



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

## First Committee

6th meeting

Friday, 12 October 2018, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga . . . . . (Romania)

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

### Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

**The Chair:** Before opening the floor for statements, I would like to remind all delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic discussion segment starting next week, Wednesday, 17 October, will remain open until 6 p.m. on Monday, 22 October.

Today I also want to remind all delegations taking the floor to keep in mind the suggested time limit for statements.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As a point of order, during his statement in right of reply yesterday, the representative of the United States said, "I have nothing more to say about him. He is a joke" (see A/C.1/73/PV.5). That lack of respect for diplomatic norms and basic manners in taking the floor reflects poorly on the speaker who disregarded them. If the representative of the United States is incapable of arguing diplomatically, it would be better if he kept silent rather than using such unpleasant words while addressing the Committee. We realize that United States policy towards my country and others respects neither international law nor international norms.

**The Chair:** The representative of Syria asked to speak on a point of order but is attempting to speak in right of reply, which is contrary to the rules of procedure.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am not exercising my right of reply but speaking on a point of order relating to the statement made by our colleague from the United States. If you will allow me, Sir, I should explain this issue, because it has to do with the Committee's work and deliberations. I will be brief.

**The Chair:** A point of order is related to the way in which a meeting is conducted and its procedural aspects. Let us try together to respect the rules of procedure and make every possible effort to maintain mutual respect and cooperation in the Committee.

I ask the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to end his intervention and remind him that he will be able to exercise his right of reply at the appropriate time. I now want to return to our colleague from Samoa so that he may speak, which is also a matter of respect for him. I had given him the floor and then interrupted him, and I apologize for that.

**Mr. Elisaia** (Samoa): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, and the other members of the Bureau on their election and their guidance of the work of the Committee. I want to assure you of Samoa's full support for your leadership throughout this session.

Samoa places great emphasis on the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee,

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given its mandate not just to discuss but to find solutions to some of the issues that have proved difficult to resolve within the international sphere, from holding peace hostage with threats of an all-out nuclear war to the collapse of States and societies from the instability that can result from the availability of small arms and light weapons. Samoa's geographical isolation no longer protects it from the world's increasingly complex and dynamic security challenges, which include but are not limited to nuclear proliferation and the illegal trade in conventional arms and light weapons. We cannot help watching with fear and uneasiness as global dynamics push our world perilously close to a potential catastrophe of unimaginable proportions.

The interconnectedness of the world has magnified the importance of close collaboration and cooperation among States, civil-society organizations and all stakeholders if we are to provide a platform that will enable us to achieve peace. The prevailing security challenges cannot be used as an excuse for continued reliance on nuclear weapons or for neglecting our shared responsibility to seek a more peaceful international society. The mere existence of nuclear weapons will never guarantee a peaceful world or enhance international security.

In the 1970s, nuclear Powers saw the Pacific region, with its isolated islands, as the perfect area for testing their nuclear arsenals, with little or no regard for the safety and welfare of the people living in the region. The horrifying scars and mistrust that resulted from those tests have shaped the perspective of the Pacific region, which supports nuclear disarmament at any cost and, ultimately, a world free of nuclear weapons. Those views led to the establishment of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Rarotonga Treaty, which came into force in 1986, uniting the Pacific region's voices against nuclear weapons. In some parts of the Pacific region we still have explosive remnants of war that have yet to be cleared and cleaned. In order to highlight the matter, each year the leaders of the Pacific Island Forum include in their Forum communiqué a reference to the importance of engaging with the nuclear Powers in addressing the ongoing impact of nuclear testing, including in the areas of human rights, environmental contamination and health. The existence of our nuclear-free zone has acted as a deterrent in safeguarding our region against nuclear weapons, as well as in protecting the ocean, the Pacific

region's main resource, from radioactive contamination caused by the dumping of nuclear waste at sea.

We are committed to cooperating and coordinating with other nuclear-weapon-free zones, States, international organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations in taking concrete actions that can move us closer to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. Two weeks ago, on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and a year after signing the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Samoa reaffirmed its stance on nuclear disarmament by ratifying the Treaty. We firmly believe that the possession of nuclear weapons and the addition of countries to the list of nuclear Powers only make the world less safe, secure and peaceful. That is why we need to rid our world completely of all nuclear weapons. There is still much work to be done to enable the Treaty to enter into force, and we encourage all States that have yet to ratify it to do so.

Samoa would like to acknowledge the role that the Committee has played over the years in monitoring and setting the standards of international humanitarian law that help to protect all citizens in places experiencing conflict. It also provides Member States with an opportunity for taking a leap of faith through international law to guarantee a peaceful world. Samoa, a vulnerable country with no armed forces, continues to have great faith in the rule of law and the vital protection that it offers to all States. The 2014 adoption by the General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was a demonstration of the United Nations community's ability to respond positively and holistically to the evils associated with the illicit arms trade in all its manifestations, because so much is at stake in that regard. The Treaty has the potential to make a real difference in reducing the deadly consequences of the illicit global trade in conventional arms and weapons and protecting innocent civilians. Unregulated and illicit transfers of weapons and ammunition harm international and regional peace, destabilize countries and economies, increase poverty and exacerbate and prolong armed conflicts. As a State party to the ATT, Samoa is committed to playing its part by implementing its obligations under the Treaty.

At the national level, in 2017 Samoa updated its conventional arms law, addressing gaps in its legislation and ensuring the translation and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in a local context. We continue to believe that the proliferation and unregulated transfer,

legal or illicit, of small arms and light weapons are reasons for grave concern for small States like Samoa and other countries in the Pacific region. In October and November of this year, Samoa is conducting its third gun amnesty of the past three years in order to allow people to hand in firearms without prosecution so as to reduce the unlawful possession of illegal weapons and prevent accidents. Samoa is in the first cycle of its project under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, which is focused on developing and implementing a national registry database of conventional weapons for Samoa.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Samoa's firm belief that the only guarantee that humankind has against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is through the non-possession and total elimination of all such weapons. Faith in the rule of law, coupled with realistic steps towards regulating the flow of arms, can lead to a more stable and peaceful world and set up a platform for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Mrs. Mills** (Jamaica): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Sir, on your election to preside over the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. You and your Bureau can be assured of Jamaica's full support. Our sincere thanks go to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq and the members of his Bureau, who successfully steered the Committee's deliberations during the seventy-second session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) (see A/C.5/73/PV.2).

As we begin our work in the seventy-third session, we are confronted with several challenges that underscore the urgency with which we must take firm and decisive action to promote international peace and security. We continue to wrestle with protracted conflicts for which meaningful solutions have remained elusive. Moreover, new sources of strife and warfare have been fuelled by social, economic and political discontent. Despite those challenges, our goal and mission must be to continue to work together as a family of nations. Our belief in multilateralism must be steadfast, and our commitment to the rules-based international order must be unshakeable.

Against that background, Jamaica commends the Secretary-General for his efforts to promote the

maintenance of international peace and security, including through the launch in May 2018 of his disarmament agenda. It is timely that we should be focusing not only on disarmament to save humankind, disarmament to save lives and disarmament for future generations, but also on conflict prevention, which has been a strong feature of the Secretary-General's strategic approach since he took office. In order for real progress to be realized, however, there are several requirements.

First, the disarmament machinery must function more effectively. We proudly recall the progress made last year in the Disarmament Commission and on the agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, as well as the Conference on Disarmament's decision in February to take forward its substantive work. While those are significant strides, they should not lull us into complacency. The disarmament machinery must not fall victim to the divisiveness that has plagued it and resulted in a stalemate for so long.

Secondly, the United Nations must continue to play a pivotal role in supporting peace and security at every level. To that end, we want to publicly acknowledge the support that the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament have provided. Jamaica has benefited tremendously from the practical and technical assistance provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), with which we have been working closely in addressing the particular security challenges we face owing to the illicit proliferation of small arms. We will therefore continue to work with UNLIREC and make our voice heard in meetings of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

We are committed to stemming the flow of those weapons, given the severe impact that they continue to have on the social and economic fabric of societies in our region and across the globe. We are therefore pleased that the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons was successfully convened in June under the able leadership of Ambassador Brunet of France. We also welcome the fact that the issue of ammunition was included in the Conference's final declaration

(A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex). We believe that we have established a basis on which to build on that significant achievement. It will be equally important to work to ensure the non-weaponization of outer space and guard against the increased use of new-frontier technologies for tools for conflict and warfare. We also want to encourage greater emphasis on the relationship between disarmament and development, in recognition of the fact that they are mutually reinforcing.

My third point is that our efforts will be futile if attention is not paid to disarmament and non-proliferation education. It is essential to give that aspect of our work the prominence it deserves so that all of us can be engaged in reducing, controlling and eliminating all kinds of weapons. I want to pause here to recognize the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which is celebrating its thirty-fifth anniversary, and to commend the Director and the rest of the team for their unswerving commitment over the years. UNIDIR has effectively brought States, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia together in the pursuit of viable solutions to threats to international peace and security. We also acknowledge the important training afforded to young professionals from all over the world who participate in the annual United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament. Jamaica is proud to have a fellow in this year's Programme and can boast of several alumni. Our junior and mid-career diplomats have been able to put the knowledge gained as disarmament fellows to practical use when they have been assigned to cover the work of the Committee. We thank the sponsors who have consistently supported the Programme and encourage continued cooperation in that regard.

Another important feature of our deliberations is the role that women can play in disarmament processes. Women continue to contribute to establishing the conditions necessary for achieving peace in our societies. They are critical agents in the maintenance of international peace and security. That role should not be diminished or taken for granted. Jamaica will therefore continue to lend its support to initiatives aimed at maximizing that potential, including through its support for the biennial resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control presented in the First Committee by our CARICOM sister country Trinidad and Tobago, which is an important corollary to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women

and peace and security, and should enjoy the support of all Member States.

A year has passed since the milestone adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Jamaica was pleased to sign the Treaty in December 2017 and, like others, will continue its efforts to ratify it as soon as possible in order to support its entry into force. It is our hope that the entire international community will rally around the Treaty in the not-too-distant future. We also join the clarion call for the urgent entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, given its potential seminal role in prohibiting all nuclear explosions.

It would be remiss of me to conclude without expressing the sincere appreciation of my delegation to our partners in civil society. They have been a source of great strength and support in our collective efforts to promote international peace and security. We look forward not only to continuing that partnership but to deepening it in the years to come.

**Mr. Gabriëlse** (Netherlands): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming your important position.

In addition to aligning myself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We see that trends in the world today entail serious risks to our security. We are seeing the emergence of a multi-order world in which the international balance of power is shifting, making multilateral action more difficult. We are seeing the acceleration of technological and digital developments that are rapidly changing the area of security, and that affects countries' internal security. The Netherlands therefore believes that restoring and strengthening the foundations of our security — the international rules-based order and an effective multilateral system — are crucial to a secure and prosperous world. That is something that we have to do together in cooperation and partnerships with other States and multi-stakeholders, including civil society.

Let me now turn to our multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, of which the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone. It reflects our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, one that can be reached by pursuing a progressive approach to disarmament. The

Netherlands therefore continues to advocate for the immediate start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as work on disarmament verification and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We promote efforts aimed at nuclear risk reduction and transparency and confidence-building measures. At the same time, we have to strengthen the dialogue on the current security situation and how we can improve it. The Netherlands considers it a duty to continue its efforts to arrive at, improve and enforce international agreements and political and legal frameworks governing the possession, use and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). I would now like to go into detail on some of today's realities.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is an important multilateral accomplishment. The Netherlands views it as vital to international security and therefore as an interest shared by all. In that regard, we deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from it. The implementation of the JCPOA should be continued. We therefore welcome the twelfth report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which confirms, after robust verification and thorough monitoring, that Iran continues to uphold all its nuclear-related obligations. The Netherlands and the EU will also adhere to their commitments as long as Iran continues to do so. In the meantime, we call on Iran to honour the provisions on ballistic missiles in Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which relates to the non-proliferation of missiles and their technologies, and to refrain from testing ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

The nuclear and ballistic programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea represents a challenge to our disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The Netherlands therefore welcomes the efforts of the United States and the Republic of Korea to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free Korean peninsula. Until the Democratic People's Republic of Korea abides by its international obligations and takes concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and the abandonment of its ballistic missiles and other WMD programmes, sanctions should remain in place.

We remain deeply concerned about the repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria as well as incidents in Malaysia and the United Kingdom where chemical

substances were used to assassinate individuals. Using those inhumane weapons not only violates universal norms and breaches international law but also shows a complete disregard for human decency. The Netherlands is pleased that an overwhelming majority of countries voted in favour of the decision mandating the technical secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. After the Security Council could not agree on the extension of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, that is an important signal that impunity is not an option.

Turning to conventional weapons, preventing the recurrence of conflicts is key. Human security is therefore a starting point when dealing with the aftermath of conflict. That means creating a secure environment in which people can return home. In that sense, security is a precondition for development.

In that light, the Netherlands remains fully committed to achieving the goal of a mine-free world by 2025. Great progress has been made but challenges remain, such as the increased use of mines in urban areas, which are often of an improvised nature. The Netherlands underlines the importance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and of coordination and cooperation among States parties.

We also support the efforts under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, where much progress has been made. However, we are not there yet. Cluster munitions continue to claim lives on a daily basis. The Netherlands condemns any use of cluster munitions by any actor. Furthermore, we need to make the Convention a truly global instrument in order to ultimately achieve a world free of cluster munitions by 2030.

Turning to the arms trade, illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a growing global problem. Such weapons are used in terrorist attacks within and outside Europe and exacerbate armed conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. Tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons therefore contributes significantly to a more secure society, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 16. The Netherlands is committed to continuing our joint efforts to ensure that disarmament and development are further integrated. The Arms Trade Treaty is important for setting the international norm against irresponsible transfers of arms and to combat illicit trade. Transparency is key.

We strongly encourage States parties to fulfil the reporting obligations. Our aims remain the concrete implementation and universalization of the Treaty.

High-grade technologies are becoming more advanced, cheaper and more widely available. They offer opportunities for society but in the wrong hands could quickly create security risks. The increasing instability in the cyberdomain as a direct consequence of destabilizing cyberoperations is a threat to international peace and security. The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts reached consensus in its reports of 2010, 2013 and 2015 on crucial topics. We believe that it is high time to review our expert meetings and to return to consensus decision-making. It is vital that the Group focus on both implementing and strengthening the normative framework that the Group of Governmental Experts process has already carefully built. If we fail to do so, we risk weakening the international legal order in cyberspace that we so badly need, as recent events have illustrated once again. We should take the recommendations of the previous successful sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts into account and to promote their implementation.

The Netherlands welcomes the progress made during the 2018 meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, in particular the adoption of 10 guiding principles.

As part of promoting an international rules-based order, the Netherlands supports efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of multilateral organizations and international institutions.

My full statement will be available on PaperSmart.

We look forward to working with you, Sir, during this session of the First Committee.

**Mr. Yaakob** (Malaysia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. I also want to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for its continued support and cooperation.

Malaysia associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Against the backdrop of a dynamic geopolitical landscape as well as multifaceted security threats emanating from States and non-State actors, we are conducting these important deliberations to address the way forward for general and complete disarmament. Specifically, nuclear disarmament has been on the global agenda since the establishment of the United Nations. Although that objective was highlighted in the first-ever resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)), in 1946, we have made very minimal progress.

In that connection, Malaysia unequivocally affirms that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament agenda. Malaysia continues to call for total and complete nuclear disarmament, because as long as such weapons remain in existence, they pose unimaginable threats to humankind.

As Chair of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, Malaysia will work very closely with all States parties to the NPT and the relevant stakeholders in laying the groundwork to ensure that the 2020 Review Conference makes tangible progress.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda set out in *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, global progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons has been greatly compromised by the inability of multilateral organizations to bridge the chasms that divide the principal players. It was in the face of that long-standing deadlock on nuclear disarmament that 122 Member States took a decision by voting to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That reflects the political determination of a sizeable proportion of Member States that nuclear weapons are categorically unacceptable and must be eliminated. However, the effectiveness of the Treaty and the achievement of its intended goals are contingent on the accession of all parties concerned.

The challenging uncertainties of the global landscape today demand that the Conference on Disarmament live up to its role as the world's pre-eminent platform for multilateral disarmament negotiations. Given that pressing necessity, measures to revitalize the Conference are urgently needed, including through the effective execution of an agreed programme of work. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes

the Conference's establishment of five subsidiary bodies in February.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/49, adopted in December 2017, Malaysia supports efforts to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as a high-level conference on nuclear disarmament, as soon as possible. Those platforms are imperative in order to maintain the international community's sustained focus on the disarmament agenda at the highest levels of Government.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is pivotal to achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament. It is essential for nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional assurances to all States in those zones against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. As a State party to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, Malaysia will continue to support ASEAN's efforts to urge nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol to the Treaty as soon as possible, as proof of their support for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Malaysia hopes that a nuclear-weapon-free zone will be established in the Middle East, and implores all relevant parties to take concerted action towards realizing that goal.

Malaysia will also continue its long-standing practice of submitting to the First Committee a 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". We count on the support of all Member States and welcome those wishing to become sponsors of this draft resolution.

At the same time, we should also emphasize that the expeditious entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a pressing concern. Malaysia therefore calls on all States, especially those in annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Malaysia is encouraged by the easing of tensions on the Korean peninsula. We also welcome the convening this year of three inter-Korean summits, the most recent of which took place in Pyongyang between 18 and 20 September. At this important juncture, we call on all parties to work together and cooperate on reconciliation in order to pave the way for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. To that end, we continue to believe that all Security Council resolutions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must be fully implemented.

With regard to the use of the VX nerve agent at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in February 2017, on 16 August Malaysia's high court pronounced that both the accused should enter their defence. That follows the prosecution's successful establishment of a *prima facie* case against them based on the evidence presented in court. The accused will take the stand to defend themselves once the trial resumes on 1 November. The trial is expected to conclude in the first quarter of 2019.

Since the incident, Malaysia has been providing regular updates to meetings of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as we strive to remain transparent, cooperative and steadfast in sharing all relevant developments.

Malaysia is currently in the process of adopting a biological weapons bill, pursuant to article IV of the Biological Weapons Convention, and is undertaking internal consultations on the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. Recognizing the imminent threat posed by the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, Malaysia calls for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and of the International Tracing Instrument by strengthening international cooperation and assistance.

Malaysia looks forward to constructive deliberations on these issues, which are of great concern to the international community. Notwithstanding the considerable challenges facing us, let us strengthen our resolve to advance the cause of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the preservation of international peace and security.

**Mr. Diarra** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of Mali, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and to extend those congratulations to all the other members of the Bureau. I want to assure you of my delegation's full support as you discharge your responsibilities in pursuit of the objectives entrusted to you by our Committee. I also want to acknowledge the outstanding work done by your predecessor.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Morocco and Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

By dedicating itself to safeguarding and promoting peace, the United Nations unequivocally rejects both war and its instruments — weapons. However, hotbeds of tension persist and often shift, thereby giving the illusion of peace in some parts of the world.

Weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical or heavy, along with small arms and light weapons, all contribute to inflicting indescribable suffering on humankind, especially the most vulnerable, that is, women and children. My delegation therefore welcomes the implementation of the various mechanisms initiated under the auspices of the United Nations to promote disarmament and strengthen international peace and security. In that regard, we reaffirm the crucial role of the Conference on Disarmament in realizing an international disarmament regime.

In that regard, the delegation of Mali welcomes the holding of various international meetings on disarmament, including the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the final report of which, among other things, recognized the inclusion of ammunition in the Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex). We also welcome the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Mali advocates the promotion of cooperation, transparency and responsible action by States parties, particularly in implementing the ATT. My delegation also welcomes the Secretary-General's disarmament initiative, entitled *Securing our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*.

The delegation of Mali is of the view that disarmament is primarily a matter of the individual responsibility of States. However, it should be facilitated under a multilateral framework that provides guarantees of transparency and confidence and the benefits of a coherent joint approach.

In the same spirit, Mali encourages and promotes regional and subregional approaches. In that regard, I am pleased to recall my country's commitment to the Pelindaba Treaty, which established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa; the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons; and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms

and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. I also commend the assistance provided to the relevant States by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

For its part, Mali has taken several initiatives and measures to contribute to disarmament. At the institutional level, we have established a permanent secretariat to counter the proliferation of light weapons and in particular to coordinate the actions of the various State services engaged in the fight against the proliferation of light weapons.

At the normative level, my country is a party to several international instruments, under which it submits regular implementation reports. We have also adopted legislation to regulate arms and munitions. Moreover, my country supports, by voting for and sponsoring, a number of draft resolutions that promote international disarmament.

As usual, Mali will again this year introduce the draft resolution entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" (A/C.1/73/L.32), on behalf of the States members of ECOWAS. We trust that the traditional consensus will be achieved again this year.

Concrete progress in implementing the disarmament regime, in particular with regard to non-State and unauthorized actors, is essential to realizing our shared goals of international peace and security.

I spoke earlier of weapons as the tools of war. Those tools are used by terrorist and affiliated groups to undermine our joint efforts for the well-being of our respective populations. As members are aware, for several years the Sahel has faced terrorism, transnational organized crime and all kinds of trafficking, particularly in arms. Mali continues to believe that an appropriate international response to the trafficking and illicit circulation of weapons in support of the efforts of the countries of the region would undeniably help to achieve a lasting solution to the prevailing situation there.

In conclusion, we reiterate our hope that the work we began last week will continue in a spirit of genuine cooperation towards our common goals.

**Mr. Gourou** (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, like many speakers before me, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as



Chair of the First Committee, and to wish your Bureau every success in fulfilling its duties.

The Central African Republic aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Morocco on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Speaking in my national capacity, I want to say that my country believes that the issue of disarmament and international security is of paramount importance, and that our Committee should pay more attention to the threats posed by nuclear weapons and the use of biological and chemical weapons against civilian populations. The Central African Republic believes that the risk of such weapons being used against innocent populations must be taken seriously.

We advocate the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. In that regard, my country welcomed the adoption in 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by 122 States as a significant contribution to achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons. We also welcome the considerable progress made to date towards its entry into force.

The will that a majority of States Members of the United Nations clearly demonstrated with regard to ridding the world of nuclear weapons is to be encouraged. That is why my country signed the Treaty when it opened for signature. In that regard, I would like to inform States that our national ratification process is under way. My delegation looks forward to the Treaty's speedy entry into force, as well as the convening of the first meeting of the States parties. My country would like to reiterate its call to all nuclear-weapon States to agree on the principle of the non-use of those weapons, which have devastating consequences.

With regard to the promotion of disarmament and arms-control programmes, my country remains concerned about the fact that the fragile security situation in Central Africa, the result of the threat posed by Boko Haram and many other hotbeds of tension, promotes the circulation of light weapons and all kinds of munitions with harmful repercussions for my country, struggling as it is to emerge from a historically protracted crisis. Pooling efforts and resources is therefore an effective way to halt the proliferation of such weapons and achieve disarmament.

To that end, my country welcomes the progress already made in implementing the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, known as the Kinshasa Convention, which was adopted in Kinshasa on 30 April 2010 and entered into force on 8 March 2017. While a few States have yet to ratify it, five countries now have in place national commissions to combat the circulation of small arms and light weapons under the Nairobi Protocol.

In collaboration with the Small Arms Survey and supported by the United Nations Mine Action Service, the National Commission for the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Central African Republic, established by Decree No. 17.069 of 14 February 2017, held a workshop from 10 to 13 July to develop a national strategy on small arms and light weapons. My country also welcomes the holding of the first Conference of States Parties to the Kinshasa Convention in Yaoundé from 11 to 13 June, following the entry into force of that Convention in accordance with the established timetable.

With regard to the Arms Trade Treaty, which my country has already ratified, we encourage States that have not yet done so to join it. In addition, the Central African Republic welcomes the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa regarding disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation in relation to Central Africa, and encourages it to support the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, which is already in force.

Moreover, my country believes that it is important to include the issue of livestock migration, which is associated with armed conflict in Central Africa and exacerbates ongoing tensions between farmers and herders, at the heart of the negotiations in this part of Africa, in order to take into account the regional dimension of this problem and its status as a significant factor in the circulation of firearms.

At the national level, Government efforts, supported by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, continue to disarm armed groups so as to create secure and peaceful conditions for citizens. After the establishment of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and reintegration (DDRR)

strategy on 10 March 2017, on 30 August 2017 the President of the Republic and Head of State launched a DDRR pilot project that has been implemented in Bangui and eight subprefectures in the country. Twelve of the 14 armed groups participated and 439 ex-combatants were disarmed. The socioeconomic and community reintegration programme for 206 of them began early this year, while 233 disarmed ex-combatants completed their training and were integrated into the Central African armed forces.

In that context, the community violence reduction programmes, which include disarmament and weapons collection, are very important. Since 2016, a total of 7,681 ex-combatants who are not eligible for the DDRR programmes have benefited from the violence reduction programmes in seven places in the country. The programmes, implemented in areas with heightened activity by armed groups or self-defence militias, seek to combat recruitment by armed groups and to enable ex-combatants to reintegrate into civilian life by providing economic opportunities for young people.

Finally, with regard to security sector reform, significant progress has been made since 2016 with our adoption of a national security policy, endorsement of a national security-sector reform strategy and implementation of democratic governance of the security sector. Security-sector reform has also enabled 829 soldiers to retire. As for the internal security forces, the recovery and verification of records in line with the new security-sector reform standards enabled the verification of 3,246 personnel, consisting of 2,065 gendarmes and 1,181 police officers. The recruitment of 500 new police officers under conditions of full transparency and fairness is a major step towards the rebuilding of our defence and security forces.

My country counts on the continuing support of the international community for establishing peace in the Central African Republic and the wider subregion. I wish the Committee every success in its work.

**Mr. Kemayah** (Liberia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of the Liberian delegation's fullest support for achieving substantive and successful deliberations. It is my honour to address this Committee for the first time since assuming the duties of Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations and its organs.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to the United Nations for its immeasurable contributions to Liberia's recovery and development. As members may know, Liberia recently turned a new page, transitioning peacefully from one democratically elected Government to another for the first time in 73 years. We remain ever grateful to the United Nations and indebted to the many Member States whose tireless efforts helped to guarantee the peace Liberia enjoys today. We sincerely salute the gallant men and women who paid the ultimate price along the way.

In his address during the recently concluded high-level debate of the General Assembly, Mr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, stated:

“[A] nation that has experienced civil war must never take peace for granted or forget the long shadow that years of conflict still cast over people's lives.” (see A/73/PV.8)

There is no doubt that we remain deeply concerned about the increasing threats to global peace and security, especially considering the new wave of global terrorism. We therefore want to emphasize the critical importance of stepping up multilateral approaches, which have been shown to be the best way to address matters of international peace and security, while at the same time not losing sight of the important role that unilateral and bilateral efforts can play in that pursuit.

As an adherent and contributor to global initiatives aimed at promoting peace and security, the Republic of Liberia reaffirms its support as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty of Pelindaba, designating Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and to other instruments that seek to address and eliminate the use of nuclear weapons. A safe world free of nuclear arsenals can be realized only through the collective effort of every Member State. It is not what we say that will matter to us or our children but the positive actions implemented to make our global village safe that will bring joy to our offspring and secure hope for generations to come. Together we must act now.

We hail the convening of a fourth high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The meeting reminded us of the grave threat that the existence of nuclear weapons

poses to humanity and was a clarion call to all of us to uphold the humanitarian pledge against the use of nuclear weapons and ensure that their use is banned. That is all the more reason for us to join the African Group in encouraging an emphasis on humanitarian considerations in all deliberations related to nuclear weapons during this session.

With regard to conventional weapons, Liberia, like many other countries in Africa, remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons. Liberia is not a producer of small arms and light weapons but a victim of their proliferation. Knowing first-hand the devastating humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences associated with the illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, Liberia reaffirms its support for the Arms Trade Treaty. As a country, we also attach great importance to the central role of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument as crucial multilateral tools to tackle the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and their multifaceted effects.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that Liberia has made great strides at the national level in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. The Liberian National Commission on Small Arms, which oversees the implementation of the Programme of Action, has achieved a great deal in strengthening our legal framework, in the form of our national laws, regulations and administrative procedures. Preparations are under way and discussions currently ongoing for draft bills before our national legislature for passage into law, one on full domestication of the Arms Trade Treaty and the other to increase the scope of the mandate of the National Commission on Small Arms for domesticating the Arms Trade Treaty and all other conventions and protocols.

Let me assure the Committee that Liberia remains fully committed to promoting instruments aimed at comprehensive nuclear disarmament and supporting States in the area of the non-proliferation of small arms, which affect us more directly as a country. Nonetheless, as we endeavour to implement the Arms Trade Treaty domestically, we have to point out a number of challenges, one of them to do with funding. We would therefore

appreciate support from the international community for programmes of the Liberian Commission on Small Arms as a way of consolidating the strides made by our Government in realizing the objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty.

With the backing of a strengthened legal framework and support of our Government under the leadership of Mr. Weah, and with the support of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Liberia conducted the first weapons and ammunition management study in the country since the crisis of our civil war came to an end in 2003. The recommendations of that study are being considered to improve and strengthen the country's stockpile management system.

Liberia also succeeded in marking and recording all State-owned firearms between 2016 to 2018. In addition to those steps, through our flagship national development policy and our pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development, the Government of Liberia, under President Weah's astute leadership, is targeting capacity-building for officers of the Liberian National Police and the Armed Forces of Liberia to prevent and effectively respond to threats of terrorism when necessary. Under the sustaining peace pillar of the pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development, the Government is also working to improve coordination and information-sharing regionally and globally with the aim of improving the state of regional and global peace and security.

Finally, I urge us all to endeavour to make this global village a happy place to dwell in, not only for ourselves but for succeeding generations. To that end, I would like to share a quotation attributed to the Indian author Amit Ray:

“Earth is the playground of our children and their children. We cannot allow it to be the playground of the nuclear arms of the evil forces.”

The Liberian delegation looks forward to a successful session and would like to assure the United Nations of the unflinching practical commitment of President Weah and the Government and the people of Liberia to continuing to support the work of the United Nations.

**Mr. Ahmed** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): As this is the first time I am addressing the First Committee, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair, and to thank your predecessor, Ambassador

Bahr Aluloom, for his excellent leadership of the work of the Committee during the previous session.

The Sudan was among the first States to accede to many international conventions and instruments in the areas that concern the Committee, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We also led efforts to proclaim Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty of Pelindaba and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to which we acceded in 2004. We would like to point out that Khartoum hosted the first Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in Africa, which led to extremely important recommendations, including for ridding Africa of chemical weapons. We also stressed the importance of ensuring that States' activities in that regard are confined to peaceful purposes without prejudice to their full, legitimate and inalienable right to avail themselves of nuclear and chemical technologies for scientific, technical and development purposes.

We want to affirm that the regional and international changes in the world today, particularly in the Middle East, mean that the only way to promote international security is to reinvigorate multilateralism, including by convening a conference on the Middle East. In that respect, the Sudan supports the draft resolution sponsored by the Group of Arab States calling on the Secretary-General to hold a conference to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We call on all Member States to support it.

The issue of conventional small arms and light weapons is a top priority for the Government of the Sudan. Like other countries, the Sudan is a victim of trafficking and the illicit trade in light weapons, which not only has economic repercussions but has also been exacerbated by natural phenomena such as climate change, drought and desertification, leading to fierce competition for resources. In that context, certain tribes and population groups view the possession of weapons as a way to project power and protect their resources, which makes the issue of collecting and controlling such weapons very difficult. The Sudan, which is more conscious than most of the threat that this issue poses and the need to eliminate it, is an active participant in all the relevant international and regional forums. We also devote efforts to combat it at the national level through our national bureau for community security and small arms control. The Sudan has also made significant and

successful efforts to control the illegal proliferation of such weapons and address their impact in various ways.

First, we have undertaken initiatives at the national, regional and subregional levels to address border controls between neighbouring countries, among other things.

Secondly, we joined and have supported the initiative of the Federal Republic of Germany as Chair of the Group of Seven to control the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in the States of the Sahel and the Sahara.

Thirdly, the Government of the Sudan has continued to implement its plan to collect weapons from citizens and population groups and restrict the possession and carrying of weapons to uniformed personnel, as well as strictly implementing the law on weapons and ammunition. That campaign has been a great success and has played an important role in contributing to security, peace and stability, particularly in Darfur, as the Security Council has recognized.

As we review those efforts, we also emphasize that combating the proliferation of such weapons should be the responsibility of the States that manufacture them in the first place, not just of the States affected. We also emphasize how important it is that manufacturing States do not export weapons to population groups and non-State actors.

My Government is making significant efforts to combat landmines and carry out demining, in collaboration with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). All of eastern Sudan's states were proclaimed free of landmines in January. My country is also working to honour its commitments under the Ottawa Convention within the scheduled 2019 time frame. We also want to commend the efforts of UNMAS to rid Sudan of landmines, which has already made great strides.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its full commitment to all international conventions and instruments within the framework of disarmament and international security.

**Mr. Moraru** (Republic of Moldova): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I am confident that your diplomatic skills and extensive experience will contribute to the success of the Committee's work.

Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are closely associated with the mission of the United Nations. They are widely recognized as indispensable to achieving the maintenance of international peace and security, a core principle of the Charter of the United Nations. Unfortunately, those and other fundamental principles developed over the past century are under serious strain. Global and regional tensions are on the rise. New and destabilizing arms races in both strategic and conventional weapons are generating mistrust and making it harder to negotiate disarmament treaties or to resolve ongoing conflicts. We have witnessed the use of chemical weapons. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of States Members of the United Nations have been violated.

Against that worrisome security backdrop, the Republic of Moldova welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative set out in *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*. Its timely proposals aim to integrate disarmament into the priorities of the whole United Nations system. We commend the Secretary-General for laying out a clear and strategic road map for addressing current challenges that can help Member States set the world on a path towards sustainable peace and security for all.

It is imperative to strengthen the United Nations disarmament and arms control architecture, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. The main issues at stake are well known and have been outlined by other speakers, including the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), with whose statement the Republic of Moldova fully associates itself.

If the present stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament is prolonged, we could lose the only forum for multilateral treaties in the field of disarmament that the international community has. There can be no question that much-needed and effective multilateral legal instruments can be generated by using other ad hoc negotiating formats, as we have witnessed in the recent past. We often point to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and its predecessor, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in that regard. Yet we continue to believe that the Conference on Disarmament should remain the central multilateral body with responsibility for negotiating agreements, particularly those that are critical to international security, including a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The crucial importance of advancing constructive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is also evident. Obviously, treaties are not a panacea for international security and stability, but they are nevertheless the basis of our collective security. Small States that lack military power, like my own country, have no choice but to rely on building and strengthening a rules-based international system.

Based on that, the Republic of Moldova has ratified or adhered to all major disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements at both the global and regional levels. We have also joined the international efforts aimed at fostering and promoting the principles of international humanitarian law. As a State party to all the multilateral legal instruments that are relevant to this area, we are committed to implementing them and pursuing the universalization of their norms.

One of our expectations is that a rules-based international system with functional and strong institutions can prevent the uncontrolled expansion of armaments, including in conflict-prone regions, and could encourage transparency and concrete disarmament measures. In that context, I would like to underscore the need for adequate transparency and control over the significant military potential retained by the unconstitutional power structures in the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova. The presence in that part of Europe of heavily equipped unlawful armed forces that are subject to no democratic, constitutional or international control whatever must be a matter of grave concern to all of us.

The military offensive capacity of the Transnistrian armed forces has been continuously upgraded, including as a result of the recurrent illegal joint military exercises with the Russian military forces stationed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova without its consent and against its express wish. Those joint military exercises, which have lately increased in scope and frequency, as well as other unlawful and destabilizing military activities, undermine international efforts aimed at resolving the protracted Transnistrian problem peacefully and have been increasingly exacerbating the internal and subregional security situation.

The current security situation demands a major reduction in the military factor in the Transnistrian region. First and foremost, that requires the Russian

Federation's unconditional and complete withdrawal of its troops and armaments from Moldovan soil, in accordance with its legal commitments under the 1999 Istanbul summit outcome document and its obligations under international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I want to stress that complying in good faith with the existing legally binding instruments, both bilateral and multilateral, is crucial to the maintenance of peace and security and the advancement of general and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

**Ms. Agladze** (Georgia): I would like to start by congratulating you, Ambassador Jinga, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee, and assuring you of the Georgian delegation's full support.

As the Secretary-General states in *Securing our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, we are living in very dangerous times, when security threats and challenges are becoming more and more complex, asymmetrical and transnational in nature. Our work on disarmament, non-proliferation and other contemporary security challenges is therefore ever more relevant.

We continue to face major proliferation threats to international peace and security. The risk of nuclear, chemical, radiological or biological weapons falling into the hands of unauthorized actors is acute. Dealing resolutely with the threat posed by the unauthorized use of such weapons requires the credibility and effectiveness of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention regimes, which are key elements in our efforts to progress towards total disarmament where weapons of mass destruction are concerned.

The recent high-level talks between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, along with the joint statement issued by the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, represent encouraging diplomatic efforts that could help to ease tensions and lead to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to embark on a credible path towards verifiable and complete denuclearization by returning to the NPT and adhering to the relevant safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We also call on it to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone, anywhere, is a crime against humanity. We firmly condemn the multiple uses of chemical weapons by the Syrian armed forces, as well as by Da'esh, as verified by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. Such despicable acts against the civilian population in Syria must not go unpunished. We also affirm our solidarity with the United Kingdom following the abhorrent chemical attack in Salisbury. We hope that the thorough and transparent investigation conducted by the British authorities will soon lead to the prosecution of the perpetrators.

Addressing the problem of the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of conventional arms and ammunition is another priority. Maintaining an effective strategic trade-control system that keeps pace with evolving proliferation threats and rapid technological and scientific developments is vital. In that context, the Arms Trade Treaty is a unique instrument defining common State responsibilities for different stages of arms transfers that serves as an important preventive mechanism.

Conventional military conflicts continue to be unresolved and are on the rise. The Black Sea region is particularly exposed to a threatening wave of militarization, in flagrant violation of international law. The military aggression by the Russian Federation against Georgia and Ukraine is not only a fundamental threat to our countries but endangers wider European security.

The Russian Federation is continuing its military build-up in Georgia's occupied territories and is further isolating those regions from the rest of the country, in total disregard of its commitments under the 2008 ceasefire agreement on withdrawing all of its military forces from Georgian territory. Russia's illegal military bases in the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions are equipped with contemporary and sophisticated offensive weaponry, including tanks, various armoured vehicles, rocket launch systems and surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missile systems, including SA-10 Grumble and SS-21 Scarab systems.

The force structure and posture of those deployments, including the type and quantity of their

military hardware, go way beyond any defensive objectives and have no purpose but to project power across the entire Black Sea region and the Mediterranean. The Russian Federation deployed additional complexes of S-300 air-defence missile systems in the Abkhazia region last year. Furthermore, Russia has deployed powerful anti-access and area-denial capabilities that cover virtually the whole Caucasus and a large part of the Black Sea. Those capabilities can critically restrict the manoeuvrability of a potential adversary on land, sea and in the air, and are further reinforced through electronic warfare.

In parallel, the Russian Federation conducts regular military drills in the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions as part of the exercises of its southern military district. This year has been marked by unprecedented military activity in Georgia's occupied territories. Between January and September, approximately 70 exercises were conducted in the Abkhazia region and 25 in the Tskhinvali region. In addition, violations of Georgian airspace by the Russian air force have become a regular practice.

A lack of international control mechanisms in the occupied regions of Georgia creates fertile ground for illegal activities, including ones related to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials. Members may recall recorded attempts to smuggle nuclear and radioactive materials through the Georgian occupied regions that the First Committee has been duly informed of, another reminder that such black holes pose a fundamental threat not just to the affected country but to the international security system as a whole.

Multilateralism and the rules-based international system are vital prerequisites for a stable and secure international environment. Our political will and joint efforts to comply with international law and adhere to non-proliferation, disarmament and arms-control regimes and related commitments will define how we cope with our security challenges today and in future.

**Mr. Incarnato** (Italy): I would like to begin, Mr. Chair, by congratulating you on your election and assuring you of my delegation's full support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made previously by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), and I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity. A full version of this statement will be available online.

A rules-based international system and effective multilateralism are crucial to identifying solutions to global challenges and threats to international peace and security. In that regard, the United Nations disarmament machinery and its three mutually reinforcing forums remain central and irreplaceable.

We welcome the establishment of five subsidiary bodies by the Conference on Disarmament (CD) early this year and the adoption of four substantive reports (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141) resulting from their work, which we hope will provide a solid basis to build on in 2019. We regret, however, that the CD's final report (CD/2149) does not reflect those substantive discussions.

Italy shares the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars, remains the key instrument and provides the only realistic legal framework for attaining a world without nuclear weapons. Such a goal can be achieved solely through a progressive approach based on effective measures, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty. Among those, the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a key priority. We call on all States that have not yet done so, particularly the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

The immediate commencement of negotiations within the CD on a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices is also crucial. We welcome the report of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group (see A/73/159), established by resolution 71/259, and are confident that its work will provide fruitful input for negotiating such a treaty within the CD.

We would also like to bring up the potential of negative security assurances. We continue to support the possible formulation in the CD of recommendations dealing with all aspects of negative security assurances, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

Italy also values all initiatives undertaken in the field of nuclear disarmament verification. We support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and welcome the start of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, as per resolution 71/67, of which Italy was a sponsor.

We also reiterate our support for the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them.

We are pleased that the Russian Federation and the United States met the central limits of the New START Treaty in February, and we encourage them to extend the Treaty. We also underline the importance of preserving the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty as a landmark agreement that remains key to European and international security and stability.

Italy welcomes the positive developments in the first half of 2018 with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that they can lead to an open and constructive dialogue aimed at fulfilling our shared goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains key to international efforts to strengthen non-proliferation. The international community should remain committed to its full and effective implementation, as long as Iran continues to strictly abide by its nuclear-related commitments. We welcome the confirmation by the International Atomic Energy Agency in 12 successive reports of Iran's compliance with those commitments. We also reiterate the importance of the full and effective implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). We are determined to cooperate with all interested stakeholders to preserve the JCPOA and fully support efforts undertaken by the European Union in that respect, as well as current work on a legal entity enabling European companies to continue their legitimate trade with Iran.

Italy strongly supports the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and reaffirms the need for full compliance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We are deeply concerned about the repeated use of chemical weapons in recent months. We reiterate our condemnation of such action by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. The international community must ensure accountability and continue to take a clear stance against impunity for such heinous crimes. In that spirit, Italy actively participates in the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. We also welcome the June decision of the special session of the Conference of the States Parties

to the Chemical Weapons Convention that enhances the capacity of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Italy remains deeply concerned about the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. We support strengthening the mechanism of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) to increase national capacities in the implementation of non-proliferation measures and welcome the positive outcome of the review of the regime under that resolution, as embodied in Security Council resolution 2325 (2016).

Italy is fully committed to international efforts to address the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security impact of conventional weapons, and is particularly concerned about the indiscriminate effects of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, especially on civilians. We actively support the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We attach great importance to their universalization, full compliance with their provisions and the development of any possible synergies between them. We are convinced of the importance of international cooperation and assistance for the full and effective implementation of those instruments. We therefore continue to devote material, technical and financial resources to the implementation of comprehensive mine-action programmes. We are also particularly engaged in promoting integrated, inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches to victim assistance.

We are firmly committed to the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the space environment and believe that a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be elaborated and put in place. Italy appreciates the important work done by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We also remain fully committed to preventing an arms race in outer space and to preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict as essential conditions to strengthen strategic stability.

Finally, Italy supports developing norms and principles of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace,



in conformity with existing international law, as well as the promotion of confidence-building measures, international cooperation and capacity-building to improve cybersecurity, promote a free and open cyberspace and decrease the risk of disputes among States in that field. We affirm our commitment to improving stability in cyberspace and call on the Secretary-General to convene a new group of governmental experts in 2019, building on the work of the previous group.

**Mr. Ligoya** (Malawi): I would like to start by thanking and congratulating you, Ambassador Jinga, on your election as Chair, as well as the members of your entire Bureau. Let me assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Malawi aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Even in the event of a single nuclear detonation, humanitarian agencies would be powerless to provide effective relief to the sick and injured. The only guarantee of our security against the threat of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination. That is why Malawi is among the countries that signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017. The Treaty places nuclear weapons on the same legal footing as other weapons of mass destruction deemed unacceptable for their indiscriminate and inhumane effects, comparable to those of biological and chemical weapons, filling a significant gap that previously existed in international law.

The fact that many countries have been signing and ratifying the Treaty is a clear indication that a majority of the world no longer accepts nuclear weapons and does not consider them legitimate weapons. Malawi is fully committed to the Treaty and is ratifying it imminently, with the intention of becoming a State party. Malawi joins other countries that condemn as illegitimate any ongoing activities that are prohibited under the Treaty, such as threats to use nuclear weapons, the testing of nuclear weapons and the development and modernization of nuclear arsenals.

Malawi condemns the use of chemical weapons, which is universally considered to be contrary to the laws of humanity and the dictates of public conscience.

The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of those weapons. Chemical weapons, which are inherently indiscriminate, include any toxic chemical or precursor that can cause death, injury, temporary incapacitation or sensory irritation through its action, as well as related munitions and delivery systems. Chlorine, mustard gas and sarin are among the most frequently used weaponized chemicals, and their continued use has eroded the norm against using such weapons. As a country, we support the renewed mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons, and we endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations on chemical weapons.

Malawi also condemns the use of biological weapons as a means of ending human life. Biological weapons use bacteria, viruses or toxins combined with a delivery mechanism to inflict harm, and can be disseminated through inhalation, ingestion or skin absorption. Malawi wishes to reaffirm and strengthen its commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and reports on measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention. At the national level, we are reviewing national measures and policies to make changes or implement new ones to strengthen compliance with the BWC.

In terms of the adoption and implementation of non-proliferation treaties, Malawi is party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and fully implements all their requirements.

Malawi considers the implementation of all the provisions of such multilateral treaties, including those covering nuclear disarmament, to be important. We have set up a technical committee to adopt national rules and regulations to ensure compliance with our commitments under the key multilateral non-proliferation treaties. Malawi is also committed to multilateral cooperation within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention, with a view to achieving our common objectives in the area of non-proliferation and promoting international cooperation for peaceful purposes.

Small arms and light weapons persist as the weapons of choice in many acts of armed violence. According to Small Arms Survey, in 2016, the most recent year for which data are available, 560,000 people died as a result of armed violence, while an estimated 18 per cent of those deaths were the direct result of conflict. In order to develop a comprehensive approach to reducing deaths caused by small arms and light weapons, we should focus on armed violence as a whole rather than limiting our efforts to addressing only conflict violence.

Compared to its neighbours, Malawi is not deeply affected by the illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons. However, our people still suffer significantly from the illicit use of small arms and light weapons. We signed the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001.

Malawi has clear interest in working with international partners to promote the responsible and peaceful use of outer space. That is because Malawi appreciates that the development of space technology holds immense potential to benefit both developed and developing countries. Malawi furthermore notes with concern the threats being posed to outer space and its applications. We condemn any anti-satellite tests as well as the development of weapons to be placed in orbit, or any system designed to be used to target space-based assets. We support the negotiation of a treaty preventing an arms race in outer space, as well as interim transparency and confidence-building measures to that end. We seek to find common ground between legal and political or rules-based approaches to enhancing the security of outer space.

**Mr. Amde** (Ethiopia): Let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on being elected. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation throughout this session.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

The accelerated development of new weapon technologies, increasing militarization in many parts of the world, protracted conflicts and displacement are

a matter of great concern for our collective security. What is more troubling is the increasing threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the risk that they may end up in the wrong hands. That is why the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and their proliferation among non-State actors.

The need to take concrete action to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons is therefore critically urgent. It is in that context that we support the Secretary-General's *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, which aims to draw international attention to reinvigorating dialogue and negotiation in order to bring disarmament back into the heart of our common efforts for peace and security.

The adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is indeed a major achievement that enhances the existing nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime and ultimately paves the way for reaching a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons and ultimately leading to their total elimination. Ethiopia firmly believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will remain the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. In our view, the three pillars of the NPT — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use — represent an unparalleled framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace and security.

Of course, nuclear-weapon-free zones also play a central role in consolidating the NPT and intensifying nuclear non-proliferation across every region of the world. Ethiopia therefore reaffirms its commitment to the Pelindaba Treaty, which prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, testing, acquiring or stationing of nuclear weapons on the African continent.

We underscore the importance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, we commend the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its important role in ensuring States' commitments to the implementation of safeguards agreements and the provision of technical assistance and cooperation aimed at maximizing the use of science and technology for socioeconomic development. Ethiopia is working closely with the IAEA in the areas of radiation protection and nuclear regulatory control, in accordance with

applicable domestic and international laws, including IAEA safety standards.

In the area of chemical weapons, Ethiopia is a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Although Ethiopia does not possess chemical weapons and has no chemical industry relevant to the Convention, our Ministry of Industry has been delegated to work closely with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and other States parties to encourage national and regional cooperation efforts related to the Convention.

Ethiopia remains deeply concerned about the continued reports of the use of chemical weapons in different parts of the world. We strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by any actor, State or non-State. It is our belief that the use of chemical weapons is totally unjustifiable under any circumstance. We therefore reiterate our strong support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and reaffirm our commitment to making every effort to fully implement it.

It is unfortunate that given the complex political and security situation in many parts of the world, various internal and external actors are using every opportunity to use many areas as a conduit for the illicit transfer and use of various weapons. The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in our region has been fuelling intra- and inter-State conflicts, owing to the easy availability, relatively low cost, technical simplicity and easy mobility of such weapons.

We therefore attach great importance to the issue of conventional arms control at the regional and global levels. We believe that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects remains an important framework for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that regard, we welcome the outcome of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action, held in New York from 18 to 29 June. Apart from national implementation efforts, the full implementation of the Programme of Action, including its provisions related to international cooperation and assistance, remains important.

Let me conclude by reaffirming our commitment and support to the United Nations disarmament agenda. We look forward to engaging constructively in the work of the First Committee.

**Mr. Tenya (Peru)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you, Sir, chairing the work of the First Committee. We also thank Ambassador Bahr Aluloom, Permanent Representative of Iraq, for his outstanding work as Chair during the previous session.

My country supports the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), and El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/73/PV.4).

Peru has a long tradition of promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We are accordingly actively participating in all international and multilateral forums and regimes in those areas. We recently participated in the work of the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in the hope of being able to prevent and respond effectively to the severe threat generated by the illicit trade in arms. Peru takes this opportunity to reiterate its firm commitment to fully and effectively implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Tracing Instrument. We believe that we must continue working in the framework of the Programme of Action in a transparent and non-discriminatory fashion, as well as on adopting a legally binding instrument for marking and monitoring small arms and light weapons so as to prevent their diversion to the illicit market. We welcome the consensus outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action this year in New York.

Guaranteeing international peace and security means eliminating the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological. The best solution to that is to prohibit them and fully eliminate existing weapons. However, much remains to be done to achieve those goals. We note with deep concern the violations and challenges experienced in recent years by the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes regarding weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons and chemical weapons. The use or threat of use of such weapons is a crime against humanity and a grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, Peru reaffirms

its interest in, and commitment to, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the full implementation of its three pillars. We affirm the inalienable right of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, in accordance with articles I to IV of the NPT, and we continue to take part in the preparatory work for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. In that regard, we call on all States to appoint the President of the 2020 Review Conference as soon as possible. In that connection, we endorse the candidature of Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi of Argentina for that position.

Peru's commitment to nuclear disarmament led to our becoming among the first States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We believe that the consequences of the use of those weapons would be catastrophic and would extend beyond national borders and have severe repercussions for human survival, the environment, social and economic development, the world economy, food security and the health of current and future generations. We condemn any prohibited activity under the Treaty, such as their use or threat of use and the development or updating of nuclear arsenals. We call on all States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty, especially the nuclear-weapon States. We were also one of the first States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, we stress the importance of its prompt entry into force and call on the annex 2 States to sign or ratify it.

In accordance with our principled position, we stress that the nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and their related activities should be abandoned completely, verifiably and irreversibly. We believe that as long as that has not been done, the sanctions imposed by the Security Council should remain in force and be strictly implemented and respected by all States.

With regard to the disarmament machinery, my delegation considers the reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament to be a priority, since that forum should be the primary negotiating body for matters relating to disarmament and international security. My country urges all members of the Conference to show greater political will by adopting and implementing a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Peru recognizes the progress that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has made this

year. We underline the importance of its Working Group II agreeing on a consensus text on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. Peru notes with regret, however, that the Commission was unable to reach a consensus on recommendations for achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We recognize the general concern of the international community, as well as civil society, academia and industry, about the humanitarian impact that the use of lethal autonomous weapons systems might have. In that regard, we understand how urgent it is to define lethal autonomous weapon systems and identify their characteristics as a point of departure for an international process aimed at prohibiting the development, use and transfer of weapon systems that do not require the control of a person to operate. Peru supports the work of the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, established within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and hopes that it will lead to the development of a legally binding and effective instrument on the subject. We strongly affirm how important it is for any use of those weapon systems to strictly comply with the principles and norms of international law, human rights law and international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of non-discrimination and proportionality in attacks.

It will once again be my country's duty this year to facilitate the draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has its headquarters in Lima. We would like to highlight the important work that the Centre is doing to contribute to progress in the region of a series of disarmament initiatives and confidence-building measures, as well as in the fight against the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives.

Finally, I would like to conclude by reaffirming Peru's unwavering and strong commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We will spare no effort in contributing to the work of the First Committee.

**Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made by

the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), and I am adding the following remarks in my national capacity.

The framework of normative treaties and conventions countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is one of the greatest achievements of the rules-based international system. They are based on a common understanding of the threat posed to national and international security by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and of the fundamental values of fairness and justice and a respect for international law. Treaties such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention proscribe weapons deemed repugnant to the human conscience.

Coupled with the safeguards regime operated by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has deterred all but a few States from acquiring nuclear weapons. Built on a basis of mutual trust and offering tangible benefits to all of its signatories, the NPT stands in stark contrast to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The ban ignores the security context and does nothing to increase trust or transparency among nuclear-weapon-possessor States. It also fails to address the technical challenges of nuclear disarmament. The United Kingdom will not support, sign or ratify it.

The United Kingdom pursues a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament consistent with the NPT. Our nuclear weapons account for only about 1 per cent of the total belonging to the recognized nuclear-weapon States. The existing counter-proliferation and arms-control framework has made a huge contribution to global security. It provides States with the assurance that their competitors are not seeking WMDs and brings predictability and stability to security relations.

Now, however, global security is under threat from States that no longer share our fundamental values or respect international law. The Syrian regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons, in contravention of its undertakings as a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Russia has prevented action in the Security Council that would have held those responsible to account, and has further shown its contempt for global norms by itself using chemical weapons on British soil. Those represent direct assaults on a norm that the majority of the international community has observed

for over 50 years. Leaving those assaults unchallenged risks further weakening the norm and inviting further violations.

Identifying the perpetrators of chemical-weapon attacks is an important step in ensuring accountability and deterring future attacks. The decision at The Hague in June was a clear sign of the international community's commitment to reinforcing norms against chemical-weapon use. We look forward to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons beginning its work on attribution for chemical attacks in Syria. We will continue to foster the development of the Secretary-General's mechanism for investigating alleged uses of chemical, biological or toxin weapons.

However, we cannot wait until weapons of mass destruction have been used. We must be quicker to act when States fail to comply with their obligations. Inaction on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea permitted it both to acquire a nuclear-weapon capability and to proliferate missile technology. In the face of repeated nuclear testing, undermining a norm observed by others since the turn of the century, the Security Council has agreed to impose sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Those sanctions appear to be changing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's calculus. Pressure must be maintained until concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization are taken. The United Kingdom stands ready to lend its expertise and capabilities to support a denuclearization process.

We continue to support the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by all remaining parties to the deal. The international safeguards regime that underpins Iran's commitment to enhanced verification and inspections is one of the most extensive and robust in the history of international nuclear accords. Successive reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirm that Iran continues to comply with its nuclear commitments under the deal and that its nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. At the same time, we want to take this opportunity to register our concern about Iran's wider missile programmes, which pose a threat to European security and are destabilizing for the region. We call on Iran to immediately cease its proliferation of missile technology. These actions are inconsistent with Security Council resolutions 2231 (2015) and 2216 (2015) and serve only to prolong regional conflicts.

While the counter-proliferation and arms-control framework has served us well, it is not complete either in its application or coverage. We will work towards the universal membership of the relevant treaties and conventions. We will continue to argue for the adoption of measures that can strengthen the framework, such as the additional protocol to IAEA safeguards agreements.

We will also continue to support and strengthen the verification work of the OPCW and the IAEA, and to work to develop the necessary verification mechanisms and technologies for future disarmament treaties. We must ensure that the mechanisms for countering the proliferation of the means of delivering weapons of mass destruction, particularly ballistic missiles, are fit for purpose and remain relevant. We call on more States to adhere to the Missile Technology Control Regime and to sign up to The Hague Code of Conduct.

We will work on addressing the challenge of an increasingly congested outer space. We believe that increased trust and confidence through consensus norms, principles and guidelines can support safe and sustainable human space activity, in compliance with international law.

As the pace of scientific and technological development accelerates, we must ensure that we not only manage the risks created but also take advantage of the opportunities generated. In this regard, we welcome the renewed vigour within the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, but we are deeply concerned about its financial situation. We call on all States parties to the Convention and other disarmament treaties to pay their dues.

Proliferation threatens every member of the international community. Each and every one of us should step up and address the threat. As my Prime Minister observed here in New York last month (see A/73/PV.8), it was the collective engagement of the international community that produced the counter-proliferation and disarmament architecture. It will take collective engagement to reinforce it in the face of today's challenges.

**Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia):** In aligning myself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States, I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your respective elections.

As we have done every year, we are meeting to debate all disarmament and international security agenda items in the First Committee and the threat posed by nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and small arms and light weapons. We are sure to talk about the multitudes of people killed and the importance of respecting our obligations under the various treaties and conventions intended to restrict, ban and prohibit the manufacture, testing, trade or proliferation of these weapons. Of course, my country, Zambia, supports and will continue to support all these treaties and urges others to do likewise.

At the end of it all, we will adopt resolutions and congratulate ourselves that so many more of them will have been adopted by consensus compared with last year — resolutions that will differ from those of last year only in their number, the updated numbers of people killed since the previous resolution was adopted and the numbers of meetings held in the interim. We will request the Secretary-General to submit more reports to us next year.

I wish we could be humble enough to accept that while we have made quantum leaps in the development of the science and technology of weapons and the art of killing, we have been moving steadily, inexorably, in reverse in the development of the things that should edify us as human beings. Human civilization is stuck in reverse gear. Our conscience does not protest when our countries produce, stockpile or use these weapons, no matter how many we kill, as long as those we kill are identified by a different country name, flag, geography, colour, religion, language or other artificial construct that we have created to divide us. We have no problem with killing in order to defend our way of life from those whom we fear are coveting what we have. Our consciences do not protest when millions die of starvation in another country or another part of the world while we destroy mountains of food in our countries to keep prices high, or when millions die from preventable diseases for lack of drugs while these are piled high in storehouses and allowed to expire so as to protect the copyrights and prices of pharmaceutical companies.

When 1 per cent of the population owns 82 per cent of the world's wealth; when the high and mighty cannot protect the weak and vulnerable; when those who should know better refuse to acknowledge that their ways are killing the environment; when we would rather produce with machines than give an opportunity to a human being because we want to maximize profit, that is a

world out of balance. That is a world that cannot be at peace with itself. That is a world in which the more we surround ourselves with weapons and the more lethal those weapons are, the more we derive a false sense of security from that.

Let us ask ourselves what difference our resolutions will make. What are we doing to change the human condition that is at the core of global instability and needless conflict? War is neither a human condition nor an imperative. We can change things. We can end war and turn our weapons into ploughshares. As the late Michael Jackson used to say, let us start with the man and the woman in the mirror.

**Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua is pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election and to wish you every success at the helm of the Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), and El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) (see A/C.1/73/PV.4).

It is unjustifiable and unacceptable that in our third year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, more and more is being spent on ways to develop, modernize and test weapons of all kinds, and less and less on promoting life, sustainable development and the happiness of human beings. Nicaragua has always emphasized the importance of making further progress towards total and complete disarmament, including not only nuclear weapons but also other weapons of mass destruction, the use of which violates fundamental principles of international law and international humanitarian law.

We firmly believe that the only guarantee for preventing the use or threat of weapons of mass destruction and their non-proliferation to non-State actors is the total and absolute elimination of nuclear weapons. We welcome the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted in July 2017 and which we have ratified, and we call on countries that have not yet done so to ratify it in order to contribute to this urgent task that we have set ourselves. This international treaty establishes in international law, for the first time in history, the norm prohibiting

the existence, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, including nuclear testing.

Nicaragua firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones will strengthen the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security, making it an important contribution to achieving nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we deplore the lack of compliance with the resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and call for its urgent implementation. We want to remind the Committee of the importance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and CELAC's Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

The Government of the Republic of Nicaragua has always supported the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through dialogue and close communication between the authorities of both parties. We welcome the rapprochement of the two Koreas and the holding of the third inter-Korean summit and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration of September 2018, agreed by the two Korean leaders, which we believe represents great progress in easing tensions on the peninsula, going a long way to eliminating the danger of war throughout the peninsula and achieving a fundamental resolution of hostile relations. The Government of the Republic of Nicaragua hopes that nuclear weapons will be completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantled and that the countries involved will cooperate in the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and thereby assure a firm, lasting and sustainable peace on the peninsula.

The Government of Nicaragua supports the nuclear negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3/EU+3, which resulted in the finalization of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on 14 July 2015. We stress that this agreement demonstrates that dialogue and diplomacy are the only and most appropriate way to resolve these problems, as an essential contribution to strengthening and implementing multilateralism.

Nicaragua attaches special importance to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a legally binding instrument of international consensus within the global non-proliferation regime for disarmament and the peaceful use of atomic energy. The international community needs concrete measures, especially the immediate compliance of nuclear-weapon States with

their commitments under article VI of the NPT, and their clear commitment to negotiating effective measures for nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective controls.

We support the negotiation of a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. Nicaragua and Russia have committed bilaterally to refraining from being the first to deploy arms in space. We will also sponsor a draft resolution with the same objective, as we do every year.

Nicaragua is committed to preventing, combating and eradicating illicit arms trafficking. Through a special law on the control and regulation of firearms, munitions, explosives and other related materials, we have incorporated into our national legislation the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Citizen security is one of Nicaragua's main strengths, and in this regard we have developed a series of specific policies and programmes to combat today's scourges of terrorism, crime and trafficking in drugs, arms and humans, among other things. We emphasize that international assistance and cooperation are indispensable to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action.

Nicaragua is proud of the establishment of Central America as a zone free of mines and cluster munitions. Nicaragua is currently the pro tempore Chair of the Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and is working for its universalization.

Nicaragua believes that the use of new information and communication technologies, including social networks, must be fully compatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and must not be used to promote crime or pose a risk to international peace and security. We call for that important subject to be discussed in the context of the United Nations.

In conclusion, many of us have spoken about the stalemate in the disarmament machinery, but we have not been able to solve the real problem, which is the lack of political will on the part of some States to achieve real progress, especially in terms of nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Duarte Lopes** (Portugal): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the Committee. I want to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), and would like to make some additional comments.

In the current climate of growing mistrust, we believe that effective multilateralism, real cooperation and a willingness to reach consensus are more than ever the way forward. The role of the United Nations and the existing rules-based multilateral system should be strengthened. The efforts of the Secretary-General to reinforce synergies across the United Nations system, with the aim of maximizing progress towards peace, security, sustainable development and human rights, are welcome. As the initial implementation plan for the agenda for disarmament has been launched, our response to the Secretary-General's call for action is positive.

Portugal remains fully committed to nuclear disarmament. The well-documented catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons should reinforce our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. It is a moral imperative. My country shares most of the concerns and frustrations about the lack of concrete steps on nuclear disarmament that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

However, in our view, a process of gradually reducing nuclear weapons, taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, continues to be the best approach to ensuring sustainable progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations. That inclusive, step-by-step approach has been driving progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons since the Cold War. But the gains made may be at risk, and we are witnessing a rise in global and regional tensions and growing signs of a new arms race in both strategic and conventional weapons.

The threat of nuclear proliferation remains a serious cause for concern. For Portugal, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation of the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the future development of the peaceful applications of



nuclear energy. We hope that the ongoing review cycle will result in a more robust and effective Treaty.

Portugal supports the essential role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in ensuring global chemical security and addressing evolving challenges. We believe that the upcoming fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention presents an opportunity to ensure the full implementation of the Convention that should not be missed. The international community should work together to restore the norm against chemical weapons. The confirmed use of chemical weapons in recent years in different parts of the world, including Europe, is totally unacceptable and those responsible must be held accountable. It was in that spirit that Portugal sponsored the decision adopted by the OPCW Conference of States Parties in June.

Despite the current worrisome trends, there are also some signs of hope. Recent diplomatic efforts on the Korean peninsula are welcome and must be encouraged. The inter-Korean dialogue and the talks between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should lead to the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Until then, the relevant Security Council resolutions must be fully implemented, and we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

One year after the United States withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the majority of Member States of the United Nations continue to support the agreement. As confirmed by the IAEA, the deal has been serving its purposes. We therefore strongly encourage its implementation by all parties.

Although some of those developments are encouraging, we should redouble our efforts to build confidence and reverse negative trends. The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be a priority. We call on all States, particularly the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty. Portugal has been actively involved in the efforts to promote the universalization of the CTBT and welcomes Thailand's recent ratification of the Treaty.

There is also an urgent need to start negotiations on a fissile-material cut-off treaty and achieve progress on nuclear-disarmament verification. The international community must continue to seek the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We must remain seized of the implementation of the 1995 resolution, guided by the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The disarmament machinery is another area where we could and should do more. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains closed to the admission of new States, like mine, that over the years have affirmed their interest in becoming full parties to the Conference. Portugal once again urges all States to address the issue of CD membership.

On the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), we were encouraged by the adoption at last year's session of recommendations on conventional arms. For the current cycle of our deliberations, we must build on that success and work together to reach consensus on the adoption of recommendations on the two working groups.

Turning to conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons are the most widespread instruments of violence and death. We welcome the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) adopted in June at the Review Conference, which stressed the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognizing the gender dimension. Regrettably, there was no consensus on the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the programme.

The Arms Trade Treaty has the potential to be a very effective instrument against the illicit trade in conventional arms and ammunition. Portugal urges all States that have not yet done so to join it.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is an example of a success, but despite the remarkable progress already achieved, we are still far from attaining the objective of an anti-personnel-mine-free world by 2025. Portugal calls on every State to support and promote the universalization and implementation of the Convention and the Maputo Action Plan.

On new and emerging threats, such as armed drones, autonomous weapons, cyberspace and the militarization of outer space, we should encourage transparency and adapt applicable international law or develop new regulatory multilateral security frameworks.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm Portugal's firm belief in the merits of effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core and anchored in international humanitarian law and human rights in all disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and initiatives.

**Mr. Rahman** (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the First Committee during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your competence and expertise will ensure the success of our work. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and wish them every success. And I congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq, on his efforts to steer the work of the Committee during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

The Kingdom of Bahrain emphasizes the importance of supporting all efforts to achieve peace and security for the peoples of the Middle East, a region that must be freed from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. That is an urgent necessity, given our belief in the importance of our fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The League of Arab States is among those sponsoring the draft resolution entitled "Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction", under agenda item 104, which is an important and essential issue.

The Kingdom of Bahrain stresses the importance of achieving the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, taking into consideration the right of all peoples to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We also stress the importance of ensuring that Israel implements the resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Kingdom of Bahrain underscores that the possibility of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction remains a major threat to world security. In spite of the progress made in recent years

towards minimizing such risks, it is urgent that we continue to make further efforts.

The decision of our friend the United States to withdraw from the nuclear agreement with Iran reflects its commitment to addressing practices by Iran that have destabilized security and peace in the Middle East region and the world.

Bahrain welcomes the two recent summits between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and their conclusions, which may help to defuse the tensions on the Korean peninsula. They could also help to achieve peace and security, as well as an appropriate solution for the nuclear programme of North Korea on the basis of the relevant international conventions.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its full commitment to working with you, Sir, and with the other members of the Committee, to making progress on all items pertaining to disarmament and international security.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): The representative of Syria has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind him that the first statement in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I had prepared a statement in right of reply to the reply made by the United States representative yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.5). However, after the United States representative clarified that he did not mean what he said about me yesterday, I will not use the right of reply that I had prepared in that regard.

Georgia is a main source of arms trafficking and the export of terrorists to Syria. Since the early days of the terrorist war organized by Western, regional and Gulf States against Syria, Georgia has continued to host secret prisons for the Central Intelligence Agency, as well as biological laboratories for the development of biological weapons, which violate its commitments to the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction in the world.

Britain is one of Europe's biggest exporters of terrorism and terrorists, especially to my country. It is leading a smear campaign against my country within the United Nations and further afield. Britain is no longer a major foreign-policy Power but has become a State that follows the lead of another major Power. It

has sponsored terrorism and terrorists in my country since the inception of the crisis and provided them with every kind of assistance, including arms, ammunition, equipment, intelligence and media coverage. It is therefore violating Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism. Britain's foreign policy is part and parcel of the problems around the world, alongside the apartheid regime, Cyprus and Hong Kong.

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

**Ms. Elliott** (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to make two announcements.

I would first like to remind all delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions is Thursday, 18 October, at 12 p.m. So far, we have received approximately 22 draft proposals for processing.

Secondly, on behalf of the delegation of Myanmar, we would like to invite delegations to informal consultations on the draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, which will take place at 3 p.m. in conference room A.

**The Chair:** The next meeting of the First Committee will be held on Monday, 15 October, at 3 p.m. in this

conference room to continue the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. I appeal to all delegations to be punctual so as to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

I should inform those present, both as a matter of courtesy and as Chair of the Committee, and out of respect for the full transparency I promised at the beginning of our session, that next week the Committee will be chaired by three Vice-Chairs in rotation: Ms. Marissa Edwards of Guyana, representing the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; Mr. José Ataíde Amaral of Portugal, representing the Group of Western European and other States; and Mr. Noël Diarra of Mali, representing the Group of African States. Ms. Muna Zawani Idris of Brunei Darussalam, representing the Group of Asia-Pacific States, will continue to be the Rapporteur of the Committee.

Next week I will be travelling to West Africa in my other capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, on behalf of the United Nations. We will meet again the week after that, and I am sure that everyone present will have productive discussions next week. Until then, I wish everyone a very enjoyable weekend in New York.

*The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.*