



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

First Committee

23rd meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

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

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

The Acting Chair: This afternoon the Committee will hear the remaining 13 speakers under the cluster “Disarmament machinery”. Immediately thereafter, in accordance with our programme of work, the Committee will begin the third and final phase of its work, namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker in the debate, I once again urge all speakers to kindly observe the established time limits.

Mr. Salimi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to convey its gratitude to the Chair for the excellent way in which he conducts the debates of our Committee. We assure him of our full cooperation in the continuation of our work.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/72/PV.22).

The international community faces multiple global security challenges that require cooperative and multilateral solutions. There are challenges linked to the deterioration of international security, the dramatic worsening of the terrorist threat and, in particular, the resurgence of tensions and concerns about the development by some States of nuclear programmes that the international community considers dangerous. The situation is aggravated by the lethargy of the United Nations nuclear disarmament machinery, while the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world necessarily depends on the efficiency of those mechanisms.

We remain concerned about the paralysis of areas of the disarmament machinery and continue to see a pressing need for progress in their revitalization, particularly with regard to the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Despite its past and current difficulties, the CD remains the only forum capable of advancing national political interests through multilateral cooperation for the benefit of all.

The prolonged stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament not only runs counter to the new security challenges and compromises the achievement of general and global disarmament but also, and primarily, goes against the momentum generated by the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first legally binding multilateral instrument on nuclear disarmament negotiated in 20 years. We are hopeful that the entry into force of that new Treaty will promote inclusive dialogue and renewed international cooperation aimed at achieving the anticipated goal of

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nuclear disarmament, through the reinvigoration of the disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. We remain fully convinced of the fundamental importance of a functional CD capable of fulfilling its function as a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

Proliferation challenges continue. Political will on the part of all States, without distinction, is needed in order to reach an agreement on concrete actions that respect the balance that must prevail in the United Nations disarmament machinery between the specific national interests of Member States and the common interest of the international community.

In the framework of the Disarmament Commission, the Kingdom of Morocco, which presided over the Working Group on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, welcomes the adoption for the first time in almost 20 years, at the closure of the Commission's 2017 session, of the 14 recommendations on practical measures to restore confidence in the field of conventional weapons. Those recommendations represent a major step forward that should help to reduce tensions and build confidence, thereby making it possible to prevent and resolve conflicts and to promote the achievement of sustainable development.

We appreciate the contribution of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, in particular the Regional Centre in Africa, based in Lomé in the Republic of Togo. My delegation welcomes the role that the Centre plays today. It is recognized for its activities on the African continent, covering a growing number of themes related to peace and disarmament which are allowing it to become a centre of expertise in Africa. Given the scope of the challenges and perils threatening the stability of the Sahel and West Africa, including as a result of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, we express our full support to the Lomé Regional Centre and call on the United Nations to provide it with adequate financial and human resources so that it can carry out its mission properly.

Mr. Aldai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the Chair's efforts in presiding over the work of the First Committee this year and to acknowledge his important role in conducting the work with the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Arab Group (see A/C.1/72/PV.22).

The State of Kuwait affirms its established position on the importance of multilateral action as the best way to tackle the challenges of disarmament and non-proliferation, which are a priority for the international community in view of the gravity of the humanitarian consequences of the use of weapons. We reaffirm the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery as a cornerstone of such action, in accordance with the mandate specified at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. All States must continue to make greater efforts and strengthen their political will to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The State of Kuwait expresses its disappointment with regard to the continued stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, which is one of the most important components of the disarmament machinery. The lack of political will on the part of certain major States members of the Conference has greatly impeded agreement on a specific agenda, notwithstanding the vital and sensitive issues listed in it. The State of Kuwait underscores once again the need for member States to show enough flexibility to revive the Conference and break the deadlock, especially in view of the current complicated circumstances, namely, the increased threats and the growing risks caused by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

My country's delegation would like to emphasize the extreme importance of the Disarmament Commission and the fact that it allows us to familiarize ourselves with the various thoughts, initiatives and recommendations about issues and challenges pertaining to disarmament in order to achieve our lofty goal of eliminating weapons of mass destruction, getting rid of them completely.

We welcome the positive outcome achieved at the previous session of the Disarmament Commission. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of States demonstrating the necessary political will and flexibility in order to allow the Commission to reach an agreement and a positive outcome at the next session, as at the previous session, and to achieve the objectives of disarmament which we all seek.

The State of Kuwait underscores the importance of a comprehensive review of the disarmament machinery and of upgrading it as soon as possible. We welcome plans to hold the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and call on all Member States to engage positively and constructively in order to reach international consensus on the objectives of that important session. We also look forward to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament in 2018.

Finally, my delegation hopes that the international multilateral efforts undertaken by all Member States will continue to strengthen the disarmament machinery, and that nuclear-weapon States in particular will demonstrate the political will necessary to enable the Committee to achieve substantive results during the current session so as to spare the world and its nations the risks of wars and armed conflicts while achieving international peace and security.

Mr. Lynn (Myanmar): My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/72/PV.22).

Meaningful and verifiable disarmament and non-proliferation measures are the drivers of the maintenance of international peace and security and of the greater good of present and future generations. The United Nations disarmament machinery plays an instrumental role in achieving those goals.

Myanmar continues to support the Conference on Disarmament as the world's single permanent multilateral disarmament treaty-negotiating body and has been an active participant since its inception. Looking back, the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors have successfully negotiated major disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, including the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

As a proponent of multilateral disarmament diplomacy, Myanmar shares equally in the frustration of the international community over the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament. However, Myanmar never gives up hope on the Conference. Its institutional framework, its composition to date and its past credentials, among other elements, are to be maximized. While we understand everyone's national

security concerns, flexibility and additional political will are much needed to put the Conference back on track so that it can live up to the expectations of the international community.

Nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, the fissile material cut-off treaty and the prevention of an arms race in outer space have been our priorities for decades. While nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for Myanmar, there is a growing need to address emerging common security challenges, such as cybersecurity, lethal autonomous weapons systems and chemical and biological terrorism. Such concerns should find a place in the work of the Conference.

Myanmar had the honour and privilege to contribute to the work of the Conference on Disarmament as Chair of the Working Group on the Way Ahead during the 2017 session of the Conference. We thank all co-facilitators for their invaluable contributions. Notwithstanding the different views on the creation and work of the Working Group on the Way Ahead, we believe that it constitutes a step in the right direction. We have had useful and substantive discussions on all the Conference's agenda items. We must work out our differences, first through discussions in the pre-negotiations phase. We hope that the telling discussions we have had this year will contribute substantially to our work next year.

Myanmar believes that the forthcoming fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) will provide an opportunity to take stock of what we have and have not achieved so far, to review the functioning and effectiveness of the present disarmament machinery and to examine emerging security challenges for our future disarmament agenda. In that context, we welcome the consensus recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group considering the possible objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV.

We commend the United Nations Disarmament Commission for being able to produce recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, ending a two decades-long impasse. At the same time, we stress the need to achieve consensus next year in the Commission's Working Group on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We underline the important and valuable role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

in our work on non-proliferation and disarmament. The insightful research outputs of the Institute are particularly useful to developing countries with limited research capacity, including Myanmar. We call on Member States that are in a position to do so to financially support the Institute.

The current achievements of the United Nations disarmament machinery are certainly far from our expectations. With our common commitments and renewed political will, we would be able to revive our disarmament architecture. Vibrant United Nations disarmament machinery will definitely contribute to beating our swords into ploughshares.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation fully supports the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.22).

In an era such as the present, marked by tension and uncertainty in the field of security, disarmament and non-proliferation, my country wishes to express with particular determination its support for the multilateral institutions and the disarmament machinery of the United Nations. We have reiterated the need for the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to be more effective, providing added value and concrete solutions to the challenges that we face. We often see signs of dissatisfaction with outcomes that we all wish were more ambitious.

Nonetheless, Spain understands that we should avoid complacency, advocating a critical and innovative spirit. We can seek possible improvements to the current situation as long as they are constructive and realistic. However, we must avoid simply discrediting institutions without providing credible and effective alternatives, because, in difficult times such as these, dialogue and exchange are needed more than ever with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation.

The satisfactory outcome of the most recent session of the Disarmament Commission demonstrated that, with the necessary patience and political will, it is possible, even if only partially, to overcome the many failures accumulated over the years. It also demonstrates that we should not make institutions the unnecessary and unjustified victims of the passivity or the inability of their member States to agree.

This year, Spain assumed the sixth presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, achieving, despite the

difficulties, a satisfactory consensus in the adoption of the final report. Despite the persisting differences among delegations, we have also proved that substantive discussions were held in 2017 in the Working Group on the Way Ahead on all substantive items of the Conference's agenda. We thank Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar and the co-facilitators. Although the Conference on Disarmament cannot lose sight of its unequivocal treaty-negotiating mandate, we cannot disregard the exchange of positions in technical debates, which are essential to achieving that objective.

My country understands that the development of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices continues to be the issue with a greater degree of political and technical maturity as a subject of negotiation. At the same time, we believe that, as recommended in the action plan agreed by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, strengthening negative security assurances would be another realistic step for the Conference based on the principle of strategic and undiminished security for all. We can also analyse potential new issues that may arise in a programme of work, such as transparency and verification.

The consensus rule, the fundamental basis for the Conference, must be an inclusive practice that responds in a satisfactory manner to all the interests of its member States. Consensus must be interpreted as the constructive pursuit of a common agreement, not as the possibility of an individual veto that undermines the negotiating mandate of the Conference. It would also be appropriate to streamline the working methods of the Conference, as well as to reasonably increase its membership.

I would like to conclude, as I did two days ago in the panel on disarmament machinery that we held in this same forum, by recalling the words of the Special Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, at a recent plenary meeting under the Spanish presidency of the Conference, when she affirmed that, after a particularly difficult period and despite the continuing differences among the member States, we together reached a consensus on the need to take sound decisions in that body. Such a consensus is already an important point of convergence, namely, that we all want to return the Conference to its original mandate. The power to do so is precisely in our hands.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): One of the most profound aspirations of humankind has been the achievement of international security, which is an inseparable element of peace. That is the affirmation with which the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament framed the *raison d'être* of disarmament activities and the ultimate objective of the bodies that that session designed as part of the disarmament machinery. For that reason, we are pleased that the Disarmament Commission succeeded in adopting the recommendations of the Working Group on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

However, the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery depends on the optimal functioning of all parts of its mechanisms. We therefore particularly regret that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not overcome the paralysis that has affected it for more than two decades.

Although each year the Conference undertakes activities, as shown in its report to the General Assembly, it continues not to adopt or implement a programme of work and has still not fulfilled the mandate for which it was created. Mexico therefore questions whether we can qualify those activities as substantive work and affirms that that forum is paralysed. That immobility contravenes the constructive and progressive spirit of multilateralism and of the United Nations, and that is not acceptable. Mexico has continued to support those forums, given the high priority that it gives to the purpose for which they were created.

Despite the efforts of countries committed to disarmament and interested in greater institutional effectiveness, there are dynamics within the Conference that benefit from the status quo and that live in pretence. Therefore, we call on the membership, in particular the members of the CD, to practise serious self-criticism as to whether we should remain complacent and deem it normal that a multilateral forum has not performed the functions entrusted to it for more than two decades of paralysis.

While the Conference has significantly contributed to the development of the so-called right to disarmament, we cannot overlook the fact that it was established and conceived under the thinking of the cold war and with the same norms. While many of our counterparts in this room and in other forums point out with great certainty that the Conference on Disarmament does not operate

in a vacuum and that there is no political will for that forum to achieve its potential, the CD is not a victim of external circumstances. We believe that it is necessary for Members of the United Nations to take responsibility for implementing anachronistic rules of procedure that impede the full functioning of the Conference. Those include application of the consensus rule as a veto on both procedural and substantive issues. We should no longer allow consensus to be seen as an imperative rather than as a legitimate collective aspiration to reach agreements and to take action.

During the 2017 session, the Conference decided, as in previous years, to keep busy with activities that, without detracting from its intrinsic value, were not a substitute for fulfilling its clear mandate: to negotiate legally binding instruments on disarmament. That is why the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was so successfully negotiated and adopted in the General Assembly. The Working Group on the Way Ahead, one more of the many working groups that the Conference has established, reflects only the intention by some of its members to pretend that the forum is functioning and to justify its work, as if such activities were in fact substantive work.

While Mexico always supports and encourages discussions and negotiations on disarmament, there are other forums in which to deliberate and to promote ad hoc discussions, in particular the Disarmament Commission. We therefore believe that while the Conference distracts itself with that kind of activities, it is wasting its resources and using up long days of work on the part of the delegations. Most of the plenary meetings of the 2017 session were informal, and thus there was not even a record of them. In addition to being fruitless, those meetings do not exist, not even in the multilateral imagination. Every year, they take place again and usurp the work of the Commission, without even producing an accurate report of their activities.

In addition to what I have just said, the fact that not all countries are represented in the Conference, the lack of civil society participation and the very limited room for maneuverability by the President during his or her one-month term are additional challenges to the Conference in meeting the expectations for which it was designed. Such thinking also applies to the working methods of other elements of the machinery, such as the Commission, whose substantive sessions should be shorter and more efficient. We must therefore

review the appropriateness of biennial cycles, among other options.

I will submit the full version of my statement to PaperSmart.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.25.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina): It is an honour to address the First Committee in my capacity as Chair of the Disarmament Commission and to present the report of its 2017 session, A/72/42.

Pursuant to resolution 71/82, the Disarmament Commission met at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 21 April and continued to consider the two agenda items adopted at its 2015 session, namely, recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. Minister Counsellor Wilmer Mendez of the Permanent Mission of Venezuela to the United Nations served as Chair of Working Group I, which was entrusted with the mandate for the item “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”. Deputy Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations Counsellor Lachezara Stoeva served as Chair of Working Group II, which was entrusted with the mandate for the item “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons”.

The Commission held six plenary meetings in the course of its 2017 substantive session. Working Group I and Working Group II held 12 and 13 meetings, respectively, and engaged in extensive discussions on their respective agenda items. On 21 April, the Commission adopted the reports of the Commission and its Working Groups and agreed to submit the text of the reports to the General Assembly. Recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons were put forward to the General Assembly by the Commission.

The Commission also held informal discussions mandated in resolution 71/82 on the subject contained in working paper A/CN.10/2016/WP.1: “In accordance with the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space

Activities (A/68/189), preparation of recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space”. Some Member States considered that the issue was of interest, to be addressed by the Commission. In that context, I hope that draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.25, on the report of the Disarmament Commission, will be adopted by consensus.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere appreciation to the Chairs of the Working Groups, Mr. Wilmer Mendez and Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, for their outstanding professionalism and diplomatic skills. Allow me also to thank the members of the Bureau and the secretariat for their support and all delegations for their constructive engagement during the deliberations, which made a compromise possible.

That is what multilateralism offers: compromise, a win-win for all. I encourage all delegations to follow that path. “Wayfarer, the only way is your footprints and no other.” During the 2017 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, we stamped our footprints. Let us keep walking to continue building upon the path of consensus.

In my national capacity, I will now briefly refer to the disarmament machinery.

(spoke in Spanish)

Argentina reiterates its commitment to the disarmament machinery, as established by the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, held in 1978, whose fortieth anniversary will be observed in a few months. In that regard, Argentina wishes to emphasize the achievements of that machinery, reflected in several international instruments that constitute significant milestones in international law, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The disarmament machinery has shown, both last year and this year, that when there is political will, we can make progress towards shared objectives on disarmament and international security.

Argentina welcomes the adoption by the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament of recommendations on the objectives and the agenda of a fourth special session and believes it to be very

timely. Argentina also supports the efforts under way to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral disarmament negotiating body, and to urgently begin negotiations on new international legal instruments to regulate matters that are essential to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Argentina welcome decision CD/2090 of the Conference on Disarmament, by which it established the Working Group on the Way Ahead. While we regret that the debate was informal and that there was no agreement on a final report, we value the body set up for open and constructive discussion of matters that should be the subject of substantive work under the agenda of the Conference. Argentina underscores the valuable discussions on negative security assurances in terms of the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, as well as the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Finally, I would like to conclude my statement by reiterating our support to the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for their valuable contributions in advisory services.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia consistently calls for strengthening and increasing the efficiency of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its three interdependent and mutually reinforcing components — the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the First Committee — are united through a single goal: to maintain international security.

Our main efforts are aimed at overcoming the stagnation in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and at launching negotiations on the core issues of its agenda, pursuant to its mandate. That is the purpose of Russia's proposal to start the development of an international convention to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism. Our initiative does not infringe on the interests of any State. The intent is to develop a new instrument that would complement the international legal framework for countering terrorism related to weapons of mass destruction and contribute to strengthening regional and international security.

Our proposal remains on the table, as does the draft programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, which combines starting pre-negotiations on an international convention to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism and continuing discussions

on various aspects of nuclear disarmament. We expect to resume its consideration in the Conference as early as January.

We welcome the active engagement of delegations in discussing the CD agenda items within the informal Working Group on the Way Ahead, which seeks to identify topics acceptable to all participants that could become the basis for a consensus-based programme of work. We highly appreciate the work of the Myanmar chairmanship to that end.

We expect that in future, the work of the Conference on Disarmament will be based on the practices and principles enshrined in that unique negotiating forum on arms control when it was established. The task of all participants in the Conference is to jointly look for a way out of the deadlock, rather than to introduce further differences into its work.

We consider the successful outcome of the most recent substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to be a positive sign. The work of the Bulgarian Chair of the Working Group on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons is highly commendable. For the first time since 1999, the Disarmament Commission adopted a consensus outcome document. We are convinced that the potential of that multilateral component of the United Nations disarmament machinery is far from exhausted.

In particular, we thank the Argentine Chair of the 2017 session of the Commission and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as our Chinese and American partners, for the attention and flexibility shown in the consideration of the trilateral proposal to include on the agenda of the Commission the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. We hope that draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.25 on the report of the Commission will adequately reflect that initiative and that, starting from the next session, the Commission will begin work on that very significant topic for international security.

Allow me also to note the efforts of Ecuador as Chair of the Open-ended Working Group in addressing the complex task of finding a common denominator for the positions of States on the preparation of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Working Group succeeded in preparing a balanced and comprehensive document,

which, in our view, serves as an excellent basis for future joint work on dealing with the outstanding issues.

The United Nations will clearly continue to play a leading role in arms control. Each component of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery should responsibly and effectively fulfil the functions entrusted to it. As States Members of the United Nations, we all are required to ensure the right conditions for the Conference, the Commission and the First Committee to deliver on their respective mandates. To that end, we should strive for compromise and demonstrate political will in moving towards positive results. In the end, not only the future of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the smooth functioning of its components are at stake. International peace, strategic stability and security depend on each and every one of us. We must always be mindful of that.

Mr. Davison (Canada): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the following countries: Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bulgaria, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Arab Emirates and Zambia, as well as my own country, Canada.

Among the key purposes of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. The disarmament machinery that has evolved over the more than 70 years of the existence of the United Nations was intended to achieve that purpose. To that end, the machinery has worked well, or poorly, sometimes due to external events but always — always — as a reflection of the level of the political will of its Member States. Where Member States engage and agree on a course of action, we have progress.

While the disarmament machinery has delivered in the past, success has been elusive for many years. The structure has atrophied and even the discussions have grown stale and repetitive. Among the ways in which the disarmament machinery has fallen short is its tepid acceptance of the importance of gender inclusiveness and gendered impacts. If we accept that the maintenance of international peace and security is a task that should be shared equally by all States, which is

a basic principle of multilateral disarmament, we should also recognize that the pursuit of that goal should be equally shared when it comes to the representation and participation of women in the disarmament machinery. International organizations need to represent society at large, and the way in which disarmament issues are treated and discussed is affected by who participates in the discussion.

Similarly, when looking at some of the key issues that are addressed through the machinery — such as nuclear weapons, anti-personnel landmines or the use of explosive weapons in populated areas — we need to incorporate and to reflect the undeniable body of evidence concerning the differentiated gender impact of many of those weapons. To take but one example, the proliferation and unlawful use of small arms and light weapons can contribute to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Improving gender aspects in disarmament is definitely not a soft issue. In that light, we welcome the inclusion of gender perspectives in a number of First Committee resolutions this autumn. Much more can be done, and we encourage all lead sponsors to adopt the same comprehensive approach to their resolutions by assessing the gender dimensions.

This is not an issue only for the First Committee. Outcome documents of meetings of States parties should also seek to capture gender perspectives. To go even further, we believe that all disarmament instruments should include gender perspectives.

Our States are committed to helping the disarmament machinery to function efficiently and effectively in the interests of all States and all persons. We also commit to working towards a balanced representation of men and women in the disarmament machinery and to making gender perspectives an everyday part of its discussions and documents so that what started as a norm becomes just the normal.

Ms. Keane (Ireland): Following on from the joint statement just delivered by our Canadian colleague and recalling the excellent statement delivered by the countries of the Caribbean Community last Monday, which highlighted the importance of gender-perspective considerations in disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to further explore the question of the participation and engagement of women in the disarmament machinery.

In recent years, the international community has worked towards strengthening the representation and

the role of women in peace and security. There has been notable recent progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. My delegation welcomes the inclusion of a reference in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that underscores the importance of women's participation in disarmament discussions. That is the first time that a reference of that sort has been included in an international disarmament agreement. Furthermore, we also welcome the factual summary of the Chairman of the 2017 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) earlier this year, which encourages States parties to work actively to improve the situation with regard to equal participation.

Despite such progress, 17 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), women's participation in international negotiating forums and peace processes lags behind that of men in most bodies. Last year, Ireland funded a seminal research study on gender development and nuclear weapons by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the International Law and Policy Institute, which, in addition to highlighting information on the gendered impact of ionizing radiation, highlighted the need for greater participation and engagement by women in multilateral disarmament negotiations. The UNIDIR research shows that women are heavily underrepresented across multilateral forums that focus on security, with First Committee and the NPT meetings leading the way in that regard. The imbalance in the First Committee is evident. Delegates need only look around the room to see that for themselves.

Studies show that diversity and differing perspectives make group prediction and problem solving more effective. Considering that security is in the interests of us all, it is essential that the voices of all be heard as we strive to meet the Sustainable Development Goals that our world leaders agreed two years ago.

States are familiar with the rhetoric of how different disarmament forums can become static. Improving the engagement and participation of women could provide fresh perspectives and inject further impetus into our work — work that takes on a greater significance as we enter important review cycles and approach landmark anniversaries of our conventions and treaties. Assisting and sponsoring qualified female participants is one example of how we can rejuvenate the discussion,

along with taking gender diversity into account in the composition of delegations and when putting expert panels together. On the rare occasion that an all-female panel occurs it is frequently remarked on with surprise. It is our belief that an all-male panel should receive the same reaction. In terms of addressing the imbalance, we encourage all States to consider that the participation and engagement of women in disarmament discussions is an essential rather than a desirable goal.

Let us work together to ensure that the agreements that we have all signed are not limited by a lack of perspective. Let us be proactive and solution-oriented in our endeavours to explore how we can further promote the participation and engagement of women in disarmament, using women's agency as a positive force for change for the benefit of all.

Mr. Bakhshi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.22).

The delicate nature of disarmament issues and their close link to the supreme national security interests of States require them to be considered in a non-discriminatory, transparent, inclusive and consensus-based process within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. For that reason, the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) acknowledges the importance of the equitable and balanced consideration of those issues in order to ensure the right of each State to security and that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage. Accordingly, Iran attaches great importance to multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in the field of disarmament and underscores the vital importance and continued validity of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery established by SSOD-I.

Based on their existing methods of work and rules of procedure, in particular the rule of consensus, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) have formulated landmark universal instruments in the past. That proves the relevance of their mandate and the efficiency and effectiveness of their rules of procedure, in particular the rule of consensus.

Although there have been continued attempts to mask the political nature of the inactivity in the disarmament machinery, in particular in the CD, with technical questions, such as those concerning its rules of procedures, what appear to be procedural problems are in fact political ones. In itself, the machinery, its structure and rules of procedure are totally innocent. Therefore, calling it ineffective is nothing but shifting blame. Indeed, in the absence of genuine political will, even the best disarmament machinery ever would be totally ineffective.

For that reason, we believe that the major problem of the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly the CD, is the lack of genuine political will on the part of certain nuclear-weapon States and their advocates who are unwilling to agree on a balanced, comprehensive and priority-based programme of work. If they were to put aside their inflexible positions, that machinery would prove once again that it still works properly and efficiently.

In that regard, while reaffirming the importance and relevance of the UNDC as the sole specialized deliberative body on disarmament within the United Nations, we wish to stress that the adoption of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons by the UNDC as a result of the flexible position of NAM and its inability to adopt recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons due to the inflexible position of certain nuclear-weapon States demonstrated once again the dominant role of political will in the work of the disarmament machinery.

Reinvigorating the existing United Nations disarmament machinery is a shared objective and a common responsibility, particularly when one takes into account the overall international security environment. Therefore, certain nuclear-weapon States need to reconsider their inflexible positions within the CD — the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament — to allow it to deliver on its negotiating mandate. That is of utmost importance with regard to nuclear disarmament — the highest priority of the international community of States.

As an active participant in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and having voted in favour of its adoption, Iran will continue supporting its overall objective. Pending any decision on

signing the Treaty, all our legal obligations and political positions on issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will remain unchanged and will not and shall not be considered affected because of our participation in its negotiations. We consider the Treaty a step forward in nuclear disarmament.

At the same time, we believe it needs to be complemented. In that context, we strongly support the early commencement of negotiations in the CD on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention, for which the Assembly has called for years. That is the only practical option to put the nuclear disarmament process in the right direction.

My delegation supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on the strict application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the composition of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as of the groups of governmental experts in the field of disarmament and international security, and urges the Secretary-General to take concrete actions to ensure its realization.

At the same time, as a participant in the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament in 2017, I would like to underline that Programme's significant role in training young diplomats in the disarmament field. Without a doubt, it is a valuable contribution to professionalism in the disarmament forums, and we will continue to support it.

Iran stands ready to constructively cooperate, within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, with all concerned States to the benefit of our common interests.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.57.

Ms. Dris (Malaysia): As we arrive at the tail end of our thematic cluster debates, I seek the Chair's kind indulgence and that of the Committee to allow Malaysia to reintroduce to the Committee, for the twenty-first consecutive year, the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons" A/C.1/72/L.57, as we have not had the opportunity to do so in early segments of this debate.

My delegation remains convinced that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons constitutes

a significant milestone in the global efforts aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The 8 July 1996 ruling of the Court remains a resolute decision in the field of nuclear disarmament, and the Court's decision embodies and remains an authoritative legal call to eliminate nuclear weapons.

We wish to recall the unanimous decision that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective control, as reflected in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution. We have updated the draft resolution to acknowledge the significant milestone achieved by the international community this year, that is, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 7 July 2017. On that note, we wish to commend civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations for their contributions towards the adoption of the TPNW, and also once again congratulate and commend the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

We strongly believe that the decision of the International Court of Justice does not confine itself only to State parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but rather and more significantly exists as a universal declaration of our collective resolve to achieve our aspirations of a world free of nuclear weapons. We believe that the Treaty is in line with the decision of the International Court of Justice and is consistent with the obligation of State parties under article VI of the NPT.

We view that the updates to this year's draft resolution reflect the need to call on all countries to fulfil their article VI obligations under the NPT, as was called for by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Therefore, operative paragraph 2 calls for all States to engage in multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, including under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We recognize that the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a first step and is part of a comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament, since any other movement on nuclear disarmament had been hampered by non-fulfilment of article VI obligations by NPT State parties. That is even more pertinent when coupled with a need to urge non-NPT State parties to

also come on board on nuclear disarmament, bearing in mind that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice is as relevant today as it was two decades ago.

Based on the changing realities, the call on States to do what the International Court of Justice has asked for must be respected. Therefore, we believe that all States Members of the United Nations must continue to follow up the decision of the International Court of Justice with concrete action. With a view to achieving the broadest support possible, my delegation has updated the paragraphs that acknowledge that changing reality and has made modifications on the technical updates.

The draft resolution has been co-sponsored by 55 delegations thus far. On behalf of the sponsors, we extend our collective appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the follow-up to the advisory opinion on the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, as contained in document A/72/321. We wish to also express our gratitude and thank Member States that contributed to the report of the Secretary-General through the submission of information requested, pursuant to Assembly resolution 71/58.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice remains a significant contribution to the field of nuclear disarmament. Its humanitarian context gives way to a moral argument in calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We must not waver on the need for requisite political will and moral courage in being steadfast towards achieving the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons, particularly in the light of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, as we enter into the action phase on draft resolutions of the Committee, by co-sponsoring and supporting this draft resolution, Member States will show that they share our conviction that the Court's opinion is an important and positive development for nuclear disarmament in the context of the multilateral process. This conviction must continue to be collectively shared, aspired to and built on by all of us in the Committee for the greater good of humankind.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador endorses the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/72/PV.22). It also aligns itself with the statement made a few minutes ago on behalf of a group of countries by the representative

of Canada on the inclusion of a gender perspective in our discussions and resolutions.

I would like to welcome the briefings made at the beginning of this thematic debate by the President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Chair of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (see A/C.1/72/PV.21).

During our debates, we have all expressed our frustration over the paralysis found in some of the bodies that are part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. This paralysis is a regrettable reality that cannot be ignored. At the same time, we must welcome some important progress that has been made in the past year. We saw the adoption of recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons within the framework of the Disarmament Commission, for which we commend the Chair of the Commission, Gabriela Martinic, and the Coordinator of the corresponding working group, Ms. Lachezara Stoeva. We also saw the adoption of recommendations of objectives and programmes of work for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament by the Open-ended Working Group that was convened for that purpose.

We also cannot forget that the First Committee of the General Assembly is also part of the disarmament machinery, and although it can be said that there has been inertia and repetitiveness in our annual discussions, the fact is that the current session has brought new ideas and elements to the debate. I also cannot fail to mention the more stable financial situation in UNIDIR, although actions are still required to strengthen its functioning and guarantee its autonomy and independence in accordance with its statute.

Nevertheless, the truth is that, despite the efforts of its presidents, the Conference on Disarmament still cannot even agree on its programme of work, and that has been the case for several decades. Its meetings are focused on deliberations, which are usually interesting, but we agree that they do not fulfil its negotiating mandate. In the framework of the Disarmament Commission, despite the efforts of the Coordinator of the Working Group, Wilmer Méndez Graterol, it was not possible to reach consensus on recommendations on nuclear disarmament this year following several weeks of negotiations, which leads us to an interesting

observation: the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva now holds debates and the Disarmament Commission in New York now holds negotiations, which largely inverts the mandates given by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The truth is that the traditional distribution of work between Geneva and New York in the field of disarmament is not so clear-cut, which must be taken into account in future discussions about the machinery.

In conclusion, I will make a brief comment on consensus. The delegation of Ecuador continues to believe in the importance of consensus in the field of disarmament, but, of course, we refer to the positive concept of consensus, which implies the shared commitment of all to advancing and achieving common objectives by following a shared path in which we seek to understand one another's position. We believe that the fact that consensus is now very discredited is the result of abuse and a misunderstanding of what the concept actually entails. Consensus does not and cannot mean the granting or recognition of a universal veto, nor can it be identified with actions that seek to simply deny the vast majority of the international community the ability to advance in achieving the objectives of disarmament.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the cluster "Disarmament machinery".

The Committee will now begin the third and final phase of its work, namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106. In this regard, the Committee will be guided by the informal papers issued by the Secretariat that list the draft resolutions and decisions on which action will be taken each day. Informal paper A/C.1/72/INF/1/Rev.2, has been circulated in and is posted on the wall of the Conference Room. We will first take action on the draft resolutions and decisions under each cluster listed therein. The Secretariat will revise this informal paper on a daily basis, in order to update the drafts that are ready for action at each of our remaining meetings. I have been informed that one additional request for votes has been made since the issuance of informal paper A/C.1/72/INF/1/Rev.2. Further information on this request is available at the Secretariat's desk to the left of the rostrum.

Before we proceed, I propose that we follow the same procedures adopted by the Committee at previous sessions concerning the conduct of business during this action phase. That is to say, we will observe the

following established four-step process: first, general statements under each cluster will be made; secondly, explanations of vote will be made before action; thirdly, action will be taken on the drafts; and fourthly, explanations of vote after action will be made. Under each cluster listed for any given day, the Committee will first hear general statements. At the same time, delegations will have a final opportunity to introduce draft resolutions and decisions ready for action on that day or at subsequent meetings. I would kindly request that they be made as brief as possible.

Next, delegations wishing to explain their positions on any of the draft resolutions under a cluster will have an opportunity to do so in a single intervention before the Committee proceeds to take action on those drafts, one after another and without any interruption in between. I would like to remind delegations that, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes. Given that there are no provisions for general statements before the voting, I will ask delegations to limit their general statements to five minutes. The buzzer will be used to keep track of our time management.

Pursuant to rule 128 of the rules of procedure,

“After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting.”

In the case of a voting error, delegations wishing to register their original voting intention should not disrupt the voting process to request the correction by taking the floor. They should instead approach the Secretariat to clarify the original voting intention, which will be reflected in the official records.

Once the Committee completes action on all draft resolutions and decisions under a particular cluster listed in the day’s informal paper, delegations preferring to explain their positions or votes after action is taken will also have the opportunity to do so. Similar to the consolidated explanations of vote before the voting, delegations are requested to make their explanations in one intervention.

Also in accordance with rule 128 of the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions and decisions are not permitted to make any statements in explanation of their votes either before or after action is taken. They will, however, be permitted to make general statements

at the beginning of the consideration of the drafts under a given cluster.

Delegations seeking recorded votes on any draft resolution or decision are requested to kindly inform the Secretariat of their intention as early as possible and before the day’s meeting begins. All delegations wishing to postpone action on any draft they submitted are also requested to inform the Secretariat at least one day before action is scheduled to be taken on the draft in question. Nonetheless, I appeal to all delegations to make every effort to refrain from delaying action.

In order to ascertain that every delegation fully understands the process for the action phase, the Secretariat has prepared an information sheet, similar to the one that was circulated in previous years, regarding the ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions and decisions. This document has also been circulated in the room.

With members’ full cooperation, I intend to follow the procedure I have just explained in order to ensure the full and efficient utilization of the remaining time for this final stage of our work.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly?

It was so decided.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on the draft resolutions and decisions listed under cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”, as set out in informal paper A/C.1/72/INF/1/Rev.2.

In accordance with past practice, if action on the drafts listed in the informal paper for a particular meeting is not completed, the Committee will first finish action on the remaining drafts in that informal paper before starting action on the next cluster.

I now open the floor for delegations wishing to make either a general statement or to introduce new or revised drafts under cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”.

I remind all delegations once again that the sponsors of draft resolutions and decisions may make general statements at the beginning of the consideration of drafts under a cluster, but may not make statements in explanation of their vote before or after action is taken. General statements are limited to five minutes.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): It is indeed an honour to address the members of the First Committee on

the revised draft resolution entitled “International Day against Nuclear Tests”, which my delegation has submitted for the Committee’s consideration (A/C.1/72/L.36).

As the Committee is aware, each year we observe the International Day against Nuclear Tests on 29 August, with the full endorsement of every President of the General Assembly since the date was so designated. However, we were asked by the Office of the President to specify the day as a mandated event, which was perhaps overlooked when the draft text was submitted to the First Committee in 2009. It was adopted unanimously by all delegations then with a large number of sponsors.

The day of 29 August is of historic significance for many countries around the globe and for many millions of people with the immense tragedies they have suffered. In adopting resolution 64/35, all countries have said in a resolute voice that there is no future for this kind of testing on the planet. I hope we can continue to speak with a single powerful and united voice. It is clear that ending nuclear testing is a global concern that calls for the commitment and action of all States Members of the United Nations.

We are bound by a shared destiny. When we speak of the Sustainable Development Goals, we refer to leaving no one behind. When we speak of disarmament, we should say that we should take care of one another, in order to save people and this precious planet. It is imperative that we end nuclear-weapon tests for the safety and security of humankind.

I would like to express my warmest appreciation in advance for the positive decision that delegations will take for humankind in this room this afternoon. I am very grateful to all countries that have supported draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.36 during the informal consultations and to those that have co-sponsored it.

Mr. Cooreman (Belgium): I would like to thank the Chair for guiding our work during the First Committee, as we come to the final action phase of our work.

Belgium continues to favour concrete and effective measures that bring us closer to our shared goal of nuclear disarmament. We believe that a number of draft resolutions introduced in the General Assembly outline a realistic path towards a world without nuclear weapons, and we will support them. However, we fear that the growing international division over nuclear

disarmament has made our journey more complicated. The voting pattern today will undoubtedly illustrate how our common ground continues to erode. Since polarization will not bring us closer to our goal, we support initiatives that foster a cooperative approach and lay the base for united action to eliminate nuclear weapons.

While we welcome some progress in the preparation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or on the issue of nuclear-disarmament verification, we share the frustration of the lack of determination by the nuclear-weapon States to move forward on nuclear disarmament. However, we do not view the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a basis for effective progress. It lacks the required underpinnings to make it a verifiable instrument that can ensure compliance and deter infraction. It also lacks the support of the main stakeholders. Moreover, we fear it may divert attention from pressing issues, such as the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

While we disagree with other States on this issue, we remain ready to cooperate with all stakeholders and help overcome the divisions so that we can move forward on nuclear disarmament.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Kemppainen (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems in the Middle East, as set out in the resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That was reconfirmed in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, in which the EU and its member States, together with all the countries of the

Middle East and Northern African region, committed themselves to the pursuit of a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — and their delivery systems. The EU considers the 1995 resolution valid until its goals and objectives are achieved, in line with the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The European Union regrets that the 2012 Helsinki Conference on the Middle East WMD-free zone has not been convened. We maintain the view that dialogue and building confidence among stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree on arrangements for a meaningful conference, to be attended by all States of the Middle East on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them, as decided during the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The European Union has continually expressed its readiness to assist the process leading to the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. The EU organized two seminars, in 2011 and in 2012, to facilitate dialogue among States of the region and bring the process forward. Likewise, prior to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, the EU convened a capacity-building workshop in Brussels in 2014 for Middle Eastern diplomats in support of the Helsinki Conference. We are gratified that in January 2017, the co-convenors met with the Arab League Committee of Wise Men to explore how to give the process a fresh start and that they will continue to engage with all States in the region. The EU Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament also met with the Arab League Committee of Wise Men and is ready to engage further.

The European Union continues to call on all States of the region that have not yet done so to accede to and abide by the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and to conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement, the additional protocol and, as applicable, a modified small quantities protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Subscription to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missiles Proliferation could also contribute to regional confidence-building, which is necessary to achieve progress towards the establishment of a zone free of WMDs and their delivery systems in the Middle East.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): I have requested the floor in order to introduce an oral amendment to the revised draft resolution entitled “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons” (A/C.1/72/L.10/Rev.1). The oral revision was posted on the e-Delegates portal late last night.

The oral revision is in the first preambular paragraph, which would read as follows:

“Bearing in mind the need to allay the legitimate concern of the States of the world with regard to ensuring lasting security for their peoples,”

The additional phrase that follows should be deleted.

With that oral revision, the draft resolution has been reverted to its original version of 9 October (A/C.1/72/L.10). Barring a few technical updates, it has become identical to the resolution that the General Assembly adopted last year as resolution 71/30. We apologize to all delegations, particularly to the other sponsors, for having to make this change at such a late stage and in this manner. We seek the continued cooperation and understanding of all delegations in that regard.

We also take this opportunity to once again seek the valuable support of all States for this important resolution, which addresses a long-standing issue on the global disarmament agenda and a recognized core issue at the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Khoo (Singapore): Singapore remains fully committed to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. That has been our long-standing and unwavering position. The only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is the complete elimination of those weapons of mass destruction. Singapore will continue to support resolutions and initiatives that contribute to concrete and meaningful progress in nuclear disarmament.

Singapore’s position on the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has been clearly expressed. Our position remains unchanged, and our support for resolutions in the First Committee that make reference to the Treaty should be viewed in that context. Singapore participated actively in the negotiations on the TPNW in good faith and in a constructive spirit. We regret that our concerns were not fully taken on board. Singapore reiterates that the Treaty should not in any way affect the rights and

obligations of States parties under other agreements, including the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon free zones, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Nevertheless, we recognize that there are multiple pathways to a nuclear-weapon-free world. The adoption of the Treaty, as well as its subsequent signings and ratifications, have demonstrated the will of the majority of the international community. In our view, meaningful progress in nuclear disarmament will be possible only when all relevant parties join in the global effort. It is important for the international community to collectively find a realistic and complementary role for the Treaty within the existing global disarmament architecture, anchored by the NPT. Inclusive dialogue, renewed international cooperation and practical measures for irreversible, verifiable and universal nuclear disarmament are essential. Singapore will continue to work constructively towards our common goal of nuclear disarmament.

The Acting Chair: I give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.5 and A/C.1/72/L.6.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.5, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons”, which Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and my country, Austria, have submitted again this year. The draft resolution is sponsored by 83 countries.

The draft resolution contains only technical updates, compared to last year. Like last year, the text is based entirely on the joint statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, as delivered on behalf of 159 countries at the 2015 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference in New York. Since the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are the underpinning of nuclear disarmament, we hope the broadest possible support will be lent to the draft resolution.

It is an honour and pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.6, “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”, submitted by Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and my own country, Austria. The draft resolution is sponsored by 57 countries.

Last year, the resolution of the same title gave the mandate for negotiations that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by 122 countries on 7 July of this year. The Treaty was drafted in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, in very constructive negotiations that also strongly involved civil society. Furthermore, the Treaty is not only fully in line with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty but is in fact a contribution to the concrete realization of that very article. The centrality of the NPT is stressed both in the draft resolution and in the text of the Treaty, and they make clear that the NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The Treaty was opened for signature on 20 September 2017, and 50 countries signed it on the first day and 3 countries ratified it.

Draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.6 contains the customary implementation provisions of treaties. It welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, calls on States to sign and ratify it, looks forward to its entry into force and requests the Secretary-General to render the necessary assistance and provide such services as may be necessary to fulfil the task entrusted to him by the Treaty. The draft resolution also proposes to decide to include an item entitled “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” on next year’s agenda, in line with other disarmament treaties.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a historic breakthrough. After a long standstill in multilateral nuclear disarmament and against a background of extensive modernization programmes in nuclear-weapon States, a clear majority of States has adopted the first multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty in 21 years. With the Treaty, the last and most destructive weapon of mass destruction will now be finally prohibited.

We are aware that States that do not share our objective of a prohibition of nuclear weapons have problems with facing this reality, namely, that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has become part of the international disarmament architecture. Such an attitude unfortunately causes unnecessary polarization and might well result in calls for separate votes on paragraphs that make reference to the Treaty. While we certainly respect the obvious right of every State to sign or not to sign a treaty, we also expect respect for a new international legal instrument, including when it is mentioned in draft resolutions.

We call on all States to vote in favour of resolutions A/C.1/72/L.5, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons”, and A/C.1/72/L.6, “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”, thereby showing their support for our common objective — a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mrs. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to make it clear that France will continue, throughout the seventy-second session, to decide on a number of draft resolutions that may have seen some changes this year in the same spirit as previous years. France nevertheless rejects any reading of these texts — specifically draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.1, A/C.1/72/L.22 and A/C.1/72/L.47 — that would create a link to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on 7 July 2017.

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

Our countries are resolved to make further progress on effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. We welcome actions that contribute meaningfully to this effort and reaffirm our commitment to advancing towards the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. To that end, we recognize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a principal means of achieving that objective.

To proceed towards global zero, practical, inclusive and effective measures that take account of the current security environment are required. In assessing the draft resolutions under cluster 1, we will focus our support on proposals that meet these criteria.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Before we proceed to take action on the draft resolutions under cluster 1, I would like to take this opportunity to address a variety of issues that were raised in the thematic discussion on nuclear issues and are the subject of some of the draft resolutions upon which we will vote shortly.

The German Government is entirely committed to a world free of nuclear weapons and would like to see nuclear disarmament progress towards that goal.

Germany shares the concern that the detonation of nuclear weapons has a devastating impact on human beings as well as on the environment. That is one of the reasons why creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons is in accordance with all provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is a clear commitment of ours.

Nuclear arsenals have been reduced significantly over the last two decades, but there is no reason for complacency, and much more has to be done to reduce nuclear risks and achieve further reductions of nuclear stockpiles with a view to their total elimination. As our discussions over the last week have demonstrated, there is broad consensus about the need for further nuclear disarmament, but views diverge about which road to take in order to get there.

As is well known, Germany has not signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and does not intend to do so. In our view, the categorical prohibition of nuclear weapons is not a shortcut to nuclear disarmament. Instead, what we need are concrete nuclear disarmament steps that are agreed with the nuclear-weapon States and that are effectively, verifiably and irreversibly implemented. That is why my country is set to continue urging tangible progress on nuclear disarmament on the basis of a concrete, step-by-step approach that must take into account the prevailing security environment. That must include entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as a long-awaited legal prohibition on nuclear testing, but it must equally progress towards the commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Another key form of progress in nuclear disarmament is to elaborate mechanisms for the verification of nuclear disarmament. In addition, reaffirming and strengthening the negative security guarantees issued by nuclear-weapon States to all non-nuclear-weapon States in compliance with their obligations under the NPT could also contribute to countering proliferation and creating conditions for further nuclear disarmament steps. That is why we have organized public discussions on negative security assurances in the First Committee in New York.

In sum, while we respect and share the aspirations of many countries assembled here to rid this world of nuclear weapons, we will continue to work towards that goal based on a progressive, step-by-step approach

that is geared to effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. We ask all our partners who we know share that commitment to join in that effort and jointly develop the substantial elements that will be needed to make the NPT review cycle a success.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom would like to reaffirm its commitment to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and to the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We fully recognize our responsibilities under the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and the United Kingdom remains prepared to actively support and facilitate renewed regional dialogue with and among regional States on arrangements for a conference. We sponsored a workshop on the topic at Wilton Park, in the United Kingdom, in December 2015, to which we invited States from the region and other interested parties, and, having reached out on behalf of the co-convenors, we met with the Panel of the Wise of the League of Arab States in January.

At the same time, our efforts alone are not sufficient to achieve meaningful progress towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We encourage all States of the region to offer concrete ideas on how to move forward to engage in a dialogue that is structured, inclusive, balanced, consensus-based and results-oriented, with a view to overcoming the current differences on the way towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

I would like to take this opportunity to make reference to the long-standing language in the preamble of draft resolution A.C.1/72/L.1 that welcomes all initiatives leading to general and complete disarmament. The United Kingdom does not accept that the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is included in the initiatives being welcomed, our position on that Treaty having been made clear on many occasions, including during the meetings of this Committee.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): Nuclear weapons continue to be the greatest threat of all to international peace and security. For that reason, the total elimination of those weapons remains the main priority of the overwhelming majority of the States members of the international community. While after the Cold War

there was a glimpse of hope that those weapons could be abolished, recent alarming trends of a new nuclear arms race and a new race in the modernization of nuclear arms unfortunately represent an unpromising future for nuclear disarmament. If uncontrolled, those trends will seriously challenge our collective security. Therefore, we the non-nuclear-weapon States should continue our united front to resolutely pursue the path towards a world without nuclear weapons. To that end, we need to use all necessary means and opportunities at the national, regional and international levels.

Nationally, we can count on the power of billions of our citizens who want a safer world where there are no nuclear weapons. Regionally, we can and should continue our strong support for the strengthening of the effectiveness of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and support the establishment of such zones where they do not exist. In that regard, ridding a region as volatile as the Middle East of Israel's nuclear weapons is of the utmost importance. We should also count on the contribution of civil society in furthering the noble objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Internationally, we should continue supporting the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the full and effective implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations under its article VI, as well as all unequivocal undertakings within the Review Conferences of the Treaty by the nuclear-weapon States for the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

It is exactly in that context that for many years now Iran has introduced biennially a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament obligations. That draft resolution, which Iran has also introduced in this session of the Committee, is entitled "Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", contained in document A/C.1/72/L.4. The draft resolution, which calls for the implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, is technically updated and contains no substantive changes this year. While warmly appreciating all States that supported the adoption of the text in the past, we request their continued valuable support for the draft that will be voted upon this afternoon.

Finally, I should reiterate that, as an active participant in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and having voted in favour of it, Iran will continue to support its overall objective. Therefore, pending any decision on signing that Treaty, all our legal obligations and political positions on issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will remain unchanged and will not be and should not be considered affected because of our participation in its negotiation or by supporting paragraphs related to the Treaty in resolutions of the General Assembly.

While we consider the Treaty to be a step forward in nuclear disarmament, we believe that it needs to be complemented through the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as the General Assembly has called for for years.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to make known its position on draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.7, A/C.1/72/L.19 and A/C.1/72/L.35, which the Committee will vote on today.

Those draft resolutions are against our supreme interest, especially draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", sponsored by Japan. It includes five unacceptable paragraphs that unilaterally call into account our self-defensive nuclear deterrence for our sovereignty and our rights to existence and development. Furthermore, the draft resolution does not deal with the hostile policy and nuclear threats of the United States against my country.

To make it clear, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea persists with nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic rockets in response to actual threats posed by the United States. It is the best option for self defence. The real reason why the Democratic People's Republic must possess nuclear weapons is the United States. My country must develop its nuclear force to current levels in order to copy the United States. .

Japan is just seeking an excuse for strengthening its military power. We must therefore develop our own defensive nuclear deterrence, in spite of these draft resolutions.

The nuclear question on the Korean peninsula is an issue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic considers the draft resolution submitted by Japan to be prejudicial, distorted and hypocritical, and we will vote against it.

We will also vote against the draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.19, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", and A/C.1/72/L.42, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", which encroach on our supreme interests.

Ms. Sehayek Soroka (Israel): As it has done in the past, Israel will again this year vote against the draft resolution entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations" (A/C.1/72/L.6), and against relevant paragraphs contained in other draft resolutions that promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Israel did not participate in the negotiations that led to the adoption on 7 July 2017 in New York of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and voted against the draft resolutions in the First Committee and General Assembly pertaining to that process in 2016 and 2017. Israel's deep reservations with regard to that initiative were based on both substantive and procedural considerations.

On the substantive side, Israel is concerned, inter alia, by arms-control and disarmament processes that fail to give due regard to the security and stability context when drafting disarmament measures. Such endeavours may result in arrangements and agreements that hinder rather than reinforce disarmament processes as well as global and regional security.

As to the procedural aspect, Israel firmly believes that such negotiations should be undertaken in the appropriate forums and under the appropriate rules of procedure in order not to undermine national security considerations. It should be emphasized that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not create, contribute to the development or indicate the existence of customary international law relating to the subject or content of the Treaty. Nor does it reflect legal norms that apply to States that are not party to the Treaty or in any way alter the existing rights or obligations of States that have not joined the Treaty.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba sponsors various draft resolutions on important groups of nuclear-weapon-related issues. They are

contained in documents A/C.1/72/L.45, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”, A/C.1/72/L.18, entitled “Nuclear disarmament”, A/C.1/72/L.47, entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”, A/C.1/72/L.10, entitled “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”, A/C.1/72/L.22, entitled, “Reducing nuclear danger” and A/C.1/72/L.57, entitled “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons”.

We want to reaffirm the validity of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.10, entitled “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”. Non-nuclear-weapon States have no effective security assurances to protect them from the use or threat of use of such weapons against them. We reiterate that in order to achieve the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we need an international legally binding instrument providing universal unconditional security assurances from nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Cuba also underscores the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world as an important contribution by States and another step towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. We call on nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all interpretive reservations and statements with regard to protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. The concept of nuclear deterrence should also be completely abandoned.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.47, entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”, we reiterate that we share this initiative’s overall goal of ending the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. Cuba reiterates its support for all initiatives aimed at strengthening the Conference’s role and contributing to efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. Continuing to postpone dealing with the issue indefinitely is not an option for Cuba. We hope that genuine political will can prevail, particularly on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, in order to make progress in achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament, including in the Conference on Disarmament, and to fulfil their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Cuba also shares the goals of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.22, entitled “Reducing nuclear danger”. We reiterate that as long as nuclear weapons exist, nuclear risk remains. The international community cannot remain a passive onlooker in the face of the serious danger that nuclear weapons pose to humankind’s existence. And we emphasize that the only way to prevent the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is to eliminate them completely.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before we consider the draft resolutions on nuclear weapons, I think it would be useful to draw the First Committee’s attention to some important points.

Looking at the resolutions in the nuclear-weapon cluster as a whole, the picture is frankly depressing. There was a time when the nuclear disarmament agenda was clear, based on consensus and agreed on by all. Now it is a victim of irresponsible fragmentation. In our view, anti-nuclear activists do not realize that what they are doing is destructive to their own self-proclaimed goals. Take a look. Instead of a nuclear arms race, we have a race to adopt a useless series of nuclear resolutions that disregard the fundamentals of disarmament. I want to point out that the value of the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was the fact that they were based on consensus and therefore had every chance of being implemented in practice. If we truly want a nuclear-free world, we need painstaking, consensus-based efforts. Yes, that will take much time and very hard work by every State, but the reality is that there simply are no alternatives.

It is worth noting that 55 years ago, right around this time, at the end of October 1962, the so-called Cuban missile crisis erupted. In order to understand what is going on right now in nuclear disarmament is very important to be familiar with the history of the issue and remember it. Unfortunately, we feel that some people here are beginning to suffer from amnesia. It would be helpful to recall that Russia — formerly the Soviet Union — has been seriously addressing nuclear-disarmament since August 1945, when we won the Second World War and liberated Europe and the entire world from the brown plague of German Nazism. What was our ally in the anti-Hitler coalition doing when the Soviet Union was pouring all its blood and effort into liberating Europe? Today we can see just how grateful Europe is to us for all that. Our ally succeeded in extracting from the bloodiest war in history billions

in profits and hugely significant military technological potential in order to turn the results of our victory on their head. In August 1945, our ally dropped a nuclear bomb on the civilian population of the Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki. From a military perspective, that was simply meaningless for the fight against Japanese militarism. It had an entirely different aim, which was the nuclear intimidation of its former ally, the Soviet Union — even though the war was still not over — and, of course, to distort the result of the war itself.

I see I am running out of time. I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that history teaches us a great deal and we must not forget it. To give credit where credit is due, at that time, the leaders of our States showed common sense. The American nuclear missiles were removed from Italy and Turkey, and the Soviet Union removed its missiles from Cuba. Astonishingly, we are once again seeing an echo of America's old nuclear insanity. The NATO military bloc is madly marching towards our borders. Elements of the strategic stockpiles of the United States are being moved towards our borders and yet they tell us that they are not targeting Russia. No doubt they are targeting aliens in outer space. But Russia is quite different now. We will not let anyone try to talk to us from a position of strength. I am sure that sober heads in Washington understand that.

In conclusion, nobody wants a repetition of the Cuban crisis. All that we need is to know our history and never forget it, and to never repeat the mistakes of the past. So when we talk about the First Committee's nuclear resolutions, obviously they are important. But by comparison to what is really going on in the world today, they seem to us severely detached from reality and sometimes, frankly, not serious.

The Acting Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I want to remind delegations to kindly limit their general statements to five minutes.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I will make my statement very clear and brief.

In accordance with rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, Japan has already circulated a revision to its draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", to Member States yesterday through the Secretariat. We have added some phrases related to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban

Treaty to operative paragraph 21, which as a whole now reads as follows:

"Acknowledges the widespread call for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, while recalling that all States, in particular the eight remaining States in annex 2 thereof, have been urged to take individual initiatives to sign and ratify that Treaty without waiting for any other State to do so, and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

The draft resolution aims to seek a common ground among all States and to move nuclear disarmament forward by promoting practical and concrete measures with the cooperation of both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. Japan sincerely hopes that our revised draft resolution will garner wide-ranging support from Member States, particularly in the wake of the remarks of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea about it.

The Acting Chair: Before the Committee proceeds to take action on the draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 1, we will hear from delegations wishing to explain their position on those drafts.

Ms. Sehayek Soroka (Israel): Israel will once again join the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.1, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", despite Israel's remaining substantive reservations regarding the modalities outlined in the draft resolution.

Our position is based on and reflects Israel's positive attitude towards a meaningful regional process aimed at the establishment of a direct engagement and dialogue seeking a more secure and peaceful Middle East. It was also in that spirit that Israel participated in five rounds of consultations held in Switzerland between Israel and several of its Arab neighbours. Despite Israel's serious attitude, the Arab side refused to engage constructively and ultimately withdrew from the consultations, which led to their termination.

Draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.1 is a consensus draft resolution. In the past, the practice of the authors of the draft resolution was to share it with Israel prior to its submission to the First Committee, in order to facilitate agreement among the parties of the region. It is unfortunate that this practice ceased many years ago. It raises the question of how a complex security

architecture in the region can be agreed on when even fundamentally consensus draft resolutions cannot be coordinated. The text of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.1 recognizes the importance of a credible regional security process as an imperative in the attainment of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery. Such a process is essential in order to address the security concerns of all the States in the region and the regional challenges we all face, as well as the necessary confidence-building measures. It is a sine qua non for establishing confidence, mutual understanding and cooperation between the partners in the region. From a pragmatic and realistic perspective, more ambitious undertakings can be considered only once such measures are in place, have taken root and have been shown to be durable and useful.

A credible process is also closely connected to the widely agreed principle that the eventual establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons or WMDs must be based on arrangements freely arrived at by all States of the region. That requires that those States fully commit to open and direct communication channels, genuine engagement and an acknowledgement of the threats and challenges facing the region. They have to recognize the right to exist of all the States of a region and the importance of building a spirit of conciliation rather than confrontation. In the final analysis, that is an incremental process, in which each building block has to be placed on top of another in a stable and sustainable way.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor to explain my delegation's vote on eight draft resolutions that are currently under the First Committee's consideration and will shortly be taken up for action under cluster 1, on nuclear weapons.

Pakistan continues to concur with the primary purpose and focus of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.2, entitled "Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". We are not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and therefore not bound by any of its provisions or by the conclusions or recommendations emanating from its various Review Conferences. We will accordingly vote against the fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs, while voting in favour of the draft resolution as a whole.

On draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.4, entitled "Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties

to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", my delegation will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole, as well as on the sixth preambular paragraph. Pakistan is committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. However, as a non-party to the NPT, we neither subscribe to nor are bound by the provisions of that Treaty or the conclusions, decisions and recommendations emanating from its review conferences, including those related to its universalization.

Regarding the two draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.5, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons", and A/C.1/72/L.17, entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", Pakistan remains committed to the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We understand the growing sense of frustration at the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. We are also mindful of the concerns associated with the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and, accordingly, participated in the three international conferences held on that subject in 2013 and 2014.

At the same time, we believe that the discourse on nuclear weapons cannot be reduced solely to its humanitarian and ethical dimensions by trivializing and ignoring the fundamental security concerns of States that rely on them for their security. We need a non-divisive approach that unites us in our common endeavour towards nuclear disarmament, based on the cardinal principle of retaining equal and undiminished security for all States, as enshrined in the consensus final document (resolution S-10/2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I). In the light of these considerations, my delegation will be compelled to abstain in the voting on A/C.1/72/L.5 and A/C.1/72/L.17.

Coming to draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.6, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", Pakistan remains committed to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world through the conclusion of a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons in the Conference on Disarmament. SSOD-I emphasized that in the adoption of disarmament measures, the right of each State to security should be kept in mind and that, at each stage of the disarmament process, the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces. Pakistan believes that this cardinal objective can

be achieved only through a consensus-based process involving all the relevant stakeholders, as a cooperative and universally agreed undertaking.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted by a vote on 7 July 2017, did not fulfil those essential conditions in terms of either process or substance. Therefore Pakistan, like all the other nuclear-weapon States, did not take part in its negotiation. Pakistan does not consider itself bound by any of the obligations enshrined in that Treaty, which neither forms a part of nor contributes to the development of customary international law in any manner. In the light of those important factors, my delegation will be constrained to abstain in the voting on that draft resolution.

On document A/C.1/72/L.7, entitled “Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments”, we share the view that all States must comply with the obligations arising from the treaties to which they are parties and that such compliance is essential to regional and global peace, security and stability. We would, however, like to underscore that questions of compliance, verification and enforcement must be strictly in accordance with the legal provisions of the relevant applicable treaties and must be addressed within the framework and mechanisms provided by them. We would also like to express that the phrase “other agreed obligations” implies only those obligations that have been undertaken by States voluntarily and in exercise of their sovereignty. To reiterate, we will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.7.

Regarding A/C.1/72/L.42, on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Pakistan has consistently supported the Treaty. We participated constructively in the Treaty negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and voted in favour of its adoption in the General Assembly in 1996. We have since voted in favour of the annual resolution in this Committee and in the General Assembly. The recent nuclear tests, which we have condemned, underscore the need for strengthening the global norm against nuclear testing. In that regard, regional and global efforts complement one another and should be pursued in parallel.

In the context of South Asia, we would like to draw attention to Pakistan’s proposal for a legally binding arrangement on non-testing between Pakistan and

India. The debate in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) on membership criteria for non-NPT States affords the NSG-participating Governments another opportunity to strengthen the norm on non-testing. The fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution refers to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). We are wary of the Council defining legislative requirements for Member States and entering into areas that are not necessarily under its jurisdiction. However, as a signal of our strong support for the CTBT, we will still vote in favour of the fourth preambular paragraph of A/C.1/72/L.42.

We are also not bound by any provisions that emanate from the NPT or its review conferences, including as stated in the seventh preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, nor from any other instrument to which Pakistan is not a party. My delegation, in line with its consistent support for the objectives and purposes of the Treaty, will again vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.42, on the CTBT, as a whole, and will abstain in the voting on its seventh preambular paragraph.

Lastly, Pakistan consistently votes in favour of the draft resolution entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”, contained this year in document A/C.1/72/L.47, and will do so again this year. Pakistan is committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world through the conclusion in the Conference on Disarmament of a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction. Such a convention should be negotiated under the universal cardinal principle agreed in SSOD-I, that in the adoption of disarmament measures, each State’s right to security should be kept in mind and, in each stage of the disarmament process, the objective should be undiminished security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

Mr. Benard Estrada (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala will vote in favour of A/C.1/72/L.35, since the text is generally in line with my delegation’s position in favour of continuing to strengthen the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regime, which recognizes that nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation

and the peaceful use of nuclear energy are mutually reinforcing and are essential to bolstering the Treaty.

The draft resolution stresses the need to continue studying ways to overcome the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. As we all know, it has lasted over two decades. We have expressed our position in both the United Nations Headquarters in New York and in Geneva.

My delegation considers that the text encourages nuclear-weapon States to continue to convene periodic meetings with a view to creating the environment necessary for nuclear disarmament and applying additional measures. Those steps are vital for achieving universal nuclear disarmament. The text also encourages the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, and it is there that the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean plays an important role as a best regional practice in Latin America and the Caribbean.

My delegation did not co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35 because the text would have been clearer and more complete if the main sponsor had included language on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and on the importance of negotiating a legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons and leads to their total elimination. Without a doubt, the inclusion of such language, in addition to contributing to a more comprehensive text, would have opened the doors to more sponsors among States members of various regional groups, thus sending a stronger message as an international community with a solid mandate to discuss this fundamental topic.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I would like to explain Austria's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Austria has voted in favour of previous resolutions with the same title and would have preferred to continue to do so. This year's draft, however, has been substantially changed in a number of important paragraphs, and it has replaced established consensus language with new formulations that undercut important tenets. Therefore, Austria will have to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution this year.

As the Committee is aware, Austria is a strong supporter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). During the NPT review

process, important commitments were agreed on to ensure progress and support the delicate balance the Treaty represents. The text of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35 is, unfortunately, incompatible with the wording of existing commitments and decisions of previous NPT Review Conferences.

We are very concerned about the potential negative impact of the changed language on the integrity of the NPT and the ongoing NPT review process leading up to the 2020 Review Conference. With the language of the draft resolution, a second, parallel version of existing commitments would be in place, thereby making agreement in 2020 more difficult, if not impossible. Austria wishes to hereby place on record that the adopted outcome documents of previous NPT review conferences remain integrally valid.

Furthermore, we regret that the new draft resolution text follows a new narrative that would postpone nuclear disarmament until confidence and trust have been rebuilt. It thereby does not reflect the historic fact that major nuclear disarmament agreements were achieved precisely at the height of the Cold War. Disarmament measures are particularly needed when tensions are high. Applying the new narrative in the draft resolution to the nuclear disarmament of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would mean that such disarmament would happen only after tensions in North-East Asia have eased and trust has been strengthened. Austria cannot concur with such sequencing because in our view nuclear disarmament by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should happen immediately and unconditionally. That example illustrates that the new narrative is prone to hinder nuclear disarmament instead of encouraging it.

Votes have been called for on several paragraphs. We regret that the language regarding the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has been weakened compared to last year, but the fact that humanitarian consequences are the very underpinning of nuclear disarmament is so important that we will nevertheless vote in favour. We hope that the language will be in line with established formulations again in next year's resolution.

On paragraph 2, we will have to vote against it so as not to undermine the outcome documents of the NPT review conferences and since the change in language from last year has totally inverted the sense of the paragraph.

In paragraph 21, we regret the much-weakened language on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Last year, resolution 71/49 contained agreed language urging all States, in particular the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay and without waiting for other States to do so. As a strong supporter of the CTBT and the whole Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, we regret that the draft resolution text now dilutes that language by only acknowledging the widespread call. We therefore will vote against that new language proposal.

Allow me, however, to finish by expressing our esteem for the main sponsor, Japan, and its successful quest in the past to act as a uniting force. We hope that future resolutions will regain balance and thereby serve as a uniting text, as was the case in the past years.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will comment on draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, despite diverging views among States on how to achieve it, there was a common element and fundamental idea shared by all — the priority of nuclear disarmament and the need to achieve a world free of such weapons. That is why, for the delegation of Ecuador, the reading and consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, was particularly alarming.

The draft text presented this year, as in previous years, not only is unambitious in the pursuit of the objective proposed in its title, but now even poses a danger by seeking to change language agreed to by consensus in nuclear disarmament forums, thereby jeopardizing the integrity of fundamental instruments in that area. Furthermore, it attempts to change the paradigm of the common language that we have all used so as to eliminate the priority of the need for nuclear disarmament in exchange for some vague quest for ill-defined conditions to obtain our indispensable objective. An analysis of all the problematic paragraphs of the draft resolution would exceed the 10-minute limit for an explanation of vote, so I will concentrate on those that contain the most egregious examples of the aforementioned.

Regarding the twelfth preambular paragraph, a year ago that paragraph (see resolution 71/49) reaffirmed that it is the advances in nuclear disarmament that strengthen the non-proliferation regime — a sequence

that was logical and shared by all. This year, the mention of nuclear disarmament has been erased and only the reference to non-proliferation is left. Why did the lead sponsor of the draft resolution delete the clear reference to nuclear disarmament? Does it no longer believe in that need? Is nuclear disarmament no longer essential for international peace and security?

With respect to paragraph 2, a year ago the resolution reaffirmed the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to completely eliminating their nuclear arsenals in order to achieve nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This year, that clear commitment, expressed in the outcome documents of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, has been eliminated and the reference to article VI of the Treaty has been erased. Under what authority can they now change the commitments undertaken in 2000 and 2010? Since when is the reference to article VI of the NPT inconvenient?

In regard to paragraph 3, a year ago resolution 71/49 called on the States parties to comply with their obligations under the NPT and to implement the measures agreed upon at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. This year, the references to the agreements reached at those Conferences have been deleted. Are those measures no longer required, although they are clearly still in force? Do the sponsors want to divert attention from the ongoing non-compliance of the nuclear-weapon States with the commitments they undertook in those Conferences? Must we also leave aside the indefinite extension of the NPT, agreed to at the 1995 Conference?

Regarding paragraph 9, a year ago the two largest nuclear-weapon States were encouraged to enter into negotiations for the further reduction of their arsenals. This year, they are barely encouraged to create the appropriate conditions to, perhaps, commence such urgent negotiations. Where did that conditionality come from? Is it not the continued existence of those weapons that creates a situation of insecurity?

With respect to paragraph 10, a year ago it called on the nuclear-weapon States to undertake further efforts to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. This year, an unprecedented condition is added, whereby all States are asked to ease international tension, strengthen trust and create conditions that would allow for the further reduction of such weapons. What is the intention with

that unprecedented condition? To transfer responsibility for the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament to the States that do not possess those weapons? Is it not rather obvious that this draft resolution and the ideas that have been introduced into it this year are causing distrust among States regarding compliance with disarmament commitments? It is not the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that can bring disunity to this Committee. It is the introduction of new language that has not been agreed and the change in language that are actually creating such distrust.

Regarding paragraph 19, a year ago this paragraph reiterated the call we all made and continue to make on the eight annex 2 States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) so as to allow its entry into force. This year the paragraph refers to the moratorium on nuclear tests and the situation concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and calls only on that State to sign and ratify the CTBT. The flaw in the new proposal was so obvious that only yesterday the main sponsor of the draft resolution added new language to paragraph 21 that very tepidly acknowledges — but does not make — the call traditionally made on those eight States.

Ecuador has also condemned in no uncertain terms the recent nuclear tests, but the entry into force of the CTBT depends not on one State but on eight. Why is there now such timidity to call on all eight States with equal vigour? What is the reason for thus weakening the call for the entry into force of that fundamental Treaty?

For those and other reasons, the delegation of Ecuador cannot and will not support the adoption of the draft resolution this year.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): The Netherlands voted against the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 7 July. Although we share the goal of the Treaty — a nuclear-weapon-free world — and participated actively and constructively in its negotiation, we could not and cannot support the text that came out of those negotiations. The main reasons for that position were the fact that we consider that the provisions of the TPNW are irreconcilable with our commitments as a NATO member, the problems with the verifiability of its provisions, doubts regarding its effectiveness in contributing to the elimination of nuclear weapons and concerns regarding its relationship with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For those reasons we cannot

at this point support any language contained in First Committee draft resolutions that welcomes the TPNW.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the position of the Netherlands on nuclear disarmament has not changed. We continue to work towards further progress in that area with a view to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons in line with our commitments under the NPT. In so doing, the Netherlands remains committed to bridging divides on nuclear disarmament, including all concerns surrounding the TPNW and its potential effects, to jointly looking for new ways to support education and research into innovative solutions on disarmament and to continuing to work towards strengthening and implementation of the NPT in any way we can.

Mr. Giacomelli da Silva (Brazil): The Brazilian delegation will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”. While we share with its sponsors the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament, the reversions and lack of ambition of this year's draft resolution, as compared to previous versions, constitute a disappointing step backwards in our endeavours to completely eliminate nuclear weapons.

Although the draft renews the global commitment to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons, it does not mention the recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons — a milestone in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is inconceivable that there is no reference to an international, legally binding instrument that was just adopted by the majority of States Members of the United Nations and received overwhelming support from the international community, including civil society, which gave its full support for the goal of nuclear disarmament and was recognized for that with the well-deserved 2017 Noble Peace Prize.

We were dismayed by the dilution of many provisions related to nuclear disarmament in this year's draft resolution. In paragraph 2, a specific reference to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been deleted and the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, as enshrined in the consensus outcome documents of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, has been severely distorted.

The twelfth preambular paragraph no longer reflects the indisputable notion that advancements in nuclear disarmament will contribute to consolidating the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation, which is essential to international peace and security. Moreover, the removal from paragraph 3 of the call on States to implement the steps agreed in the final documents of 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences is a major loss. The removal of any explicit reference to the NPT Review Conferences' final documents in an operative paragraph signals a lack of commitment to those documents and therefore runs counter to a successful outcome of the current NPT review cycle.

In addition, Brazil cannot support a step back regarding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We must continue to urge all States, in particular all eight remaining States listed in annex 2, to take individual initiatives to sign and ratify that Treaty without further delay and without waiting for any other State to do so. While we recognize the main sponsor's efforts in presenting an oral amendment to that paragraph, that language is an unacceptable regression from previous versions of this resolution.

With regard to paragraph 28, we reiterate that its language should fully reflect the relevant provisions of the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, particularly action 30 in its action plan, which states that additional protocols should be universally applied once the complete elimination of nuclear weapons has been achieved.

The text should have been more ambitious in other aspects as well, and should have included, inter alia, a reference to the importance that a treaty on fissile material should cover both existing and future stocks in order to not only serve non-proliferation purposes, but also to advance disarmament.

Due to the issues that I have just mentioned, we regrettably are not in a position to support the draft resolution this year. We hope that in the future, its main sponsors will put forward a text that does not run counter to previously agreed nuclear disarmament commitments.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I seek your indulgence, Sir, as I read three explanations of vote before the voting under this cluster.

My delegation will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.2, on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. As we have reported to the Committee in the past, we cannot support this draft resolution because we believe that its purposes are inimical to advancing the important goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, which we continue to strongly support. We remain convinced that progress towards such a zone can be achieved only through direct, consensus-based dialogue among the regional States. We are cognizant of the many political and security realities that continue to impede such dialogue, including the lack of trust among the regional States, persistent conflict and instability in the region, Iran's destabilizing development and proliferation of ballistic-missile technology and support for terrorism, ongoing non-compliance by Syria with its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement, the horrific use of chemical weapons by Syria and non-State actors, and the non-recognition of Israel by many States in the region.

Pursuing politically motivated resolutions that single out one State for criticism while ignoring the political and security realities that continue to impede progress is not a realistic manner of advancing a shared goal. Such an approach only serves to further undermine trust and confidence among the regional States. We continue to urge all the regional States to pursue direct dialogue with their regional neighbours without further delay or preconditions, and to take responsibility for advancing that important objective in a constructive, cooperative manner. For its part, the United States remains prepared to support direct regional dialogue based on the principles of consensus and mutual respect.

I am now speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, France and my own country, the United States, and would like to explain our vote against draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.5, on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and A/C.1/72/L.17, on ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Many have argued that devastating humanitarian consequences would result from the use of nuclear weapons. We agree, but neither the consequences nor the concerns are new. They were written into the preamble of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968 and captured in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution

S-10/2) in 1978. The question is, what conclusions do we draw?

Some of those who continue to promote the humanitarian-consequences narrative contend that the route to the goal of nuclear disarmament is to prohibit the possession and use of nuclear weapons now, even if those States that possess the weapons do not sign up to, and are not bound by, the prohibition. We find that approach to be deeply flawed. We believe the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons risks undermining the review process of the NPT by making consensus difficult if not impossible. Moreover, the Prohibition Treaty risks creating a less secure world, similar to the one we inhabited before the NPT entered into force and became nearly universal. At the time many regions were faced with the prospect of nuclear proliferation, and uncertainty and mistrust impeded access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Prohibition Treaty fails to account for the security considerations required for nuclear disarmament and will not eliminate a single nuclear weapon. Rather, it sets back the cause of implementing and strengthening the NPT regime in all its aspects by deepening the divide among NPT States parties.

We are committed to pursuing the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and are active in that area, as set out in our respective national statements earlier in the session. However, creating and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons cannot take place in isolation from the very real international security concerns that we face. We believe that an approach that addresses the challenges to the international security environment that make nuclear deterrence necessary is the only way to combine the imperatives of general and complete disarmament in accordance with the goals of the NPT and of maintaining global stability. By working together, we can create the conditions in which nuclear weapons will no longer be needed.

Finally, I would like to deliver an explanation of vote on behalf of the United Kingdom, France and the United States with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.6, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations". The draft resolution welcomes the adoption, on 7 July, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Our Governments did not take part in the negotiation and adoption of the text of the Prohibition Treaty because it is premised on the false assumption that nuclear disarmament can be achieved without addressing the

real security challenges that make nuclear deterrence necessary. A balanced and pragmatic approach that takes into account the prevailing international security environment remains the only realistic way to make substantial progress on nuclear disarmament, while enhancing international peace and stability. We have made tremendous progress in reducing our nuclear arsenals. However, addressing further prospects for nuclear disarmament must also take into account all factors, including those that could affect international peace and stability, which an approach merely focused on the humanitarian dimension fails to achieve.

The Prohibition Treaty's provisions threaten to undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which remains the cornerstone of the international arms control and non-proliferation regime. That is true in particular of article 18 of the Prohibition Treaty, which, as its parties make clear, supersedes other existing international legal instruments, including the NPT. The Treaty does not impose adherence to the NPT as a criterion for accession. A country could decide to withdraw from the NPT and its requirement for safeguards on the pretext of adhering to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Treaty does not address the real challenges of nuclear disarmament. It requires parties to declare past possession of nuclear weapons but not to declare former nuclear-weapons programmes. It will divide the international community and weaken existing instruments and structures that are crucial to achieving concrete and verifiable progress towards nuclear disarmament. The Prohibition Treaty does not include serious verification provisions. The provision that does appear endorses a standard that has long been deemed to be insufficient, rather than requiring adherence to the additional protocol, which, when combined with comprehensive safeguards, is the current and widely accepted standard for verification.

For those and other reasons, we strongly oppose the Treaty. Although entitled the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, it was negotiated and concluded in the absence of participation by any State that possesses nuclear weapons. The Prohibition Treaty and its adoption or entry into force will not change our legal obligations with respect to nuclear weapons, and we do not accept that the Treaty constitutes, or contributes, to the development of customary international law. The focus on nuclear disarmament would be better channelled towards existing processes

aimed at developing practical and effective measures on disarmament that can help create the conditions for sustainable progress. We must work together and strive for an inclusive approach. Effective multilateralism requires demanding efforts from all stakeholders to achieve progress through constructive dialogue and consensus-building.

For those reasons, we will vote against the draft resolution and will not support any other explicit or implicit references to the Prohibition Treaty in any other draft resolution.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): I would like to explain our vote on draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.10, A/C.1/72/L.28 and A/C.1/72/L.57.

Our position on nuclear disarmament has been expressed many times. We support a progressive approach for inclusive, effective, practical and sustainable disarmament under the existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which takes into account the international security environment and legitimate security concerns. We cannot support provisions referring to a certain treaty in the draft resolutions that are not compatible with that position.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor to explain the position of my delegation with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.1, entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, and draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.2, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”.

It is well known that the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was proposed by Iran in 1974. Since then, the General Assembly annually adopts a draft resolution in support of the realization of that initiative. Since 1980, a draft resolution has been adopted by consensus, thereby reflecting the full support of the entire international community of States for the establishment of that zone. However, although adhering to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by all States in the Middle East is the most essential requirement for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region, the Israeli regime, as the only non-party to the NPT in the region, continues to refuse joining it despite long-standing international

calls. Moreover, it also stubbornly objects to all regional and international efforts aimed at establishing the zone.

One such endeavour was the adoption of a separate resolution on the Middle East by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, which was an essential and integral part of the package for the indefinite extension of the Treaty. Again, all efforts geared towards the implementation of that resolution, including the relevant Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, failed only because of the Israeli regime’s refusal to participate in a conference in Helsinki in 2012 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Even the 2015 Review Conference failed to adopt its final document due to Israel’s stubborn policies, which are supported by the United States in particular. Immediately following the Review Conference, the Israeli Prime Minister thanked United States officials for adopting that position, which again proved that the regime is the only impediment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region. That also clearly indicates not only the hypocritical policies of the United States with regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, but also proves that the United States easily disregards the views of almost all parties to the NPT solely to appease the only non-party to the Treaty in the Middle East — the Israeli regime.

That kind of short-sighted policy will further motivate the Israeli regime to obstinately maintain the status quo, continue to threaten its neighbours and the region and defy the repeated calls by the international community of States to comply with international principles and norms.

One of the strongest sources of support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is that of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The latest position of the Movement on the subject is reflected in the final document of the XVII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, at which the 120 participating States,

“expressed great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemned

Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals;

and

“were of the view that stability cannot be achieved in a region where massive imbalances in military capabilities are maintained particularly through the possession of nuclear weapons, which allow one party to threaten its neighbours, and the region”.

Addressing the threat posed by Israel’s nuclear-weapons programme to regional and international peace and security requires meaningful actions. The international community of States, in particular the depositaries of the NPT, which are also the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, should exert the utmost pressure on Israel to compel it to accede to the NPT and all other international legally binding instruments banning weapons of mass destruction. That is the minimum requirement for the establishment of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction.

For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran, by ratifying and fully implementing the provisions of all international treaties banning weapons of mass destruction — namely, the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention — has demonstrated its firm resolve and support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We remain committed to the establishment of such a zone and will continue to work towards its realization.

Therefore, as in previous years, we will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.1, which once again demonstrates the strong international support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We will also vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.2, which highlights the concerns of the international community of States regarding the threat posed by Israel’s nuclear weapons.

Mr. Wang Chang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”. We note that there are updates incorporated into this year’s draft resolution. However, on the whole, a gap remains between the draft resolution and China’s principled position on questions of nuclear disarmament. In particular, in addition to those issues,

there are also major loopholes. I will elaborate on some of China’s principled positions.

First, with regard to paragraph 20, China firmly believes that the Conference on Disarmament is the only appropriate forum for negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMTC). There is a need to reach a comprehensive and balanced plan of action and launch FMTC negotiations based on the Shannon mandate. Moratoriums do not have clear-cut definitions or scope of work and cannot be verified, and therefore have very little substantive significance. On the contrary, they could potentially undermine the political mandate of the international community to negotiate an FMTC.

Secondly, concerning the nuclear explosions that occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they undeniably represented tragedies of historic proportion, and we express our sympathy to the people of both cities for their suffering. However, China believes that it is most inappropriate to single out that historical event. China has long stood for the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons. We understand the humanitarian concerns of certain countries. We nevertheless do not want to see the issue used by a number of countries as a tool to interpret the past and, even worse, distort history. Regrettably, one country has long chosen to look at history selectively by highlighting the dimension of victimization while diluting and evading the predatory nature as well as the associated responsibility of others. China hopes that the country in question will look at history and reflect on the past objectively, and contribute to international peace and security through actual actions.

Mr. Mahomed (South Africa): It is with deep regret that South Africa has taken note of the contents of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.35, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, which reflects a serious deviation from the draft resolution adopted by a vote during previous sessions of the First Committee. South Africa is particularly concerned about the potential impact of the draft resolution on the integrity of the process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and efforts aimed at the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It is noted with concern that the number of the changes compared to last year’s resolution not only seeks to impose conditions on the implementation

of nuclear disarmament obligations and the related commitments made during NPT Review Conferences, but also introduces language that significantly deviates from that agreed to by consensus in the final documents of NPT Conferences, in a manner that undermines the commitments made towards the implementation of Treaty obligations. Instead of supporting the accelerated implementation of commitments or renewing determination to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the draft resolution seems rather to water down those commitments. By doing so it potentially creates the opportunity for others to also condition or reinterpret what they have undertaken, as well as the decisions that were agreed to during the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. Such efforts may cause irreparable harm to the Treaty.

We also note with concern that, while the sponsors of this draft resolution have argued that nuclear disarmament can be achieved only through a systematic, step-by-step approach, the draft resolution reinterprets the solemn undertaking made by State parties to that end. South Africa has long warned that

efforts by some States to reinterpret NPT provisions and undertakings — as well as the tendency by some to focus exclusively on certain preferred aspects of the NPT — or to condition the implementation of the obligations and commitments, could well undermine the Treaty as a foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. That has caused divisions instead of uniting NPT State parties to achieve our common goals. If State parties are indeed committed to the NPT and wish to restore confidence and trust, they would support the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all Treaty obligations and the various commitments and solemn undertakings made in that regard at Review Conferences.

Given our continued commitment to the NPT and the credibility of the Treaty's review process, South Africa is unable to support the draft resolution this year. We hope that the sponsors will address those concerns should the draft resolution be introduced at future sessions.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.