute to our common goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Mrs. Nguyen** (Viet Nam): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and my own country, Viet Nam.

Seventy-two years ago, humankind witnessed the atrocity of the use of nuclear weapons causing catastrophic and irreversible humanitarian consequences. Yet, after decades of efforts towards disarmament, we are still living in apparent fear and in potential danger of nuclear attacks, probably at the most alarming level since the end of the Cold War. The very existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose a serious threat to global peace and security, and even the survival of humankind. Nuclear stockpiles and arsenals across the world remain abundant, and there are increasing risks of a nuclear arms race and the proliferation of nuclear weapons to non-State actors. The current global context, with its complex developments, makes the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons all the more urgent. It is therefore ASEAN's firm belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. We reiterate our strong commitment and unwavering support to the collective efforts leading to that end.

We also reiterate our commitment to preserving our region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. We stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, as reflected in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, and agreeing to extend its plan of action for an additional five-year period from 2018 to 2022. We reaffirm our commitments to continuously engaging the nuclear-weapon States and intensifying ongoing efforts on the part of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty.

This year, we intend to introduce the biennial draft resolution on the SEANWFZ Treaty to the Committee, and we look forward to receiving delegations' valuable support once the draft has been submitted. We also recognize the importance of other regional nuclear-weapon-free zones to the existing global non-proliferation regime, and we continue to support the ongoing efforts for the establishments of such zones, especially in the Middle East.

The adoption, on 7 July, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination constitutes a vital step towards global nuclear disarmament and complements the existing non-proliferation instruments and global instruments related to nuclear weapons. At the same time, ASEAN continues to recognize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, and we call on all State parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under article VI of the NPT. We reaffirm the inalienable rights of every State to the peaceful use of nuclear technology for its economic and social development.

We look forward to formalizing the partnership between the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy, ASEANTOM, and the International Atomic Energy Agency to promote greater cooperation on issues related to nuclear safety, security and safeguards, including capacity-building.

Bearing in mind the significance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we welcome its recent ratification by Myanmar and Swaziland, and we join others in urging the annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible in order to realize its early entry into force.

We express our grave concern at the recent escalating developments on the Korean peninsula, which have seriously undermined regional peace, security and stability. We reiterate ASEAN's support for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner, and we call for the exercise of self-restraint and the resumption of dialogue in order to de-escalate tensions and create the conditions that are conducive to peace and stability.

ASEAN has been playing the central role in building and promoting a regional security architecture. We have always upheld the fundamental objectives and principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations in addressing security challenges and in ensuring peace and stability in the region. Noting with satisfaction that this year is a progressive year for disarmament, ASEAN reiterates its strong commitment to moving forward the global non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. We call on all Member States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to show goodwill, promote mutual understanding, enhance trustworthy cooperation and ensure responsible, collective actions in striving for a world without nuclear weapons.

To conclude, I wish to humbly quote a famous saying by our respected former Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon: "We have a legal and moral obligation to rid our world of nuclear tests and nuclear weapons."

**Mr. Aboulatta** (Egypt): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

The Group aligns itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement, delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia, and wishes to make the following comments with respect to the cluster on nuclear weapons.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of those weapons. In that context, the Group reiterates the urgent need for our planet, including outer space, to be free of nuclear weapons, as their presence constitutes an existential threat to global peace and to the survival of humankind. In that light, the African Group notes the announcement last week of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Africa supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament as the utmost prerequisite for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In that regard, the Group welcomes the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its subsequent opening for signature on 20 September. The Treaty represents the resolute efforts and determination by the majority of the United Nations States Members and civil society groups to end the long impasse that has characterized negotiations on nuclear disarmament. With the opening of the



Treaty for signature, it is hoped that all members of the international community, including the nuclear-weapon States and those under their nuclear shield, will seize the opportunity to pursue the goal of a nuclear-free world.

For the African Group, the highest priority remains nuclear disarmament and to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the overall objective of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Group restates its concern about the slow pace of progress by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under article VI of the NPT. The Group therefore insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of the Treaty.

The African Group furthermore welcomes the high-level General Assembly meeting in commemoration of the International Day of the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September, and underscores the importance of the Day as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort. The Group reaffirms the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world to the overall objective of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They represent a significant milestone towards achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, thereby enhancing global and regional peace and security. In that context, the African Group reiterates its commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and as a shield for the African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of those weapons in the entire space that constitutes the African continent.

In the same vein, the African Group restates its deep concern about the fact that commitments and obligations related to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, including the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, have not been fulfilled. In particular, the Group remains disappointed at the inability to convene the agreed conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which was expected to have been held in 2012. The Group wishes to further stress that the 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package and the basis upon which the NPT was indefinitely extended. The Group

emphasizes the continued validity of the resolution until its objectives are achieved.

The Group reiterates its regrets that the ninth NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on a final outcome document, despite the concerted efforts of non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly those in Africa. As preparations for the tenth NPT Review Conference have begun with the first session of the Preparatory Committee held in May, the Group calls on all States to work towards the actualization of the goals and objectives of the Treaty.

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

The Group stresses the importance of nuclear knowledge-sharing and the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries, including African countries, highlighting the potential contribution of nuclear energy to promoting sustainable development and prosperity across the world. The Group stresses that the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA, as the main vehicle for the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, should continue to be formulated and implemented in accordance with its Statute.

The Group wishes to emphasize humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons, particularly its serious concern over the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use or detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or as a deliberate action. The Group calls on all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to take into consideration the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among other things, and to take necessary measures aimed at dismantling and renouncing such weapons.

Achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and particularly bearing in mind the special responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States, is of importance to the African Group. The Group believes that the CTBT offers hope of halting the further development or proliferation of

nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Group acknowledges the overwhelming support of the international community in promoting the entry into force of the CTBT, and calls on the nuclear-weapon States and those yet to accede to the NPT that are listed in annex 2 of the Treaty and have not yet done so to sign and ratify it without further delay.

**Mr. Quinn** (Australia): I am honoured to make this statement on behalf of the States members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI): Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

The members of NPDI reaffirm the critical importance of concerted action to achieve our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are deeply committed to our core mandate, as declared in the first NPDI ministerial statement in September 2010 and reaffirmed in the recent NPDI ministerial statement of 21 September, to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) based on the 2010 NPT Review Conference of Parties Action Plan. The current geopolitical situation serves to underline the need to strengthen and uphold the NPT, and we highlight the need for further bold steps in that respect, including in the 2020 NPT review cycle.

The rapid development of North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes challenge the established disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and pose an unprecedented, grave and imminent threat to the peace and security of both the region and the broader international community. Those activities are clear violations of relevant Security Council resolutions and present a direct challenge to the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime centred on the NPT.

The NPDI condemns in the strongest terms the repeated nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches conducted by North Korea. The NPDI strongly urges North Korea to immediately cease its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile-related activities, to refrain from conducting further destabilizing and provocative actions and to abandon all nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The NPDI calls on the international community to fulfil its obligations to rigorously and fully implement all relevant Security

Council resolutions in order to maximize pressure on North Korea.

The NPDI is intent on contributing to a successful outcome of the current review cycle, based on the need to comprehensively address all three pillars of the NPT: peaceful uses, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The NPDI's engagement is further reflected in the fact that the Netherlands and Poland chair the Preparatory Committee in 2017 and 2018, respectively. In that respect, we urge all States parties to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under the NPT, particularly with regard to the full and prompt implementation of all the actions in the 2010 Action Plan. The NPDI will continue to build on the agreed 2020 NPT Action Plan by developing new ideas and initiatives that can help build bridges between NPT member States. We reiterate our commitment to continuing our constructive dialogue with the five NPT nuclear-weapon States to make progress on strengthening the NPT.

We remain united and focused on the NPT objectives to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapon technology, to promote cooperation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. In that vein, the NPDI strongly endorsed the reflections of the 2017 Chair of the Preparatory Committee as common ground for States parties to the NPT in their discussions during the remainder of this review cycle.

The NPDI resolves to actively work towards further progress and concrete results on nuclear disarmament. Sustained high-level political leadership and unwavering commitment to the NPT are needed to make concrete progress towards achieving deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals worldwide and towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The NPDI remains committed to the further successful implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, which concretely demonstrates that diplomacy can successfully advance NPT objectives when supported by a broad international consensus. The continued strict implementation of the JCPOA by all sides, based on full respect for the NPT, will help to build the confidence of the international community that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful in nature. We welcome the continued activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency

to monitor and verify Iran's implementation of its JCPOA commitments.

Increasing the transparency of all States parties on the implementation of NPT commitments remains one of the signature initiatives of the NPDI. The NPDI continues to underscore the need for improved transparency on the part of the nuclear-weapon States on their disarmament undertakings, including information on the quantity, type and status of their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems, the quantity of fissile material produced for military purposes and the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. NPDI members are supportive of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification, established pursuant to resolution 71/67. We welcome the participation of nuclear-weapon States in those processes and continue to press for the inclusion of disarmament verification measures in the NPT.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another component essential to achieving nuclear disarmament. The NPDI regrets that the Treaty, 21 years after its opening for signature, has yet to enter into force. We therefore urge all States that are yet to ratify the CTBT to do so without delay. For its part, the NPDI is actively working towards the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices (FMCT). We welcome the work of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group on this issue. The NPDI commits its full support to that process and urges the Conference on Disarmament to launch negotiations on such a Treaty as soon as possible.

In conclusion, the recent NPDI ministerial meeting affirmed that, as a diverse cross-regional group of non-nuclear-weapon States, the NPDI will continue to play a constructive and proactive role in facilitating discussions on these and other challenging issues and bridging diverse positions to help reinvigorate the NPT review cycle process. Noting that the 2020 Review Conference will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, the NPDI remains committed to supporting a productive outcome to mark that important occasion by progressing global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

**Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica): I take the floor on behalf of the 14 member countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to speak on the cluster "Nuclear weapons".

I align my statement with those delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

CARICOM joins this discourse as concerned members of the international community with an abiding misgiving over the continued reliance by some States on nuclear weapons as a feature of their national security policies. As small island developing States with porous borders and limited resources with which to secure and protect them, we are ever mindful of the heightened risks posed by any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. CARICOM countries regard these weapons as inimical to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The international community needs to convincingly and frontally pursue its nuclear disarmament obligations. This is made more evident by the heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula. We implore all parties to exercise restraint in the interest of preserving peace and stability. Every effort must be made through the pursuit of diplomatic measures to reduce the risk of nuclear war.

It is inconceivable that, in this era of wanton need and increasing crises, a premium is being placed on the maintenance of nuclear arsenals. As the Secretary-General has noted,

"while efforts towards reducing existing stockpiles are acknowledged, the estimated total number of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, still amounts to several thousands" (*A/71/126, para. 7*).

Equally alarming is the fact that nuclear-weapon States continue to undertake programmes aimed at modernizing their weapons, delivery systems and related infrastructure. Against that backdrop, the international community must urgently work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by stimulating a sense of collective purpose. CARICOM therefore joins the call for the convening of a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament in order to take urgent and effective measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We continue to play our part in various efforts aimed at facilitating the implementation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. To

that end, CARICOM was actively involved in the negotiations that culminated in the historic adoption in July of the first legally binding treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. We welcome the fact that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons provides for a range of obligations to be undertaken by States parties to prevent the development, testing, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. One member of the Community, Guyana, has since signed and ratified the Treaty, and it is expected that other States of the region will do likewise in the near future.

The fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains central to the goal of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. To that end, CARICOM supports the work of the United Nations to tackle the global threat posed by the acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction. We are committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on weapons of mass destruction. We also strongly support the Council's resolution 2325 (2016), unanimously adopted in December 2016, which calls on all States to strengthen national anti-proliferation regimes to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). As a region, we are working to ensure that we do not become fertile ground for terrorist activities.

CARICOM publicly acknowledges and places on record its appreciation for the work done by civil society towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. Members of civil society have proved to be invaluable partners whose support and commitment has been unwavering. In that regard, we congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons.

We share the frustration of other delegations that the disarmament machinery has not been functioning as effectively as it should. One of our greatest disappointments is that the Conference on Disarmament is yet to agree on its programme of work. CARICOM is nonetheless encouraged by continued efforts to return the Conference to work through the establishment of the Working Group on the Way Ahead. It is our fervent hope that the Working Group will be able to fulfil its mandate by identifying common ground for a programme of work with a negotiating mandate. In the

same vein, we hope that we can reach consensus within the Disarmament Commission on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

CARICOM holds to the expectation that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will enter into force. We welcome the ongoing efforts to discuss, review and reinvigorate deliberations on the Treaty. In addition, we continue to regard the CTBT as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

CARICOM is pleased that the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was convened in Vienna in May. Although there was disagreement regarding the pace of implementation of disarmament-related commitments, we welcome the fact that States parties underscored the continued validity of the 64-point Action Plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference.

CARICOM continues to value the work done by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies. Its independent verification work allows it to play an indispensable role in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. We will continue to lend our support in that regard, and look forward to deepening cooperation with the IAEA. That is in keeping with recent deliberations that culminated in the updating of the CARICOM-United Nations cooperation work plan to include the IAEA as a contributing organization.

CARICOM member States are proud to be parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which 50 years ago pioneered the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones and has since been replicated in several regions across the world. As the first zone of its kind in a densely populated area, the Treaty has been central to the maintenance of regional and global disarmament, peace and security.

**Mr. Quinn** (Australia): I take the floor on behalf of 29 countries: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Netherlands, Turkey and my own country, Australia.



We are committed to our shared goal of attaining a world without nuclear weapons, pursued pragmatically and effectively through the progressive approach. A key element of the progressive approach is that effective, sustainable disarmament must take into account the international security environment. The current situation with regard to North Korea highlights this ground truth. North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes pose a grave and increasing threat to regional and global security and a serious challenge to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Only by addressing both the security and humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons can we take the incremental but necessary steps that will enhance security for all and provide the best chance of reaching a world without nuclear weapons.

To advance the course of nuclear disarmament and strengthen nuclear non-proliferation, thereby enhancing international security, we are fully committed to supporting the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The NPT is the cornerstone of global peace and security and of the international community's long-term non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, with its safeguards and verification arrangements. Effective disarmament must be inclusive and engage the nuclear-weapon States, which have special responsibilities in this field, in practical ways that build the trust necessary for further reductions. The only way to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is through effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. That can be achieved only through the constructive engagement of all relevant parties.

Far from maintaining the status quo, our goal is to take practical and effective actions to advance disarmament. Many of those steps are outlined in the 2010 NPT Action Plan, the comprehensive blueprint for implementation across the three NPT pillars. The NPT provides the foundation for States to work together on key building blocks to achieve common objectives. It contains hard-won treaty-level commitments on the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons as provided in article VI. The reflections of the Chair of the 2017 Preparatory Committee on the basis of views that States parties appear to share on the NPT could serve as reference point for further discussions in the 2020 review cycle.

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

Progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament requires practical and effective confidence-building measures. Trust must be built through credible engagement and demonstrated implementation of concrete disarmament measures on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, as well as the commitment of all States to non-proliferation and support for the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system, which ensures confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We are making progress. Renewed momentum has been given over the past year to a number of parallel and simultaneous measures or building blocks that are necessary to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are encouraged by practical progress through the High-Level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group and look forward to the commencement of the work of the Group of Government Experts on nuclear disarmament verification, both of which are initiatives adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

We need to prioritize practical progress on those and many other items in the 2010 Action Plan, including by increasing transparency measures and achieving the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In the meantime, we have to complete and finalize its monitoring system.

In conclusion, the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT in 2020 will provide an opportunity for us to be forward-looking and focus on common interests in supporting and strengthening the NPT. We all need to do our part in minimizing divisions and find the space for compromise and common ground to advance our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

**Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in our capacity as President pro tempore.

The Union welcomes the adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which prohibits the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices. We believe that the signing of the Treaty is a significant step that could complement the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, two decades later, joins the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on the path towards the

elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The Union also hopes that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, opened for signature on 20 September, will be able to enter into force shortly.

UNASUR expresses its deep concern over the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and reiterates its humanitarian commitment and support alongside the 127 States that have agreed to adopt measures to fill the legal void regarding the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. UNASUR reiterates its commitment to the NPT and the balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

However, UNASUR believes that the disarmament pillar suffers a serious implementation deficit. In that regard, UNASUR regrets that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT did not adopt a final document due to a lack of consensus regarding the issue of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The States of UNASUR also express their deep regret for the lack of implementation of the agreement achieved at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to hold an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. UNASUR strongly believes that such a zone would make an important contribution to the peace process in the Middle East and the world, and therefore reiterates its call for the conference to be held as soon as possible with the active participation of all States of the region, as agreed at the Conferences of the States Parties to the NPT in 1995, 2000 and 2010. UNASUR welcomes the debates that took place at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, held in Vienna from 2 to 12 May.

We reaffirm the need for all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in particular those listed in annex 2, to do so as soon as possible as a demonstration of their political determination and commitment to international peace and security. We therefore welcome the ratification of the CTBT by Myanmar and Swaziland.

While we await the entry into force of the Treaty, the members of UNASUR reiterate the need to maintain the moratorium on nuclear tests and to refrain from

developing or using new nuclear-weapon technologies and from any act that would undermine the goal and purpose of the CTBT. The Union of South American Nations expresses its firm rejection of all types of nuclear tests anywhere in the world, and condemns the recent nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 3 September, which poses a threat to international peace and security. The Union also urges the States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the NPT and the CTBT as soon as possible.

UNASUR is very proud of the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on 29 January 2014, at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Cuba. That was a historic decision that will help to eradicate the use or the threat of use of force in our region, as reaffirmed at subsequent summits in Belén, Costa Rica; Quito, Ecuador; and Punta Cana, the Dominican Republic.

The States members of UNASUR, as members of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, urge all nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all interpretive declarations on the protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which would contribute to eliminating the risk of the use of nuclear weapons against countries of the region. It is in the legitimate interests of States that do not possess nuclear weapons, including all members of UNASUR, that nuclear-weapon States offer unequivocal and legally binding guarantees not to use or threaten to use those weapons. We therefore call for the earliest possible negotiation and adoption of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. UNASUR also urges the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their political, security and defence doctrines so as to achieve the complete elimination of these types of lethal weapons, regardless of their type or category.

Our countries will continue to support efforts to reactivate the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral body on disarmament, and to launch urgent negotiations on new international legal instruments to regulate fundamental questions of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), a specialized regional body that formulates common positions and joint action on nuclear disarmament, constitute a political, legal and

institutional framework for establishing nuclear-free zones in other areas of the world. The experience of OPANAL is also valuable to the international community as an inspiration for the establishment of other nuclear-weapons-free zones. We note that we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty and the creation of OPANAL on 14 February.

**Mr. Al-Dobhany (Yemen)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me, Madam, to express the confidence of the Group of Arab States in the leadership of the Chair and in his ability to steer the work of the First Committee to success.

The Arab Group aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The Arab Group welcomes the declaration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. It is a tangible step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Group also welcomes the success of negotiations on the first comprehensive and non-discriminatory treaty to ban the use, possession, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, and the decision to convene an international high-level conference on nuclear disarmament in 2018, at the latest, in order to review the progress achieved in this vital domain.

The Arab States will continue to contribute positively to the international endeavour towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. We have been engaged through our active participation in all multilateral forums on the elimination of nuclear weapons. All Arab States that are Members of the United Nations have joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subjected all their nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Arab Group expresses concern about the continued failure to make progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and to commit to implement the second decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, the 13 steps adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the Action Plan on nuclear disarmament adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In that regard, the nuclear-weapon States are clearly avoiding having to establish a time frame to implement those international

commitments towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Group expresses the rejection of all Arab States to the continued adoption by the nuclear-weapon States of military doctrines that authorize the use of nuclear weapons and even allow their use against non-nuclear States. In that regard, the Group reiterates that the total and final elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the NPT, is the only safeguard against the use of these weapons. The failure of the most recent Review Conference and the delay by nuclear States in fulfilling their commitments require us to redouble our collective efforts to accelerate the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In that context, given the failure to implement the 2010 consensus resolution, at the 2015 NPT Review Conference the Arab Group sought to end the current stalemate through a new proposal that was put forward in the Arab working paper and adopted by an overwhelming majority of States members of NAM that are also parties to the Treaty. However, that positive proposal did not achieve the desired objective. The decision of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada was disappointing in that it undermined the international consensus and was responsible for the failure of the Conference to agree on a final document that includes the Middle East.

We reiterate that ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons is a collective responsibility at the international level. The Arab Group is committed to this issue. It remains for the other parties to commit themselves as well; their failure to do so could undermine the NPT, the disarmament system and non-proliferation as a whole. The Arab Group supports the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones across the world, including in the Middle East. In that regard, Arab States reiterate the need to take effective steps and immediate measures to that end, as called for by the Arab draft resolution submitted annually to the General Assembly entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East."

In that regard, the Arab Group also expresses its concern about the ongoing security and environmental threat caused by Israel's continued refusal to accede to the NPT. Israel is the only State of the Middle East that has not acceded to the Treaty and refuses to subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, thereby posing a dangerous security and environmental

threat. The Group underscores that the continued delay in the implementation of the international commitment to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, pursuant to the 1995 resolution, has seriously set back nuclear disarmament efforts and undermined progress in nuclear non-proliferation.

In conclusion, the Arab Group calls for the universalization of the NPT, which is the fundamental pillar of the international multilateral disarmament regime and international security. The Group reiterates the need to respect the balance and address imbalances among the three pillars of the NPT, as some parties tend to focus on non-proliferation at the expense of disarmament. Furthermore, there should be greater cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy so as to enable States parties to the NPT to exercise their inalienable right to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

**The Acting Chair:** Before giving the floor to the speaker in exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind delegations that statements in that regard are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. In Il Ri** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I wish to speak in exercise of my right of reply to respond to the representative of Australia, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, and others who made provocative allegations and irrelevant remarks regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear deterrence.

I think that those representatives should first properly inform themselves on the background of the real threats and tensions that are afflicting the Korean peninsula. I wish to make it clear that the development and position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear deterrence constitute our legitimate right to safeguard our supreme interests — sovereignty and the right to exist — and to deter nuclear threats and attack from hostile forces. Therefore, nobody is justified in saying whether our powerful self-defence measure of nuclear deterrence is right or wrong.

**The Acting Chair:** I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

**Ms. Elliott** (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to remind delegations that the deadline for submitting draft proposals is tomorrow, 12 October, at noon. I cannot overemphasize the importance of delegations uploading their proposals as soon as possible for sponsorship.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*