



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

## First Committee

7<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 15 October 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

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

*In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Diarra (Mali),  
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

### Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): Before I open the floor for statements in the general debate, I would like to remind all delegations that the list of speakers for our thematic discussion segment, which will start on Wednesday, 17 October, will remain open until Monday, 22 October, at 6 p.m.

I wish to remind all delegations taking the floor once again to kindly limit their interventions to eight minutes when speaking in their national capacity, and 13 when speaking on behalf of several delegations.

**Mr. Saleh Azzam** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, as well as the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the work of the First Committee during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. Through you, I would also like to congratulate the Chair of the Committee. I wish him every success. He can count on the support of the Lebanese delegation in successfully carrying out the work of the Committee.

I commend the efforts undertaken by the delegation of brotherly Iraq for the excellent conduct of the Committee's work during the previous session.

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

Lebanon has always firmly and steadfastly supported all international efforts to spare the world of the disasters and tragedies that are caused by weapons of mass destruction. For that reason, Lebanon joined all relevant international conventions and has been involved in the efforts to implement them.

On numerous occasions Lebanon has voiced its concerns over the deadlock in the efforts to establish a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. A number of resolutions have been adopted to that end during the various Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, specifically in 1995 and 2010. That deadlock has been caused by Israel, which seeks to safeguard its nuclear programme and arsenal against any international oversight. Israel has been ignoring and disregarding the international legal system regarding the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It intentionally creates obstacles to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons.

Lebanon believes that establishing such a zone is necessary for ensuring security and stability in that volatile region of the world, which has been marred by conflicts and terrorist threats, causing a great deal of concern. The relevant States should exert all necessary pressure on Israel in order to compel it to

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abide by international norms in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

It is incumbent upon the international community now more than ever to revitalize efforts to establish such a zone free of nuclear weapons in accordance with the aforementioned terms of reference. Consequently, Lebanon strongly supports the draft decision proposed by the League of Arab States, contained in document A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in 2019. We call on all States to support the draft resolution, which, in our view, provides a great opportunity that should not be missed.

The tremendous challenges caused by weapons of mass destruction must not allow us to forget the dangers posed by conventional weapons. Lebanon, together with all States seeking to achieve peace and security, is very concerned about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Lebanon fulfils all its obligations pursuant to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We update and implement our relevant national legislation, which is clearly and transparently reflected in Lebanon's relevant periodic reports, the most recent of which was in 2018.

In that regard, I am pleased to inform all Member States that some days ago Lebanon ratified the Arms Trade Treaty. That is a particularly significant step for us as we seek to combat the dangers posed by such conventional arms. Meanwhile, my country's delegation reaffirms Lebanon's commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is important for that Convention to achieve universality.

The leading role played by Lebanon in concluding the Convention was rooted in Lebanon's painful experience as a result of the cluster bombs and their remnants when Israel carried out its aggression against my country in 2006. Concerted efforts must be undertaken to end the use, stockpiling, production and financing of those dangerous weapons, as well as to protect innocent people from their deadly consequences.

Today the world is witnessing a technological revolution that affords us great opportunities. However, it also poses significant challenges, some of which are related to disarmament. The international community should pay attention to cybersecurity and promote international multilateral cooperation in order to

combat related challenges within the United Nations framework. Lebanon also believes in the importance of protecting outer space from an arms race, since it should be maintained as a common good for humankind. Outer space should be for the benefit of all humankind instead of posing a security threat.

The Charter of the United Nations reflects our collective faith in the inherent link between the goals of peace and security, sustainable development and the protection and promotion of human rights. For that reason, Lebanon believes in addressing disarmament from a humanitarian and comprehensive perspective. According to statistics, last year the world spent more than \$17 billion on armaments. We need to consider the positive impact of reducing military spending. That would contribute to promoting efforts towards achieving sustainable development at the international level. We also need to consider how to integrate the gender perspective into those efforts.

A few days ago, in Beirut we unveiled a symbolic copy of the knotted gun located at the entrance to the United Nations Headquarters. That represents a positive message that Lebanon is a country that believes in peace and strives for achieving it notwithstanding all the challenges that it faces, namely, occupation, threats and violations.

**Mr. Soemirat** (Indonesia): Let me first congratulate you and the other Bureau members on your election and assure you of my delegation's full support throughout this session. We would also like to thank the previous Chair and Bureau for their leadership during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by our representative on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

While some countries seem to have reincarnated the Cold War era, today's world is far more multipolar, complex and unpredictable. Despite the resistance by some to global interconnectivity, the economic and social links are hard to dismantle. Events and conflicts can quickly spiral regionally and beyond. Disarmament is a very direct way to reduce dangers in that particular environment, and, in that undertaking, nuclear weapons must command the highest priority. No other weapons can singlehandedly cause more destruction than them.

While Indonesia also stands resolutely against non-proliferation, it is regrettable that the States that possess nuclear weapons have reneged on their obligations related to nuclear disarmament. The focus on non-proliferation alone by the self-appointed nuclear-weapon States is unsustainable. It invites proliferation and the arms race. For far too long, the nuclear-weapon States' so-called step-by-step approach, with its unbalanced focus, has fuelled an impasse in the United Nations disarmament machinery. That should end.

Indonesia calls on the nuclear-weapon States to undertake their commitments with respect to nuclear disarmament in a swift, transparent and internationally verifiable manner. They should also refrain from the modernization of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Not only does that negate their commitments, it aggravates international security. Despite such negative trends, the vast majority of the international community demonstrated their strong determination against nuclear weapons by achieving the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year. Now, in partnership with relevant non-governmental organizations and civil society groups, we must all intensify our role to help universalize the Treaty and ensure that it enters into force as soon as possible.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is also essential to realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world. Indonesia has fulfilled its responsibilities, including by ratifying the CTBT. We call on the remaining annex 2 States to fulfil their responsibility. Indonesia also calls on nuclear-weapon States in particular to abide by their undertakings under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concerning the three Treaty pillars in a balanced manner. It is also necessary to ensure that the 2020 NPT Review Conference is fruitful. The provisions of legally binding security assurances in the context of the NPT are also essential. They will contribute to the strengthening of the Treaty.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are also critical. Anti-nuclear weaponization tools should also be promoted everywhere. Indonesia underlines the importance of maintaining South-East Asia free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We call on the nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the protocol to the Bangkok Treaty at the earliest. We underline the benefits of the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and urge the convening of the long-delayed

2012 conference. It is deeply regretful that the grand bargain agreed at the 1995 conference as a basis for the indefinite extension of the NPT continues to be unmet.

As a firm believer in peacemaking, we stress a higher priority on negotiation and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Despite developments jeopardizing the long-term viability of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), efforts should be made to ensure that the JCPOA serves as a means of obtaining assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme while at the same time yielding economic benefits for Iran.

Indonesia welcomes the recent positive developments concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We continue to monitor the situation closely in the hope that dialogue and concrete advances will lead to the complete denuclearization of the peninsula.

On the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Indonesia is delighted that last year's meeting of States parties to the BWC succeeded in reaching a consensus on international substance and process that reflects the common interests of all its member States. My delegation looks forward to participating in this year's meeting of States parties in order to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we are also firmly committed to the full and effective implementation of our obligations under the Convention. In that regard, we would like to reiterate our position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances is unjustifiable. Indonesia calls on all States parties and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to push forward towards the total elimination of chemical weapons.

Turning to conventional weapons, Indonesia expresses its concern about the immense loss of life and property that the illegal supply and illegitimate use of conventional weapons by unauthorized actors causes in so many regions. Indonesia fully supports 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 takes note of the result of the recent conference to review progress on its implementation. We emphasize strong international cooperation and support for such implementation. We condemn any deliberate use of explosive weapons

in populated areas in armed conflict. We agree with the need to strengthen norms, including through the consideration of an international instrument to protect civilians against explosive weapons.

Indonesia supports instituting negotiations on a treaty to ban an arms race in outer space. Such negotiations should be open, transparent and inclusive. Meanwhile, we encourage interim steps to build trust and transparency on that topic. Indonesia is also concerned about the threat of cyberattacks as well as the militarization of cyberspace. It is very important to establish norms against the use of the Internet as a medium for cyberattacks and cyberwarfare. We strongly support the promotion of the use of the Internet for the purposes of peace, development and human betterment.

We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community and reiterate our call on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. We welcome the establishment of the five subsidiary bodies of the CD and its reports and hope that it may pave the way towards the early commencement of the negotiation of its core issues.

We note with appreciation the Secretary-General's presentation of his agenda and vision in *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* in May. Its advancement can unfold positively towards many of the global disarmament challenges. We assure him of our full support in that regard.

In conclusion, I reiterate our support for the imperative of bolstering multilateralism together with everyone here. We must work together better and with a greater sense of collective responsibility. Indonesia stands ready to engage actively with all delegations to help ensure concrete results by the Committee, which is indispensable.

**Ms. Bartolini** (San Marino): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and wish you and all of us a fruitful and successful session. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his renewed commitment in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. His disarmament agenda and its priorities should guide our deliberations.

The Republic of San Marino — a small State founded on a culture of peace, dialogue and neutrality — recently

deposited the instrument of ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. For my country, that act represents the rejection of all weapons of mass destruction, and we hope that that action can be another small step towards achieving our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are the most lethal and indiscriminate category of weapons of mass destruction, and any use or threat of use of them is therefore unacceptable. We remain concerned about the 15,000 nuclear weapons that are stockpiled around the world and the modernization of arsenals. Nuclear weapons are the most devastating kind of weapon. Any detonation would have catastrophic and long-lasting humanitarian consequences. It would lead to massive suffering and have a tragic impact on people, society and our environment.

We can certainly say that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is one of our most successful instruments, although some of its goals remain unfulfilled. We need to implement all the commitments of the NPT, including the full implementation of article VI. We now have the opportunity to prepare for a successful 2020 NPT Review Conference, and we should all be fully committed to achieving that goal.

We cannot remain silent on the use of chemical weapons in the Middle East, Asia and Europe. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic has investigated several incidents in Syria involving the alleged use of chemical weapons. It is necessary to uphold the norm established against the use of such weapons. We cannot allow impunity in Syria or elsewhere, and we cannot allow the erosion of our rules.

We need to reduce the negative impact of conventional weapons. The availability of those weapons contributes to spreading chaos and violence around the world. Conflicts today are more frequent and long-lasting, and they are taking place in urban areas, where the use of explosive weapons has a devastating effect on civilians. The use of such weapons in populated areas causes numerous civilian casualties and tremendous damage and destroys hospitals, schools, infrastructure and water and electricity supplies, depriving civilians of medical care and access to food and basic services, which has resulted in their massive forced displacement. We call on all parties to fully comply with international humanitarian law, avoid using explosive weapons in



populated areas and minimize the impact of military operations on civilians.

The unregulated proliferation of small arms has a disproportionate impact on our societies, causing death and human suffering. Small arms fuel civil wars, organized criminal violence and terrorist activities. The illicit and unregulated trafficking of such weapons undermines security and the rule of law and contributes to increased poverty and human rights abuses and violations, including forced disappearances, displacement and recruitment of child soldiers, torture and rape.

In that regard, I would like to emphasize that vulnerable groups, such as women and children, are often disproportionately affected. The uncontrolled accumulation and presence of unregulated firearms and ammunition increase the risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Furthermore, in many conflict zones, small arms and light weapons are the main instrument of death and destruction and are often used to displace civilians and prevent humanitarian assistance and development projects. In addition, the continued availability of weapons in post-conflict environments will fuel future violence. The uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons has had serious humanitarian and social consequences and continues to pose a threat to peace, reconciliation, security, stability and sustainable development. The less control over the trade in small arms, the more devastating the human impact is. The implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects remains fundamental if we want to address such crimes and violence. Finally, the increased and excessive spending on weapons is not compatible with the vision of building a more stable and secure world or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resources should be redirected towards peace and prosperity for all.

We live in an extremely complex environment, and we have enormous challenges ahead of us. The only way to address them is through effective multilateralism and the integrity of our international norms. We need dialogue, trust and political will for concrete results and progress in all aspects of disarmament. All of us — Governments, experts and civil society — have a role to play in building a more secure world and a disarmament agenda that prevents violence and supports sustainable development.

**Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh): I congratulate Mr. Jingga on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure him and the other members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support in discharging their responsibilities.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is anchored in our Constitution and remains a fundamental pursuit of our foreign policy objectives. That perhaps explains why Bangladesh has usually been one of the first in South Asia to come forward in assuming its obligations under all major multilateral disarmament treaties. We welcome the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, launched this year, with its people-centred approach and specific action points. We thank the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for tracking the implementation of the action points in a transparent manner. We acknowledge a possible difference of views among Member States on certain elements and action points in the Agenda. We would, however, strongly encourage that the Agenda be mainstreamed into the work of the First Committee this year. Bangladesh commits itself to helping to advance certain aspects of the disarmament agenda pursuant to its national priorities.

Last year, in this Committee, we joined other delegations in calling for dialogue and diplomacy in de-escalating the tension and seeking lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula (see A/C.1/72/PV.8). We feel encouraged by the outcomes of the summit-level meetings held so far and urge all those concerned to forge ahead with their ongoing efforts. We must transcend the times of egregious political rhetoric and brinkmanship concerning the repeated nuclear and ballistic missile tests and possible threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In a similar vein, Bangladesh welcomed the Joint Comprehensive Programme of Action (JCPOA) to peacefully and constructively address the Iranian nuclear issue. We urge all parties to the JCPOA to remain engaged in order to build on the positive gains made so far, as attested by the International Atomic Energy Agency. We reaffirm the right of all Member States to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Bangladesh remains convinced that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be ensured only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that to be the underlying premise of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which we have signed. We are encouraged to see the steady increase in the Treaty's ratification.

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

Bangladesh commends the work done by the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, including its informal consultations with Member States. We hope that the expert group's work will help create grounds for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to be able to commence negotiations on the Treaty. We also look forward to the outcome of the work of the group of governmental experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. All those efforts and initiatives should be aimed at the shared objective of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh remains gravely concerned about reports of the use of chemical weapons in different parts of world. We reiterate our abiding support for any objective and impartial initiative that investigates those reports so as to ensure accountability for those responsible for such alleged use and to work decisively towards eliminating any remaining chemical weapons stockpiles or abandoned weapons. We underscore the importance of upholding the credibility and integrity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The chilling prospect of terrorists and other non-State actors seeking and obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction is becoming more real than previously assumed. With rapid progress in new technologies, including in the domains of artificial intelligence and

biotechnology, there is a potential for such threats being further aggravated. We should prioritize further mainstreaming those issues into our discussions in the First Committee and other relevant forums with a view to undertaking far-reaching normative exercises. We thank the Secretary-General for his Agenda for Disarmament and for highlighting some of those issues in his report on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts (A/73/177).

Bangladesh takes particular interest in ensuring the application of relevant international law for an open, secure and inclusive cyberspace. We underscore the need for compliance with norms agreed through the intergovernmental processes for regulating responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We recognize the need for developing further norms and standards in that regard, with the meaningful participation of all Member States and other relevant stakeholders. The voices and concerns of developing countries must be factored into any such process. At a side event on the margins of the general debate during the high-level week, our Honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, called for convening an international conference to that end.

With its recent launch of a nationally owned satellite, Bangladesh now has an enhanced interest in preventing an arms race in outer space. Pursuant to our principled position, Bangladesh commits to refraining from being the first to place weapons in outer space. While trust and confidence-building measures can be useful for preventing the weaponization of outer space, there is no denying the importance of concluding an international legally binding instrument to that effect under the purview of the CD.

Bangladesh remains seized of the possible ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty as it continues to explore ways to further improve its compliance with the Treaty's provisions. The threats posed by new technologies in manufacturing and reproducing small arms and light weapons should help spur further international cooperation to prevent such proliferation, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 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 addressed some of our critical concerns in that regard.

As a developing nation in transition, Bangladesh has a legitimate interest in advocating for channelling the massive resources deployed for the build-up of arms to the deserving priorities of sustainable development and sustaining peace. We remain committed to upholding the United Nations disarmament machinery, including by revitalizing the work of the CD. We reiterate the importance of convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to give further impetus to the disarmament machinery in an evolving and complex global context.

**Mrs. Theofili** (Greece): I would like to commend the Chair and the rest of the Bureau for the competence and guidance that they bring to the First Committee deliberations and to wish them every success in their challenging task.

Greece 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 contribute a few remarks in its national capacity.

First and foremost, we would like to reiterate the importance of safeguarding and reinforcing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) midway in the current review cycle of its many significant aspects, leading up to the 2020 Review Conference. The NPT is, and rightly so, the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

There is little, if any, disagreement about the importance of upholding the principle of undiminished security for all and about the fact that we bear witness to an ever-changing twenty-first century, with an increasingly diverse and challenging global security environment. However, that should not prevent us from prudently and realistically giving a new impetus to the interrelated pace of non-proliferation and progressive disarmament. It is in that very understanding, aimed at bolstering the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, that we must accelerate efforts towards a fissile material cut-off treaty and a nuclear disarmament verification framework. The way forward is a dialogue among nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, which would significantly enhance all future nuclear arms reduction efforts and ultimately lead to complete nuclear disarmament.

In its pursuit of a holistic approach and in the spirit of maintaining a constructive dialogue, Greece believes that, as long as Iran continues to respect its nuclear-related commitments, safeguarding the full and

effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action furthers the security interests of the European Union, upholds the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and lends credence to the key role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in verifying Tehran's commitments.

In addition, given the favourable momentum following the United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea summit in Singapore, any concrete steps towards the verifiable and irreversible disarmament of Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic military programmes should seek to ensure the IAEA's verification role and lay the groundwork for Pyongyang's recommitment to the NPT, its compliance with the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards System and its signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate what my country has repeatedly supported in this forum. While we remain a strong proponent of the NPT's third pillar, which focuses on the peaceful use of nuclear technology, and acknowledging the sovereign right of all States to opt for peaceful nuclear energy, we remain steadfast in our adherence to and respect for the international non-proliferation regime, the safeguards agreements and the IAEA's safety standards and security architecture.

We assign high importance to the stringent implementation of the IAEA's safety standards and nuclear security guidance documents. Furthermore, we believe that international confidence-building can be supported through, inter alia, the IAEA's international assistance and peer-review missions, such as the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review missions and site evaluations for external risks. Transparency and compliance with the results of such reports will contribute to bolstering regional and international confidence-building measures. In that regard, we commend the IAEA for stressing, in its 2018-2021 Nuclear Security Programme, the important elements of transparency and predictability, as well as for introducing the concept of nuclear security by design, similar to nuclear safety.

In conclusion, we welcome the actions proposed by the Secretary-General in his publication *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, which indicates the way forward for disarmament in these turbulent times. I would especially like to

point to the need for strengthening and consolidating nuclear-weapon-free zones and supporting the further establishment of such zones, including in the Middle East, and to appeal to all remaining States whose ratification is required for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force. Those two actions are key elements of the disarmament and non-proliferation edifice. Constructive deliberations will guide us towards securing our common future.

**Mr. Dhaene** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate the Chair on his assumption of office and to wish him every success in discharging his mandate. I assure him of my delegation's full support.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2) and wishes to add some remarks in its national capacity.

As the Secretary-General said in his Agenda for Disarmament, we live in dangerous times. He rightly points out that this new reality requires that disarmament and non-proliferation be put at the centre of the work of the United Nations. We welcome that position and express our readiness to further discuss the Agenda. Good coordination of the Agenda with the work of the First Committee is essential.

Belgium reiterates its commitment to the preservation of the international system based on respect for rules and standards and deplores the actions of some countries aimed at undermining that established order, such as the unscrupulous use of chemical weapons, destabilization through cyberattacks and the violation of international treaties. There are many such examples and they pose a genuine challenge to the maintenance of peace and security.

Our Committee deals directly with such issues. We must therefore assume our responsibilities. Let us show that we are committed to the principles and ready to enter into dialogue, which go hand in hand.

Belgium is committed to contributing to the preservation of that established order. That is what will motivate Belgium as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, starting next January. That is also what motivated Belgium when it undertook to assume the task of co-coordinator of the article XIV process of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Belgium will continue its efforts to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT, a key step towards our ultimate

goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. There is no shortcut to a nuclear-free world. That will require the entry into force of the CTBT.

As co-chair and in close partnership with Iraq, Belgium is working to create conditions that will lead States to accede to the Treaty. A special responsibility falls to the annex 2 States, but we will not forget the States that are not parties to the Treaty. Accession to the CTBT should not be conditioned on the action of other States. Indeed, such a tactic leads only to a circular rationale and an endless impasse.

The relevance of the Treaty's entry into force has been clearly demonstrated by the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Despite North Korea's recent declaration that it welcomes a halt to its nuclear tests, that announcement will become a firm commitment only if the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accedes to the CTBT and accepts the consequences of its accession, including the verification and irreversibility of its commitment.

Today, nuclear disarmament is in a sorry state. Real progress towards a world without nuclear weapons is sorely lacking. Moreover, yesterday's advances are in danger today. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles has been a pillar of European security for decades. Although most European States are not parties to the Treaty, they all benefit from the protection it provides. The preservation of the Treaty is of crucial importance. The two main parties to the Treaty must make the necessary efforts to resolve any disputes by using the dialogue platform provided for in the Treaty and by implementing the usual verification and confidence-building measures. We call on Russia to address the concerns raised by the development of a new missile system. We also hope that the protection against the threat of intermediate-range missiles that Europe currently enjoys can one day be extended to other continents.

Thanks to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty), the current number of strategic nuclear weapons deployed between the United States and Russia is at its lowest level since the end of the Cold War. At a minimum, the process should be initiated to extend the New START Treaty



beyond its expiry date of February 2021. We call on the United States and Russia to be more ambitious by further reducing the deployment level of strategic weapons and by starting negotiations on the reduction of all nuclear weapons systems, including tactical weapons.

Beyond those two crucial treaties, all nuclear States must act in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We must take decisions on the effective reduction of all kinds of nuclear weapons alongside decisions on reducing the dependence on nuclear weapons in defence doctrines. Alert and decision times for the launch of nuclear weapons should be extended, thereby reducing the risk of accidents or unauthorized attacks.

In the conventional field, too, Belgium wishes to contribute to building an international system based on the respect for rules. In the context of the Arms Trade Treaty, we attach particular importance to the issue of reporting and diversion. It is essential that the significant work done in the context of the Treaty be recognized and supported by our Committee.

My country welcomes the adoption, under the presidency of France, of the report of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We call for continued efforts to develop synergies between the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action.

Belgium maintains its active commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, in particular by chairing the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration this year. Victim assistance is a priority pillar of mine action and my country advocates the establishment of a cross-cutting approach to victim assistance through the various relevant instruments. The issue of gender deserves particular importance in that regard and we are pleased that the Norwegian presidency of the forthcoming Review Conference is preparing to give it the necessary consideration.

Belgium is concerned about the increased use of improvised explosive devices and the indiscriminate humanitarian impact of such devices, particularly on civilians, in armed conflicts or as a result of terrorist acts. My country condemns such attacks in the

strongest terms. It supports further work on this issue within the framework of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and encourages the exchange of information, best practices and increased cooperation among States under the Convention. The CCW is also the appropriate framework for discussing emerging technological challenges, including lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Finally, it is worrying that across the various multilateral mechanisms, there are growing arrears in the payment of contributions. The lack of resources hinders the implementation of treaties and conventions. This cross-cutting issue raises questions about the commitment of States to disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. In the dangerous world in which we live, such a breakdown in our commitment does not serve our interests.

**Mr. Saint-Hilaire** (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

I will now make a few brief remarks in my national capacity.

In his address to the General Assembly on 25 September, the Secretary-General stated:

“The nuclear peril has not eased, with non-proliferation at serious risk. Nuclear-weapon States are modernizing their arsenals. A new arms race could be triggered and the threshold for their use lowered” (A/73/PV.6, p. 2).

Those wise words of the Secretary-General are of particular concern to the First Committee, which deals with disarmament and international security issues. They evoke the first paragraph of the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. Are we really committed to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war? What is certain, for the time being, is that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction makes us fear that scourge.

Indeed, the international security environment is marred by acts of violence, armed conflict, terrorism and violent extremism, which inflict intolerable suffering on many populations. As a result, we are witnessing

the appalling destruction of essential infrastructure and livelihoods in the affected areas.

To respond effectively to disarmament challenges, our Heads of State and Government recently highlighted several safeguard measures. Fortunately, their views are generally in line with the Agenda for Disarmament launched by the Secretary-General in May. In that regard, I would be remiss if I did not reiterate here Haiti's unconditional support for all concrete initiatives aimed at disarmament and the peaceful settlement of conflicts that are tearing the world apart.

We have a responsibility to join forces to re-establish or strengthen safeguards to protect humanity from the threat of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons. It is worrying to note the persistence of marked differences of opinion among our countries on how to achieve that. We must at least keep in mind that international peace and security cannot in any way depend on the power of weapons.

My delegation would like to stress two clear considerations. First, the existence of weapons of mass destruction is one of the most serious threats to the survival of humankind. Secondly, no country should lend its power and influence to the arms race. We are all aware of the danger posed by a new arms race and the incalculable risks that it would represent for international peace and security. Some of the scourges of our time, such as terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime, are also inextricably linked to the proliferation of firearms.

The Republic of Haiti welcomes all efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting a common vision and adopting concrete measures to significantly reduce the nuclear threat. We would like to reaffirm our commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We are closely following the preparatory work for the 2020 Review Conference.

My country notes with great satisfaction the resumption of negotiations between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the significant progress towards the normalization of relations between the two Koreas. We strongly hope that nothing will undermine the efforts to achieve the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The Republic of Haiti reiterates its strong condemnation of any use of chemical weapons, which are used only to inflict cruel and unacceptable suffering on defenceless populations. We urge all States possessing such weapons to dispose of them unconditionally, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Similarly, we must support all efforts to achieve the universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

We cannot overemphasize the need to put an end to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. That phenomenon is a major obstacle to the security, stability and development of the most affected countries. Moreover, no country is completely immune to it.

The Republic of Haiti is encouraged by and welcomes the concrete progress made at 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 reiterates its commitment to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. In that context, we stress the crucial role of the Arms Trade Treaty and the urgency of its universalization.

We would also like to draw the attention of all States to the dangers posed by anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices. We deplore the number of victims of accidents caused by them and call for full compliance with the obligations arising from the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

We strongly hope that positive and transparent use will be made of scientific and technological innovations. In that regard, we strongly support the measures adopted or envisaged by the Secretary-General under the *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* initiative.

The current security challenges require collective action at all levels. To that end, we call for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant regional and subregional organizations. My delegation hopes that the work of our Committee will provide an

opportunity for a constructive exchange on ways to move forward on disarmament and human security.

The Republic of Haiti has consistently advocated for a world order based on the purposes and principles of the United Nations and, in the words of the Holy See, for respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings. Such an order is incompatible with an arms race. Rather, it is the race to implement the Sustainable Development Goals that will enable us to raise the Organization to the lofty standards of its founding fathers.

**Ms. Roopnarine** (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of my country on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/73/PV.2) and of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/73/PV.4).

For Trinidad and Tobago, disarmament is about preventing and eliminating violence, supporting sustainable development and upholding the principles of humanity. For my delegation, there is a direct correlation between disarmament and development. Our commitment to disarmament is therefore anchored within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Approximately 70 per cent of murders committed in the Caribbean Community subregion are perpetrated by the use of handguns. Such weapons are the arms of choice and are a key driver of armed violence, including gang violence and organized crime. Trinidad and Tobago is particularly affected by that unrelenting scourge of gun violence, which continues to be a malignancy in our society. The control, prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in such weapons is a top priority for my country. Trinidad and Tobago therefore considers the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects an important instrument for harnessing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

In that connection, we welcome the outcome document of the recently concluded third Review Conference of the Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex), as it represents a progressive step in addressing issues of critical importance in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation is pleased with

the inclusion of ammunition in the outcome document, which we see as a significant step forward. For years, many States, including Trinidad and Tobago, have asserted that any discussion of the illicit use of small arms and light weapons that makes no reference to ammunition is deficient. We are therefore pleased that it is included in the outcome document and remain optimistic that the international community can eventually reach consensus on addressing ammunition comprehensively within the context of the Programme of Action. We also consider the language on gender an important success of the Conference. We welcome its reference to gender-based violence, recognizing that in the lead-up to the third Review Conference, the Biennial Meeting of States laid the foundation for such significant progress. We urge all States to strive to fully implement the Programme of Action and underscore the importance of international cooperation and assistance in that regard.

Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its belief that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), if implemented in good faith, could reduce the human suffering caused by illegal and irresponsible arms transfers, improve regional security and stability and promote States parties' accountability and transparency with regard to transfers of conventional weapons. We encourage the Treaty's universalization and want to express our support for this year's draft resolution on the ATT (A/C.1/73/L.8), piloted by Latvia, which calls for strong and effective implementation of the Treaty.

Trinidad and Tobago shares the majority view that the only world that is safe from the use of nuclear weapons is one that is completely free of them. That belief has long underscored our policies, and we are a signatory to the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone, in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, we stand firm in our commitment to upholding our important and essential obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017 by a majority of States challenged the perception that disarmament is a goal that the United Nations has neglected. We were pleased to be among the States supporting that historic Treaty and are working diligently to sign and ratify it without delay. We join other delegations in highlighting the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The human and environmental

impact of the use and testing of nuclear weapons is not confined to the past. It remains a threat to the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals relating to health and well-being, gender equality and the environment, on land and in the oceans. CARICOM was part of a group of States that advocated for positive obligations in the Treaty. Those positive obligations, on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance, provide an opportunity to address the ongoing threat that nuclear-weapon activities pose to human rights, sustainable development and the environment. For my delegation, they represent one of the Treaty's most important articles.

My delegation is proud to be among those at the forefront of integrating the subject of women and peace and security into disarmament processes. In 2010, when Trinidad and Tobago first introduced a draft resolution (A/C.1/65/L.39) on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, it was suggested that the issue would find no traction in the First Committee, a sentiment that was subsequently disproved. Gender is an undeniable factor in peace and security. Women play a crucial leadership role in the ability of communities to counter violence and insecurity and should play a similarly crucial role in the area of disarmament. The issue will again be addressed during the current session of the First Committee in order to reflect recent developments in the field, and we welcome the Committee's support for this important initiative.

My delegation is concerned about the harm and risks associated with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). It is estimated that thousands of civilians, if not more, have been killed, injured or displaced as a result of that technology. Due to their unique characteristics, armed UAV operations have particular implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation wants to once again express its concern about the negative ethical, legal and humanitarian consequences of the use of armed UAVs in a manner incompatible with international law.

Finally, I would like to thank the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for the valuable practical work that it continues to undertake in CARICOM member States, including my own country, in many areas of disarmament.

**Mrs. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate

Ambassador Jinga on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure him of our full support and our trust in his ability to make this session a success. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to his predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Iraq, for his leadership of the work of the First Committee during the previous session.

The United Arab Emirates aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

The First Committee meets today to seek consensus on achieving international and regional peace and security amid the grave security challenges that threaten to undermine the progress made in the areas of disarmament and international security during the past year. Despite serious regional and international efforts, we continue to suffer the consequences of the smuggling of weapons and their use by non-State actors, as well as the use of chemical weapons against civilians, the conduct of nuclear testing and the launching of ballistic missiles such as those fired by the Iranian-backed Houthis at Saudi Arabia. The United Arab Emirates therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative on global disarmament with the goal of eliminating nuclear arsenals and other destructive weapons around the world. In that regard, the United Arab Emirates believes firmly in the importance of using international forums on disarmament and international security, such as the First Committee, to achieve consensus on disarmament and support the international community in its efforts to establish a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to the issue of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates underscores its continued commitment to supporting all efforts aimed at making progress towards that objective. We also hope that the current review session for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will take serious steps to implement the agreed 2010 Action Plan and convene a conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction without delay and with the participation of all the countries of the region. In that regard, my country once again calls on Israel to accede to the NPT, since it is the only State in the region that has so far failed to do so.



The United Arab Emirates was one of the first States to call for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We attach special importance to the NPT because my country is committed to ensuring global security. We maintain a clear and steadfast policy on issues of non-proliferation and disarmament and particularly value participation in the relevant international conventions and ensuring their full implementation. We also pursue transparent policies on the peaceful and responsible use of nuclear weapons. The United Arab Emirates complies fully with the criteria set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and calls for enabling the Agency to implement the measures contained in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), foster confidence among the international community and address the related international concerns.

Like many other States, the United Arab Emirates hoped that the implementation of the JCPOA signed with Iran would address all the remaining relevant issues and have a positive effect on Iran's conduct in the region, in addition to addressing previous concerns about its ballistic-missile programme. However, we are still concerned about Iran's ambitions and its desire to develop weapons of mass destruction despite the opportunities that the international community has afforded it to change its aggressive policies. We supported the United States decision to withdraw from the JCPOA for the same reasons. We therefore urge Iran to work to increase confidence in its nuclear activities through its commitment to transparency and full cooperation with the IAEA. We also call on it to cease any activity that undermines peace, security and stability in the region.

The United Arab Emirates considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be vital. We believe in its important role in promoting nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons at the international level. We therefore call on States that have not yet acceded to it, especially annex 2 States, to take every step necessary to sign and ratify it as soon as possible. We also urge all States to continue to refrain from testing nuclear weapons. In that regard, my country has welcomed the recent positive steps with regard to the crisis on the Korean peninsula that have been reflected in the high-level talks between the two countries. We also welcomed the summit held between the Presidents of the United States and North Korea in June, marking a turning point in efforts to

reduce tensions and achieve peace and security on the Korean peninsula. We once again call on North Korea to return to the NPT, sign the CTBT, end all nuclear and ballistic-missile tests and abide by the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Finally, the United Arab Emirates underscores the importance of the engagement of women in disarmament issues and international security, as well as the promotion of the role of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional and international organizations. In that context, we have launched some significant programmes and organized seminars for young people with the aim of enhancing their knowledge about nuclear issues and improving the participation of women, men and young people. We also realize that we should involve all sectors of society if we want to pursue innovative policies that address the most urgent issues of our time, especially with regard to international peace and security.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to congratulate Ambassador Jinga and the other Bureau members on their election and assure them of our full cooperation. I also sincerely commend the leadership of the First Committee's outgoing Chair, Ambassador Bahr Aluloom of Iraq.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Since the Committee met last year, the world has become less safe and less stable. We have seen systematic attempts to undermine the value, significance and efficacy of multilateralism, demonize multilateral institutions and agreements and disregard global rules and norms. One such example is clearly the illegal withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was the result of long and intensive multilateral diplomatic efforts to resolve a manufactured crisis and build trust. In 12 reports, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed Iran's full compliance with its commitments. However, the current United States Administration, in violation of its international commitments, has withdrawn from the JCPOA and has continued to systematically violate its commitments under the JCPOA and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). It is now brazenly forcing others to either violate the resolution or face punishment.

In such circumstances, doing nothing is not an option. We have to defend multilateralism because it is the foundation of the rules-based international system. We must defend multilateral agreements and institutions. We should protect their credibility and enhance their effectiveness. As part of our mandate in this Committee, therefore, let us consider how we can advance multilateral cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation. We agree with the Secretary-General that the current realities of the international security environment demand that disarmament and non-proliferation be put at the centre of the United Nations work. We commend him for presenting his agenda on disarmament.

Nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat to humankind. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was recently adopted, thanks to the strong determination of non-nuclear-weapon States. That is a historic accomplishment that complements the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). And yet, despite that, achieving nuclear disarmament appears as impossible today as it was in the 1970s. The nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility for realizing nuclear disarmament. However, they are making no meaningful efforts to implement their obligations to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The core problem of nuclear disarmament is unilateralism, and specifically the unilateral nuclear actions and policies of the United States, which represent the gravest threat we have to nuclear disarmament. As long as the nuclear policy of the United States remains the same, there will be no progress towards nuclear disarmament.

The non-implementation of article VI of the NPT is a threat to the Treaty's future. The best way to protect its credibility is to implement it fully. The main focus of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT should therefore be States' full implementation of their obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament.

The lack of progress in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East continues to be a matter of deep concern. We cannot achieve peace and stability in that volatile region as long as the Israeli nuclear arsenal exists. Indeed, the existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of Israel, a country with a long and dark record of crimes such as occupation, aggression, State terrorism and crimes against humanity, represents a uniquely grave threat to regional and international peace and security. On

29 August, Israel's Prime Minister, speaking at his regime's underground nuclear weapons development centre, known as Dimona, explicitly threatened Iran with nuclear annihilation, a threat that should not be condoned. The Security Council should fulfil its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, as well as its commitment under resolution 984 (1995), to strongly condemn that threat by the Israeli regime to use nuclear weapons against Iran.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has been a successful multilateral disarmament instrument. The global norms against the use of chemical weapons must be fully upheld. We categorically condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone. We call for ensuring the CWC's full implementation and universalization. The disputes regarding the mandate of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) must be settled. If not, the OPCW will be further polarized and lasting damage will be done to the Convention, which must be avoided. We must work hard to ensure the success of the Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in November.

The Biological Weapons Convention, as a crucial multilateral disarmament instrument, is also facing old and new challenges. In order to address them, all aspects of the Convention should be strengthened. To that end, the most effective approach would be to resume the negotiations on a multilateral legally binding protocol for the Convention. We call on the United States to withdraw its objection to those negotiations.

Effective measures to prevent an arms race in outer space are also imperative. The announcement by the United States of its creation of a new military force for outer space is an alarming development. As United States officials have stated, they seek dominance in outer space, view it as a potential domain for fighting wars and plan to work on developing a space-based weapon system. Such policies and measures increase the possibility of an arms race or even of conflicts in outer space. In order to prevent that, Iran supports negotiating a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament.

**Mr. Mahmaminov** (Tajikistan): I would like to congratulate Ambassador Jinga on his appointment as Chair of the First Committee and to assure him of my

delegation's full support and cooperation during this session. I also want to express our appreciation to the other members of the Bureau and the secretariat of the First Committee for their support and cooperation.

Strengthening multilateral mechanisms for controlling weapons, disarmament and non-proliferation is key to maintaining global security and stability. In that regard, the threat of nuclear proliferation remains a serious cause for concern. We therefore regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Tajikistan shares the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and believes that no nuclear-disarmament mechanism can be effective without the participation of all the relevant stakeholders, particularly the nuclear-weapon States. We therefore call for the implementation of the NPT and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible. Tajikistan supports the ongoing efforts to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula through political and diplomatic means, and the recent inter-Korean dialogues and summits must therefore be further encouraged.

The establishment of nuclear-free zones is an important component of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the strengthening of regional peace and security. The entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on 21 March 2009 was an important milestone for our region. Through the Treaty, the countries of Central Asia have made a significant contribution to strengthening regional and global security. The countries that constitute such zones have pledged not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or to receive any assistance in their manufacture. The nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia has therefore made a real contribution to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as being a mechanism for regional security. In that regard, we attach special importance to accelerating the ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on negative security assurances, signed on 6 May 2014 on the margins of the third Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Building strong guarantees of peace and security in our region and around it creates a foundation for sustainable development, cooperation and progress.

Tajikistan attaches great importance to the efficient implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We call urgently for a Central Asia free from the threat posed by mines and for strengthening cooperation in the area of humanitarian demining.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm Tajikistan's belief in the merits of multilateralism, with the norms and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at its centre. The United Nations, as the world's most reputable international organization, continues to be the main universal platform for achieving consensus on key issues ranging from international security to development, as well as for coordinating the joint and consistent efforts of the international community to meet global challenges and address the risks faced by a new generation.

**Mr. Barro (Senegal)** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate Ambassador Jinga on his assumption of the Chair of the First Committee and to assure him of my delegation's support and full cooperation. I also congratulate all the other members of the Bureau.

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

Today's geopolitical tensions and increasing risk of the use of nuclear weapons are complicating the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, and non-proliferation in all its aspects are still a long way from being realized, and multilateral negotiations are making little headway, despite the adoption on 7 July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by States at the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards Their Total Elimination. We therefore need collective efforts to prevent armed conflicts and maintain international peace and security. That requires a comprehensive approach to establishing dialogue and mutual trust, which, I should point out, are prerequisites for the successful regulation and elimination of weapons.

It is right to stress here that multilateralism is more than ever the most appropriate approach for achieving

concrete results. Nuclear-weapon States will therefore have to redouble their efforts and take concrete steps to meet the goal we all share of disarmament, in accordance with their obligations and other commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Accordingly, we call on those States to take action in that regard and work towards the total elimination of their nuclear warheads. My country, Senegal, will continue to support the humanitarian initiative to eliminate nuclear weapons, reflecting the will of States and other civil-society actors to find other effective ways and means to eliminate such weapons, which pose a continuing threat to humankind.

With regard to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held from 18 to 29 June, provided an opportunity for Member States to take stock of their efforts and identify innovative measures as part of a collective approach to improving the effectiveness of the fight against the illicit trade and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Conference resulted in the unanimous adoption of a comprehensive and ambitious outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) aimed at achieving concrete and effective progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, including combating the diversion, manufacture, reactivation and illicit conversion of small arms and light weapons, as well as improving coordination, cooperation and assistance in this area, tackling the gender issue and including the subject of ammunition. Member States reaffirmed their commitment to fully implementing the Programme of Action and to strengthening cooperation and assistance among countries.

The delegation of Senegal welcomed the entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), with the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty held in Tokyo in August. My country is implementing the ATT and continues to promote its universalization and encourage regional cooperation in order to benefit from the sharing of best practices, while continuing to engage civil society in raising awareness about the ATT. I call on all countries that have not yet signed and ratified the ATT to do so as soon as possible in order to facilitate its universalization and implementation.

Negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, another essential pillar of disarmament and non-proliferation, are also unfortunately at an impasse, despite the fact that some efforts and progress have been made. However, at its most recent meeting in June, the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group, which consists of 25 members, including Senegal, and which is tasked with making recommendations on aspects that could contribute to drafting a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, successfully negotiated a consensus report recommending elements for a future treaty. In the meantime, we must ensure that existing stocks of fissile materials do not fall into the wrong hands and that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force without delay. In addition, the inalienable rights of States to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, must be upheld.

With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, we welcome the decision of 16 February, under the Sri Lankan presidency, to establish five separate subsidiary bodies that in principle should end the deadlock in the Conference and strengthen its exclusive role as a multilateral negotiating body on disarmament matters.

The same holds true for the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which has begun its 2018-2020 three-year cycle under the new theme of confidence-building measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. My delegation hopes that in 2020 it will issue recommendations on nuclear weapons and on this new theme, following the 2017 recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons.

With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, we call for the signature and ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention and for the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Finally, my country welcomes the invaluable contribution that non-governmental organizations make in the area of disarmament. I want to reiterate that they should be given fair representation, including in our deliberations.

**Mr. Musaddeq** (Afghanistan): Afghanistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative



of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Afghanistan is deeply concerned about the deteriorating international security environment. The impact of nuclear weapons on the environment, human health, food security and economic development has been catastrophic, and we must work together to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons and their possible use or even threat of use. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General has highlighted in his new Agenda for Disarmament, the international community must ensure accountability and end impunity for violations of international law.

Afghanistan is party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), among other multilateral treaties that call for the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We urge all Member States that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so. My delegation firmly believes that multilateral diplomacy is essential to advancing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Only through strong collective action can we achieve a nuclear-free world. In that regard, we welcome the ongoing efforts, including dialogue, to address various relevant situations, and hope that they will lead to positive outcomes. Afghanistan welcomes the recent hopeful developments and significant efforts for dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. My delegation would also like to reiterate its strong support for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Afghanistan has experienced tremendous suffering for more than four decades. We can attest to the fact that an abundance of small arms and light weapons, and easy access to them, empowers terrorists, violent extremists and organized criminal groups. Terrorists have sharply escalated their attacks in Kabul and other urban areas since 2016, and their attacks also involve small arms and light weapons. Ineffective or non-existent arms control is a destructive element that helps to drive the cycle of violence in our region. As outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there is a clear link between arms regulation and development and between illicit trafficking in arms and organized crime. Illicit weapons, drug trafficking and money-laundering enable and follow the purchase of weapons by non-State actors. We must work to better understand those

complex relationships and take all necessary measures to disrupt the flow of arms to conflict regions.

Afghanistan believes that small arms control is a prerequisite for regional stability and a top priority. In that regard, we ratified and acceded to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols in August of last year. We call on all the relevant parties to take full responsibility for preventing terrorist organizations' access to precursors and weapons and to enhance efforts to build national capacities for implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Explosive remnants of war and landmines pose a serious threat to global peace and security. Afghanistan remains one of the countries in the world with the most landmines. Last year, more than 2,000 Afghans were killed or injured by landmines, which is five times the number of civilians killed in 2012.

Of equal concern is the fact that Afghanistan is the country most affected by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Last year, 40 per cent of the 10,000 civilian casualties and injuries reported in Afghanistan were caused by IED attacks. Eighty per cent of those victims were children, and many of those who survived suffered serious injuries. The catastrophic impact of IEDs extends beyond physical security alone. Rapid advancements in the design of IEDs and detonation have brought unprecedented challenges for humanitarian assistance in various conflict settings around the world.

IEDs have become the primary weapon for non-State armed groups across many conflicts and are responsible for killing and maiming thousands of civilians every day. Last year, more than a third of all countries were affected by IED attacks. The increasingly transnational nature of such devices demands a comprehensive international response. For this reason, Afghanistan calls upon all Member States to support draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.60, entitled "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices", a previous version of which was adopted by consensus in both the First Committee and in the General Assembly in 2015 (resolution 72/36). The draft resolution conveys Afghanistan's strong commitment to preventing and mitigating IED attacks. It also serves to bring countries together and build consensus at the international level. We thank all Member States that have supported the draft resolution, in particular Australia and France.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Chair of my delegation's constructive engagement throughout the discussions of the First Committee.

**Mr. Matt** (Liechtenstein): This year's high-level week was dominated by a discussion on the value of a rules-based international order. While sobering and alarming at times, it also brought a strong commitment by an overwhelming majority to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Not for a very long time, however, have positions on the very foundations of the United Nations been so starkly diverged.

Today that divergence penetrates all areas of multilateralism, all pillars of the United Nations and all agendas that we have set for ourselves in the Organization. It has erosive effects on our collective security that can be felt most imminently when it comes to the subject matter of the First Committee. The new arms race, combined with the increasing disrespect for legal norms and the unwillingness of a few to address the threats posed by new technologies, puts us on a dangerous trajectory. Inaction has hardly ever come at a higher cost than today.

The Secretary-General has recognized the signs and proposed a way forward. Liechtenstein supports his new disarmament agenda, which is ambitious, given the current political environment, but, in many respects, sets a bare minimum standard for our collective response to today's threats. All the more, Liechtenstein will vigorously support efforts to implement the Secretary-General's vision to secure our common future in a comprehensive manner.

The *acquis* of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements comes with tangible security gains and has proved time and again its potential to reduce tension. It goes without saying that compliance with obligations is essential if we are to enjoy the full benefits of the rule of law. Unfortunately, we see this guiding principle of international relations increasingly under pressure, with particularly grave consequences when such long-standing norms as the total prohibition of chemical weapons or the fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law are routinely violated.

Our response should be to strengthen the agreements we have entered into and to increase accountability for non-compliance. The Security Council too often fails to live up to its responsibility in that regard. But the increasing willingness of the General Assembly and its

subsidiary bodies to step up its involvement should be a reason for hope. With the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, we have a valuable tool to address the gravest violations of international law in Syria, including chemical weapons attacks. It is currently the only avenue to justice in Syria.

Liechtenstein welcomes the *détente* in the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula and the prospect of increased security as a result. We hope that the political commitments soon translate into legal obligations and verifiable steps towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Tangible progress towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would be a very welcome and concrete first step towards a more comprehensive package of agreements. The way of multilateral diplomacy has been successful in other crises of non-proliferation. Liechtenstein continues to consider the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to be a landmark achievement in that respect. Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) is a reflection of the collective security gains that the international community as a whole associates with the agreement and that we risk losing should the agreement be further undermined. Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) remains binding on all States. We therefore share a responsibility to comply with its provisions.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons has guided the work of the United Nations since its very beginnings. With the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it has given effect to the grand bargain between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Without any doubt, the world is a much safer place thanks to the safeguards regime of the NPT. Unfortunately, we have not come anywhere close to that level of implementation with respect to nuclear disarmament. Quite to the contrary, the serious obligations of nuclear-weapon States contained in the NPT are routinely mistaken for discretionary options or, worse, entitlements. Important agreements from NPT Review Conferences suffer from revisionism or are discarded altogether, including in the First Committee. We will soon have a new opportunity to rectify this course of action with the next NPT Review Conference. Liechtenstein is committed to working towards a substantive result that builds on past agreements.

Liechtenstein is one of the initial signatories of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This Treaty helps restore the balance of the NPT and thereby strengthens it. It complements the CTBT and its verification machinery in establishing a clear legal norm against nuclear tests. Most importantly, however, the Treaty draws a clear legal line against any attempts to justify the use of nuclear weapons. There is simply no justification in the light of the horrendous and indiscriminate suffering such weapons unfailingly inflict on civilians. The comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons enshrined in the Treaty represents the will of a large majority of States and will strengthen the rule of law at the international level. It is our firm hope that it will also provide the foundation for nuclear disarmament in the future. In the current circumstances, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is our best reason for optimism in this regard.

The Secretary-General has identified a number of serious emerging threats based on increased technical capacities and new developments in the areas of cyberspace and artificial intelligence. The work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security has made an important contribution to our collective understanding of the scope of threats and the necessity for cooperation and risk reduction. There can be no question that warfare in future will be based significantly on cyberweapons, and drawing on past experiences, it is not difficult to assert that the rules regulating the use of force extend to cyberspace.

The United Nations Charter does not cease to apply in cyberspace, nor do many other legal agreements that regulate State behaviour in terms of the illegal use of force, conduct during conflict, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as fundamental rights and freedoms. The applicability of existing legal obligations in cyberspace is therefore an indispensable component of our future discussions and indeed a precondition to identifying possible legal gaps.

Liechtenstein supports such a discussion, in particular when it comes to the illegal use of force against the background of existing legal obligations, including the framework of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Given the relevance of this topic to all States, discussions on cybersecurity should henceforth take place in a regular and inclusive format. Moreover, a number of technical developments clearly point to a

need for new legal obligations, in particular in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Liechtenstein supports efforts to establish binding standards to ensure a human component in the decision-making processes of such systems. As on many other important disarmament questions in the past, the principled resistance of very few States should not prevent the large majority from establishing and benefiting from new standards in this area. Liechtenstein looks forward to stronger collective action in this area.

**Mr. Zambrana Torrelío** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, allow me to congratulate the Chair on his election, as well as the other members of the Bureau who are assisting him in directing the work of the First Committee. They can count on the support of my delegation.

Secondly, my delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered, respectively, by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), and the representative of El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/73/PV.4).

We meet at a time of great tensions worldwide. Given our concerns over the considerable number of armed conflicts, which bring with them a great humanitarian cost, Bolivia has committed itself to the culture of dialogue among nations through the diplomacy of peoples. With its will to uphold international law and as a pacifist State and promoter of culture and the right to peace, Bolivia advocates for the implementation of peaceful means for the settlement of disputes, good offices, preventive diplomacy, multilateralism, non-interference and respect for the sovereignty and independence of States, which are universal principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and recognized by the international community and are effective tools to ward off the scourge of war and its consequences. In that regard, we must emphasize the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to achieving peace, preventing conflicts through the analysis of their structural causes, strengthening the rule of law and promoting economic growth and social development.

As part of the first densely populated area in the world to declare itself free of nuclear weapons through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and as part of the first region to

declare itself a zone of peace, Bolivia believes that the States Members of the United Nations have before them the great challenge of implementing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 7 July 2017. In this context, we call on all States to sign, ratify and give immediate effect to its provisions. That is the best way to avoid the catastrophic possibility of the use of such weapons. It is an ethical imperative and a debt to future generations.

It is time for countries to commit themselves to prohibiting the development, testing, production, acquisition and possession of nuclear arsenals, which is why we call upon States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their security and defence doctrines and policies and to comply fully with their legal obligations and commitments, in order to achieve the total elimination of this type of weapons. We must be aware that we have reached a point at which those weapons put at risk not only the destruction of entire nations or peoples, but all life on planet Earth because a miscalculation in a crisis, a human error or a mechanical or computational failure could trigger the worst-case scenario for all living beings.

Consequently, we reiterate our opposition to the conduct of any nuclear test, as well as the launching of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. We call for the dismantling of any nuclear or related ballistic-missile programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We therefore welcome the prospects for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the latest developments of which we consider encouraging, as the dialogue between the highest-level authorities of the relevant parties during the intra-Korean summits, as well as the one held in Singapore in June last year, led to the cessation of nuclear and ballistic-missile tests.

The States Members of the United Nations are obliged to comply with the essential tenets of the Charter of the United Nations, adopted in 1945, especially that of resolving international disputes through the use of peaceful settlement mechanisms. In no conflict should arms of any kind be used. On the contrary, negotiations, diplomacy and dialogue should guide the actions of countries. Bolivia is convinced that only through these means will we achieve more just societies with shared responsibilities.

In that context, the development of confidence-building measures is essential. A successful example of the implementation of such measures is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme, which underscored the willingness of the parties to reach a peaceful and consensual agreement. That programme strengthens the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes generally to peace and stability in the Middle East. We regret that one of the parties has abandoned this important initiative.

Multilateralism should be the basic principle of all disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. Bolivia reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, preservation and strengthening of multilateralism, which is why we seek to renew the commitment of the international community to move towards the definitive elimination of weapons of mass destruction and thereby raise awareness of the humanitarian impact and catastrophes that could be caused by the use of those weapons, as well as the threat posed by their mere existence in the world.

In that regard, we express our concern at the reports on the possible use of chemical weapons. Bolivia firmly and categorically condemns the use of chemical weapons, or the use of chemical elements as weapons, because it is an unjustifiable and criminal act, regardless of the circumstances and who uses them, since their use constitutes a serious crime against international law and a threat to international peace and security.

Bolivia adheres to the principles of the prohibition of the use of weapons in outer space, and, on the contrary, believes that the exploration of outer space should be carried out for exclusively peaceful purposes. For this reason, we believe that a possible arms race is a cause for concern. The legal regime applicable to outer space does not in itself guarantee the prevention of such a race, which requires a commitment to and compliance with the rule of law to prevent such a situation.

Accordingly, we reiterate our defence of the rule of law in order to consolidate and improve the international non-proliferation regime. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other relevant resolutions constitute the legal basis for the international non-proliferation regime.



Finally, we regret the million-dollar investment in the military-industrial complex, the exorbitant amounts of which could be better spent on health or education in order to make future generations aware of the scourge of war. The responsibility of our generation is to deliver a fairer and safer world to the future generations. That will be achieved only if we work together to consolidate a multipolar world, with common rules to respect and defend from all threats to the United Nations.

**Mr. Margaryan** (Armenia): On behalf of the Armenian delegation, I want to congratulate the members of the Bureau on the assumption of the leadership of the Committee and assure them of our full cooperation and support.

Armenia strongly supports international non-proliferation regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and other relevant treaties, all of which are indispensable for maintaining international peace and security. Armenia continues to take a strong stance in support of the exceptional role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in facilitating and coordinating nuclear-security activities among Member States, as well as international organizations and initiatives. As a member of the IAEA Board of Governors for the years 2017-2019, Armenia brings its contribution to the collective efforts aimed at strengthening the nuclear-security architecture.

We attach great importance to reinforcing nuclear security both at national and international levels through the ratification and implementation of international legal instruments, as well as the establishment of robust national legislation. Armenia fully implements its international obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and is a member of the related Group of Friends. Armenia's national action plan for 2015-2020 is an important additional voluntary measure that outlines a series of steps reflecting already implemented national measures, as well as ongoing and anticipated activities.

Armenia continues its active involvement in counter-proliferation initiatives, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and fully shares its key objectives enshrined in its Statement of Principles. We consider the Global Initiative to be an important platform for developing partnership capacities, examining best practices and techniques

related to terrorist threats or incidents involving radiological or nuclear material, and coordinating activities to promote an information exchange among interdisciplinary groups of experts.

Armenia attaches high priority to the full implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) through its instruments at national and international levels. Armenia has undertaken significant steps towards the implementation of the provisions of the BWC by creating a national programme of action, and, with the valuable assistance of its international partners, has been constantly strengthening its national capacities and capabilities in the area of biological safety and security.

We firmly believe that an effective, functioning and comprehensive conventional-arms-control regime, as well as faithful implementation of the commitments under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), is vital for military transparency, predictability and security at international, regional and subregional levels. Armenia is committed to the maintenance of the legally binding conventional-arms-control regime in Europe and fully complies with the obligations on force limitations, as well as on on-site inspections and information exchange with respect to its armed forces under the CFE Treaty.

Overall, Armenia received eight inspections and evaluation visits under the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and bilateral arrangements this year. The reports of these inspections have affirmed Armenia's full compliance with the letter and spirit of the aforementioned international documents.

Armenia considers the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to be an important instrument aimed at promoting a safer and more peaceful security environment at global and regional levels. The illicit trafficking and circulation of small arms and light weapons not only are a major source of insecurity, but also impede socioeconomic development and contribute to gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Armenia is an active contributor to international peace and security through its involvement in various peacekeeping missions. We attach particular importance

to our participation in the United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations in Lebanon and Mali. Convinced that peacekeeping operations, executed in accordance and compliance with Security Council mandates, are crucial for promoting stability, peace and security, we are also determined to further enhance our peacekeeping capabilities. It is with this understanding that Armenia co-sponsored the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, in November 2017. We have also endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations launched in September this year by the Secretary-General within the framework of his Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

We unequivocally denounce all forms and manifestations of terrorism regardless of motives and narratives. In the context of addressing threats stemming from or related to foreign terrorist fighters, the adoption of Security Council resolution 2396 (2017), in December 2017, represents an important milestone in preventing foreign terrorist fighters from travelling to conflict areas or relocating to third countries and in effectively addressing related risks. In this regard, the Armenian Government has already initiated a number of practical steps and measures to ensure appropriate implementation of provisions enshrined in the resolution, including the introduction of advance passenger information and passenger name record systems.

We resolutely condemn any attempt to justify and glorify the incitement of violence and bellicose rhetoric. It is important to recognize and combat extremist and fundamentalist ideologies emanating from certain countries and terrorist or other criminal groups that encourage hatred and discriminatory attitudes towards neighbours, minorities or those of different identities.

As a supporter of the concept of regional engagement, Armenia has consistently promoted the efficiency and the role of regional mechanisms, including for the maintenance of international peace and security. Armenia has always been a strong advocate for confidence-building and regional cooperation and has continuously contributed to the discussions aimed at reinvigorating the framework of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again that Armenia fully supports the principle of the indivisibility of international security, with the understanding

that each and every country shares a responsibility for guaranteeing peace and security for all. We are committed to strengthening the institutional capacities of the United Nations in these fields and stand ready to contribute to the work of the Committee through a constructive dialogue.

**Ms. Bavdaž Kuret** (Slovenia): Let me start by congratulating Ambassador Jinga on assuming the role of the Chair, and of course the Bureau, and wish them every success in their endeavours.

In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), I wish to add some elements on how Slovenia sees and already implements the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and how we are contributing to securing our common future.

In the area described by the Secretary-General as disarmament to save humanity, we find the proliferation of the use of chemical weapons — in Iraq, Syria, Malaysia and the United Kingdom — unacceptable. Slovenia is a strong supporter of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament through the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by State or non-State actors, represents a breach of international law and may amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity. The responsibility of the international community is to stand against impunity and to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of such acts.

To this end, we support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the implementation of its decision on establishing a mechanism for the attribution of the use of chemical weapons. In addition, in April, Slovenia joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

With regard to nuclear weapons, we firmly believe that we should achieve our shared goal of a world free of such weapons progressively through the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For Slovenia, the NPT remains a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. We believe that progress has been made in all three areas, and we encourage all States to continue implementing the NPT. In our view, effective, verifiable and irreversible

nuclear disarmament requires not only appropriate technical and security conditions, but also the active engagement of States that possess nuclear weapons. Slovenia will therefore support resolutions focused on delivering concrete and tangible results that are related to a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, nuclear-disarmament verification, banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, and establishing and maintaining nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We commend the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in ensuring Iran's ongoing implementation of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as a part of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, which is crucial for the security of the region. As long as Iran honours its obligations, we will reiterate our support for the JCPOA.

We welcome developments and decisions taken at a high level in relation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we are awaiting their implementation. Slovenia supports all diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Until then, we will continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions and call upon all States to do so as well. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions and call upon it to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, thereby helping its entry into force, and return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

As I move forward to the part of the Agenda on disarmament that saves lives, I wish to highlight the need for full respect for international humanitarian law and the obligation of all sides to refrain from the use of weapons that do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. Slovenia is concerned about the rising numbers of mine and cluster-munitions victims.

Victim assistance represents one of the true embodiments of the spirit of the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The commitment to all victims and their families often means lifetime care. Slovenia has also been active in this area through the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security, established by the Slovenian Government 20 years ago, to help solve humanitarian crises caused by anti-personnel mines and other unexploded remnants of war in South-East Europe. Today, the

International Trust Fund is actively engaged in many other mine-affected regions and countries in the world, where it has, together with other donors, responded to the needs of children and adults affected by conflicts.

After learning that our cluster-munitions stockpiles, which were sent to an implementing partner country in 2011 for destruction, were not completely and irreversibly destroyed by the service provider at that time, we have worked relentlessly to ensure the complete destruction of the remaining elements of munitions. It is a great pleasure for me to inform the Committee that the Slovenian stockpiles of cluster munitions were completely and irreversibly destroyed on 12 April. Slovenia has therefore fulfilled all its obligations arising from article 3 of the Convention before the deadline.

Let me turn to international humanitarian law and touch upon disarmament for future generations. New weapon technologies raise a number of ethical, legal, moral and technical questions that need to be thoroughly examined and must not jeopardize the implementation of international humanitarian law. It is necessary to preserve the autonomy of human control over computerized methods with the possibility of human intervention in all phases of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Slovenia strongly supports the idea expressed in the Agenda for Disarmament of strengthening partnerships for disarmament. We have to take into account the synergies within such United Nations platforms as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as among different organizations and forums, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The importance of the gender dimension and the participation of women in all decision-making processes must be recognized. The protection and promotion of women's rights is also one of our national foreign-policy priorities. Slovenia was also one of the initiators of the launching of the Vienna chapter of the International Gender Champions initiative.

As an observer at the Conference on Disarmament, we were pleased to follow the work of subsidiary bodies on the agenda items of the Conference. We look forward to contributing to discussions on present challenges and

the search for solutions. We are also hoping for positive decisions to be made with respect to expanding the Conference on Disarmament's membership to ensure universality, transparency and multilateralism.

**Mr. Diamonds** (Namibia): Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Jinga on assuming the chairmanship of the Committee and assure him of the full cooperation of our delegation during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

Namibia believes that the non-selective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is key to disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, we reiterate our strong commitment to multilateralism as the bedrock of global governance. We therefore look forward to the upcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Namibia supports the noble position adopted by the International Court of Justice in its 1996 advisory opinion on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, which, inter alia, states:

“the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law” (A/51/218, annex, para. 105).

In this context, we join the call for the delegitimization of nuclear weapons in their entirety.

The Secretary-General perfectly expressed our view when, in commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, he reminded us that nuclear weapons hold an existential threat to humankind, and that “[t]he only world that is safe from the use of nuclear weapons is a world that is completely free of the nuclear weapons themselves”.

We must stand together against the myth that nuclear weapons are an assurance of peace, as that myth goes completely against the spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use, or threat of use, has been shown over the past year to continue to be valid. Indeed, threats of the use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and chemical weapons, highlight our concerns over complexities around global disarmament and international security.

Efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation must therefore run parallel to nuclear disarmament. In that regard, Namibia would like to underscore the urgent need for improving women's participation at all levels in the debates and decision-making processes relating to international security and disarmament. Suffice it to say that the Security Council's adoption in 2000 of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, which Namibia had the privilege to lead, makes those efforts incumbent on all Member States, which is why we are once again calling on all Member States to promote the presence of women on the global peace and security agenda, including its disarmament machinery.

The nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, as well as the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia, represent positive steps and important measures for strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Going forward, Namibia fully supports the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We commend the launch in May of the Secretary-General's comprehensive disarmament agenda as a step in the right direction.

Our respect for the rule of law, democracy and international solidarity motivated our signing of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008 and ratification of it in June 2018, as well as implementation of our national plan of action on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. As the State that has become party to the Convention most recently, Namibia looks forward to the convening of the ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to be held in Geneva in 2019. Since becoming a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty in 2014, Namibia has also actively participated in the relevant deliberations, including the recently concluded fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty held in Tokyo in August. We expect to ratify it in the not-too-distant future.

The impact of outer-space activities on the common interests of humankind is such that we have to recognize the inalienable and legitimate sovereign right of all States to explore and use outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes. We reject any act denying or violating a State's right to the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all humankind.



As a major uranium-producing nation, Namibia actively participates in the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency for the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear material for the treatment of cancer, agricultural production and energy generation. We emphasize the inalienable right of developing countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. We are concerned, however, about undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. It is therefore our belief that the production and possession of nuclear materials for other than peaceful uses is not a sustainable guarantee of security. Namibia urges all nuclear-weapon States to take a leading role by reducing their nuclear arsenals and aiming ultimately for total nuclear disarmament. Now that we are almost two decades into the twenty-first century, the issue of the universalization of nuclear disarmament remains as valid as ever.

Finally, we urge all parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to remain steadfast in their commitment to the agreement.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I shall now call on those delegations that have asked for the floor to exercise their right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first statement is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to exercise my right of reply to explain the position of the Russian Federation on a number of statements made last Friday, 12 October (see A/C.1/73/PV.6).

At the outset, I would like to thank the representative of Georgia for raising the very important issue of ensuring security in the Caucasus. Unfortunately her statement gave absolutely no perspective on the historical context in which the current security situation in the Caucasus evolved and without which it is impossible to understand the situation in Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Georgian delegation clearly hoped to take advantage of the fact that few of those present are well informed or indeed know anything at all about the events that have led to the current complex situation in the Caucasus.

I would like to remind the Committee that on the night of 7 and 8 August 2008, Mikheil Saakashvili's regime launched a reckless and inhumane action

against the people of little South Ossetia. Consider the suffering inflicted on more than 1,400 civilians in South Ossetia, more than 10 per cent of its entire population, by the Georgian armed forces' aggression. Furthermore, that heinous act of provocation led to a tragedy for both Georgia and Russia. Its victims included Russian peacekeepers, of whom nine were killed and about 40 wounded, while Georgian soldiers also died, dragged involuntarily into this reckless venture. The international investigation into the actions of Saakashvili's regime fully confirmed his guilt and the justification for the Russian Federation's operation aimed at bringing peace, which also ensured that the number of casualties was not larger.

The political upshot of the act of aggression against South Ossetia was the establishment on Georgian territory of two sovereign States, which turned to the Russian Federation for assistance, since they lacked the capacity to adequately ensure their own security. Russian military contingents are currently deployed on the basis of corresponding bilateral treaties on the territories of independent South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Their sole objective is to ensure the security of those new independent States in the Caucasus. I would like to emphasize that our military personnel, with international oversight, have been successfully carrying out their tasks for the past 10 years despite the fact that some political forces in Georgia continue to entertain the illusion of the possibility of a violent revanchist effort. The situation in the region is calm and peaceful, fostering the peaceful coexistence of the Georgian, South Ossetian and Abkhazian peoples. That in turn is helping to facilitate peaceful dialogue between the parties in the context of the Geneva process, despite the fact that in that regard the conduct of the Georgian authorities is far from irreproachable.

The Russian Federation hopes that common sense will prevail among Georgia's current leadership, that it will bring the objectivity, even-handedness and wisdom characteristic of the Georgian people to bear in analysing the situation in the Caucasus, and that it will do all it can to help facilitate a political process to settle the continued problems in the region. As it has in the past, the Russian Federation is ready to engage in open, frank and unbiased dialogue.

The delegation of the Russian Federation would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations for bringing up the difficult situation in his country with regard to

the more than 25 years of persistent problems over the achievement of a settlement in Transnistria. The Russian military contingent in Transnistria, which consists of 400 military personnel implementing a peacekeeping mission in line with its international mandate and 1,000 Russian operational troops, is carrying out specific tasks and is certainly no threat to the security of the Republic of Moldova or other countries in the region. As in Georgia, the necessity of the Russian military presence is related to the tragic historical events of the early 1990s, when a fratricidal civil war broke out on Moldovan territory and threatened to annihilate tens of thousands of people. It was only thanks to the efforts of Russian soldiers that the conflict was stopped and a fragile truce established between Transnistria and the rest of the Republic of Moldova that has been maintained for 25 years.

We consider General Assembly resolution 72/282, initiated by the Republic of Moldova and adopted on 22 June, on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from its territory, to be a provocative document that aims to secure the approval of the international community in the event of an armed operation against Tiraspol under a simple and easily understood slogan about the need for preserving the State's territorial integrity. If those plans were realized we would see yet another bloody page in the history of Moldova and a shameful move on the part of those of its leaders who are attempting to resolve the Transnistria issue through any means possible except substantive political dialogue within the existing international format.

The Russian military presence in the Caucasus and Transnistria is legitimate and historically, politically and economically justified and well founded and has played a positive role in ensuring regional stability for a considerable time.

On Friday several references were made to Russia building up its military capacity in the Black Sea basin and Crimea. I would like to make it clear that units of the Russian armed forces have never left the region but have been consistently deployed both on Russian territory and in friendly States on a completely legal basis. The purpose of the Russian Federation's military presence in the region is to protect the legitimate and vital interests of our country and our allies and to safeguard our territorial integrity and the people who live in the region. Any assertion that Russia is concentrating its military offensive capacity in the Black Sea region in

order to be able to project force into Europe, the Middle East or North Africa is simply absurd.

I want to once again respond to my British colleagues' insinuations about the possibility of any kind of Russian tracks in Salisbury. After six months of British intelligence services and law enforcement's investigation of the incident in which the Skripals were poisoned, we know only three facts for certain. The first is that six months ago there was an attempt to poison citizens of the Russian Federation with a powerful chemical substance. Secondly, the crime occurred on United Kingdom territory. Thirdly, the British authorities have categorically refused to cooperate with the Russian Federation. None of the rest of it stands up to any critical examination, not to mention thorough expertise. Furthermore, the British authorities used a special approach in investigating this horrific and inhuman crime. They first decided on a guilty party and accused Russia, and then began their investigation, in which they have attempted to somehow bend the scant facts to fit a predetermined answer. If this is considered a civilized approach to investigating a crime in Great Britain, it is clearly the product of an ancient civilization that is extremely underdeveloped where the law is concerned.

**Mrs. Imnadze (Georgia):** I want to exercise my right of reply with regard to two issues. The first is to the statement made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic during our last meeting (see A/C.1/73/PV.6). It is very indicative that the comments about my country were made by the representative of a regime that has committed heinous crimes against humanity, including through the use of chemical weapons. And coincidentally, all of those allegations replicate well-known tropes of Russian propaganda, which is why my delegation was doubtful about the merits of addressing such absurd allegations in this forum.

However, in order to ensure that the First Committee is well informed, I want to say that first and foremost, we categorically reject all the false accusations about terrorism. It is also notable that they are being voiced only now, when the war in Syria is already in its seventh year. I want to underline that Georgia remains open and transparent to all international monitoring mechanisms. As a matter of fact, we have been cooperating closely with the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, which visited Georgia this summer. Furthermore, in response to the Syrian representative's allusion to an

infamous allegation by the Russian Federation that the Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research in Tbilisi is a military agency of the United States that carries out dangerous experiments and designs biological weapons, here are some facts. The Center is an open institution under the auspices of Georgia's National Center for Disease Control and Public Health that fully complies with the provisions and obligations of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and fully meets international standards for biosafety and biosecurity. Its main goal is protecting Georgia and the entire region from infectious diseases through early detection, epidemiological surveillance and scientific research. To demonstrate its transparency and openness to cooperation, Georgia has cordially invited all States parties to the Convention to a peer-review compliance exercise to be conducted on 14 and 15 November. By opening a BWC-compliant facility to all interested States parties, Georgia is demonstrating its openness to building trust and enhancing confidence in States parties' compliance with the BWC. It is worth noting that the representatives of the Russian Federation have refused to participate in this visit.

Lastly, we regret that the Syrian Arab Republic has become the mouthpiece of the Russian Federation, having abandoned any semblance of being the State it once was. This is apparent not only with regard to the issue of Georgia, but also every other issue. It also explains their outrageous decision to recognize the so-called independence of the occupied regions in Georgia, thereby legitimizing ethnic cleansing and other crimes committed on Georgian soil.

As for the statement that we heard just now from the Russian representative, let me underline that invasion, full-scale war and occupation are acts of aggression against a sovereign State. Furthermore, such actions violate all fundamental principles and norms on which the United Nations stands. As a result of Russian aggression, hundreds of thousands of Georgians have been subjected to ethnic cleansing. Russia has not complied with the provisions of the 2008 ceasefire agreement brokered by the European Union. Let me remind the Committee that this agreement was signed by the President of Russia, and the Russian Federation needs only honour its international commitments.

Instead, the Russian Federation is continuing its military build-up and the process of de facto annexation of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia through its implementation of the so-called

integration treaties, which envisage the full integration of Georgia's occupied regions into Russia's military, economic and social system. We once again call on the Russian Federation to comply with the norms of international law and remove its illegal military forces from the territory of Georgia.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply to respond to the comments that were made earlier by the representative of Iran.

Let me say that my Government is focused on a comprehensive approach that keeps an Iranian nuclear breakout permanently out of reach and addresses Iran's ballistic-missile programme, support for terrorism, destabilizing regional behaviour and human rights abuses. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was agreed with the hope that it would lead to improvement in Iran's behaviour in other areas, but this has not happened. Instead, Iran's behaviour became more aggressive, threatening the United States and our interests under the cover of the deal. Iran's destabilizing conduct in its region, its continued development and proliferation of ballistic missiles, its support for militants and proxies, and its shameful human rights record all remain pressing concerns that were not addressed by the JCPOA.

In addition, the public revelation that Israel recently acquired an archive of documents from Iran's past nuclear-weapons work highlighted the dangers inherent in the JCPOA's so-called sunseting of restrictions on Iran's nuclear programme. Rather than putting its past nuclear-weapons work completely behind it, Iran carefully preserved its documents and research on nuclear-weapons designs. For these reasons, President Trump withdrew from the deal, which failed to protect America's national security interests.

We now aim to bring all necessary pressure to bear to change Iran's behaviour and pursue a new framework that can resolve our concerns. Looking forward, we are seeking a deal that comprehensively addresses Iran's destabilizing behaviour — not just its nuclear programme, but also its missile programme, support for terrorism and its malign regional behaviour as well. The sting of sanctions will only grow more painful if Iran does not change course from the unacceptable and unproductive path it has chosen for itself and for the people of Iran.

Sanctions relief, the re-establishment of full diplomatic and commercial relations with the United States and United States economic cooperation can begin only once we see that Iran is serious about changing its malign behaviour. President Trump has said that he is prepared to engage in dialogue with Iran in order to find solutions to urgent national security issues. The United States is looking forward to commitment from Iran that it is willing to make fundamental changes in its behaviour.

**Mr. Levon** (Israel): I am compelled to take the floor following the outrageous accusations that were directed against my country by the Iranian representative. I will not delve deeply into these absurdities, as they do not warrant serious consideration. I simply want to remind all the delegations in this room today that Iran is the world's main State sponsor of terrorism and the world's greatest proliferator of small arms and light weapons, heavy weapons, rockets, missiles and other related technologies. Its forces and proxies spare no time and effort in training, financing and carrying out acts of terror all around the world — mainly in the Middle East — so as to promote its hegemonic aspirations and radical agenda.

Directly and through its proxies, Hizbullah and other Shiite militias, Iran is committing atrocities against the people of Syria while supporting the Al-Assad regime, which massacres its own people, women and children alike. Iran spreads extremism, threatens its neighbours and destabilizes the Middle East. Its appetite does not end in Lebanon or Syria. It is in Iraq, in the Persian Gulf, in Africa, including the Maghreb, and in other places around the world, including Europe and Asia. This is the time to say “no” to the Iranian regime.

**Mr. Robotjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the accusations and nonsensical comments made by the representative of the United States.

It was evident from the comments of the United States Ambassador that he has no explanation for his country's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was in violation of its international obligations and commitments pursuant to the JCPOA and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). This is a trend that we are seeing from the United States: mixing everything together, confusing and obfuscating facts, and making up stories and false

narratives about why it is violating its international commitments and obligations under international law.

We have heard justifications and excuses that have no relevance to the JCPOA, which was negotiated and concluded because the United States was trying to deny Iran the exercise of its right to engage in peaceful nuclear activities. Iran tried to build trust and cooperation with other parties such as China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom and Germany so that all of us could work together. An agreement was reached in the Security Council through a process in which the United States took part. The Council endorsed that agreement by consensus. We now see the United States violating its commitments under international law without offering any justification related to the JCPOA.

We once again heard comments and accusations from the United States representative about Iran's past nuclear activity, about Iran not cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), about Iran hiding its nuclear activity from the IAEA — all baseless accusations and comments. However, it is not surprising to hear such commentary from the representative of the United States. From day one, the United States has approached the First Committee in an aggressive manner, and its approach is intended to destroy the atmosphere in the Committee.

For example, let me address the United States representative's comments with respect to cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA has explained its position on Iran's cooperation, which should be enough for all members of the Committee, because they all value what the IAEA has to say. But the United States seeks to destroy, undermine and weaken the credibility of the IAEA, which is in line with the United States practice of challenging international institutions and multilateralism.

At the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the IAEA representative said the following about Iran:

“The fact that Iran is implementing its additional protocol has significantly improved our access to locations and information.”

That is a fact: Iran is implementing the Additional Protocol to its Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards



agreement and providing full cooperation with the IAEA.

A second fact expressed by the IAEA representative is that Agency inspectors now spend approximately 3,000 — Committee members heard that right, 3,000 — days a year in the field in Iran, which is twice as many as were spent in 2013:

“They have taken hundreds of environmental samples and placed around 2,000 tamper-proof seals on nuclear material and equipment. Hundreds of thousands of images are captured daily by our sophisticated surveillance cameras. We collect and analyse several million pieces of open-source information each month. In short, Iran is now subject to the world’s most robust nuclear-verification regime and is implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the [JCPOA].”

Those are the facts offered to the international community by the IAEA representative. Therefore, whatever the Committee hears from the representative of United States about the JCPOA and about Iran’s nuclear activity is self-justification and a lie. We will leave it to the judgment of the great diplomats in this room, who have already rendered their judgment, having expressed their deep regret at the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA. There is a reason to express regret: the United States is wrong. The vast majority of the international community regrets that the United States has made a mistake.

The Committee should not be swayed by Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates encouraging support for the United States withdrawal from the Plan of Action. It is well known that they too are acting in violation of international law. Customary international law requires a State to oppose the wrongdoing of another State. Most States are doing the right thing. They should not be encouraged by a small minority. It is not good for the United States, which claims to be a leader in global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The United States has abandoned its leadership because it is a violator of international law.

With regard to accusations that Iran is destabilizing the Middle East, I would inform the Committee of other facts to prove who is destabilizing the region. The United States sends billions of dollars worth of arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to be used to attack Yemeni civilians, school buses and buses transporting displaced persons seeking shelter.

Contrary to its commitments under international humanitarian law, the United States is destabilizing the region through its interventionist policies to seek dominance in the region. The Islamic Republic of Iran is at the forefront of fighting terrorism, alongside its friends in Syria and Iraq. We have suppressed Da’esh, and we have lost many lives in combating terrorism.

My last comment is about the absurd accusations and comments made by the representative of Israel. What we have said about his country is based on international facts. Israel occupies Palestinian territory. For more than half a century, it has been killing Palestinians on a daily basis. It has committed acts of aggression 17 times against its neighbours and beyond. These are the facts. A total of 85 Security Council resolutions have been adopted against Israel, and Israel has rejected all of them. Israel does not comply with any of them. Therefore, nuclear weapons in the hands of such a regime pose the greatest threat to the peace and security of the region. That is what we said. I believe that those are the plain facts, and we believe that it is our duty to express those facts here in the First Committee.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I regret that the representative of the Georgian regime has once again sought to cover up the fact that her country has allowed a large number of terrorists to leave it for Syria. It is well known that Georgia has exported terrorists to our country, some of whom were the leaders of terrorist groups operating in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Furthermore, for some time now, Georgia has been in breach of conventions on weapons of mass destruction, particularly in terms of its arms caches. I am deliberately using the word “caches” as the aim is to develop biological weapons. Over the past two years, I have been saying that toxic chemical agents have been smuggled from the Caucasus to Syria without naming the States involved. However, today I am compelled to say that Georgia is the first State whose regime allowed toxic chemical agents originating in the country to be sent to terrorists in Syria.

We find it ironic that the representative of the Israeli entity makes accusations even though Israel has rejected all calls by the majority of Member States to accede to the various treaties and conventions dealing with weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. International reports have confirmed that since 1948 it has used chemical

and biological weapons — including depleted uranium and white phosphorus, as well as other internationally prohibited weapons — many times against the people of Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine. The Israeli entity, as usual, violates Security Council resolutions with regard to fighting terrorism. It has provided terrorist organizations with arms and munitions as well as toxic chemical agents in Syria and has brought terrorism to our region since the 1930s. We informed the Security Council some time ago that the Israeli entity had sent toxic chemical agents to terrorist groups in Syria before they were expelled, with the aim of staging a chemical charade.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to speakers wishing to make a second statement in exercise of the right of reply, which I would like to remind delegations are limited to five minutes.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will try to keep my statement to three minutes. My comments are directed at my Georgian colleagues, who, taking cover behind claims about Russian propaganda, have completely distorted the facts about what is really taking place in the Caucasus right now and what brought it about.

I would like to point out that Georgia's short history since it became independent, 25 years ago, has already seen three bloody episodes — the ethnic cleansing and bloody battles conducted by the Georgians in Abkhazia in 1992, the civil war within Georgia itself in 1996 and lastly, the aggression against South Ossetia, which verged on genocide for that people's small population. All of those events gave the Abkhazian and South Ossetian peoples the right to ask for help, and they asked for the help of the Russian Federation. Our troops are deployed on the territory of the independent States of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the basis of bilateral agreements, and their activities are subject to international monitoring.

I want to remind my Georgian colleague that an agreement was reached in 2009 to create joint mechanisms to prevent and respond to incidents on the borders that Abkhazia and South Ossetia share with Georgia. Apart from the Russian military personnel and local entities providing security and law and order, the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe participate in the mechanisms. Any discussions

about aggressions or annexations of parts of Georgian territory are unfounded and have no basis in fact.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind delegations that our valiant interpreters will have to leave us in five minutes, so after 6.10 p.m. we will no longer have interpretation, and we have three more States that have asked to speak in right of reply.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor once again, but I should respond to the ridiculous comments by the representative of Iran. I think most people here will remember Iran's taking of American hostages back in 1979 for several hundred days. I am sure that Iran will say that was certainly in line with international law. Iran is a country and a regime that is a leading State sponsor of terrorism. It takes hostages. It funds terrorism. It has used the money that it has accrued from being part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to fund a reign of terror and a huge addiction to terrorism. As the Committee may remember from my comments about Iran last week (see A/C.1/73/PV.5), I talked about the number of terrorist incidents that Iran has been responsible for in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa — all over the world. Is that a regime that one can deal with?

Last time, after outlining just a small sample of terrorist acts committed by the regime, I said that I would speak to the Committee about how Iran funds its addiction to terror. I will be as brief as I can in the five minutes allowed. The Islamic Republic of Iran regularly seeks to use deception and subterfuge to fund its illicit activities, threatening the integrity and security of the international financial system. The regime primarily uses shell companies and other types of seemingly legitimate entities to exploit vulnerabilities that enable it to access financing. Although the international community has for years urged it to adopt a more stringent regulatory framework, Iran has failed to implement the necessary reforms to comply with standards for combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force, the extraterritorial branch responsible for supporting proxies in the region, continues to engage in large-scale illicit financing schemes to fund its malign activities. They include its support for groups that the United States has designated terrorist, such as Hezbollah and Hamas. In one case, the Quds Force set

up a network of front companies to exploit the currency exchange market in the United Arab Emirates in order to procure and transfer hundreds of millions in United States dollar-denominated bulk cash. At least one Iranian front company, the Rashed Exchange, advertised its services online and appeared to be a legitimate broker. In May 2018, the United States designated nine targets to disrupt that activity. The Quds Force's illicit financing schemes are facilitated at the highest levels of Iran's Government, including through the Central Bank of Iran. In May 2018 the United States Treasury revealed that the then Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, Valiollah Seif, and the Assistant Director of its international department conspired with the Quds Force to conceal the movement of illicit funds to its terrorist proxy Hizbullah. The scheme also involved co-opting the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Al-Bilad Islamic Bank in Iraq to act as an intermediary, which enabled the transfer of funds to Hizbullah. That scheme, conducted by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, not only fuelled terrorism but also undermined the integrity of Iraq's financial system and therefore its ability to underwrite economic growth and development. In May 2018, the United States designated four individuals and one entity for that activity.

The Quds Force's efforts to exploit the international financial system are not limited to fraudulent documentation or front companies. In 2017, the Quds Force engineered a plot to produce counterfeit currency and flout the laws of our allies in Europe. It deceived European suppliers by using a series of companies in Germany to conceal its identity and end-user data to procure advanced printing machinery and other necessary materials. It then printed counterfeit Yemeni banknotes, which were used to support its destabilizing activities in Yemen. In November 2017, the United States Treasury designated six targets related to that operation.

Lastly, the Quds Force is also responsible for orchestrating an extensive plot to circumvent United States sanctions and export controls to illicitly procure aircraft parts.

Since I hear the buzzer go off, I will stop here; but I will have more to say later on in terms of further Iranian activity.

**The Acting Chair:** Please be informed that the interpreters have just left. If members of the

Committee wish to continue, we will need to do so without interpretation.

**Mr. Levon (Israel):** In the case of Syria and the Al-Assad regime's atrocities against its own people, once again we should not expect to hear the truth from a State that has repeatedly violated its international obligations, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Programme of Action on Small Arms, several Security Council resolutions and others.

The Al-Assad regime has shown that it sees no merit in sticking to the truth and to facts. That country is committing war crimes against the Syrian people, including through the use of chemical weapons. Syria is hiding residual chemical-weapons capabilities from the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and is renewing its chemical-weapons programme. Syria itself is proliferating weapons and technology, as well as Iranian weapons and technology, to Hizbullah, including arms, rockets, missiles and related technologies.

**Mrs. Imnadze (Georgia):** I will be very brief. The comments made by the representative of Syria are so absurd and ridiculous that it would be a waste of time to respond, especially since I already did so earlier.

With regard to Russia, let me note the following. First, with respect to the representative of Russia's references to the so-called crimes committed by Georgia, which allegedly engaged in an act of aggression by bombing its own citizens, resulting in the deaths of peacekeepers, may I recall that the Tagliavini report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia clearly states the contrary of what the Russian delegation said. Also, it was the Russian Federation that invaded Georgia.

Secondly, there is currently a case before the International Criminal Court (ICC) concerning the war crimes committed during the Russian aggression by Russian forces and local militias under the control of Russia. That is clearly stated in the Pre-Trial Chamber decision of the ICC. I would advise the Russian Federation that instead of twisting the facts and placing the blame on somebody else, it should cooperate with the international community and the ICC and allow access to the occupied territories.

As for propaganda, I do not have to add that Russia by far surpasses every other country in that area, with its 70-odd years of experience and the legacy of the Soviet era, during which time propaganda was an art.

**Mr. Robotjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): In exercise of my right of reply, I will respond to the second round of accusations made by the United States Ambassador against my country. He just proved what I said in my previous comments — that the United States has nothing to say to defend its policy in this Committee. This Committee is about disarmament, and the United States goes back and forth. It tries north, and then south, east and west, in an effort to manufacture a story to defend its wrongdoings in the Committee. Its remarks have nothing to do with the Committee's agenda, which shows disrespect to the Member States that are participating in the Committee's work and expecting credible arguments and positions.

We are tired of listening to the same list, every day, given by the United States representative. This is symbolic of the free fall of the United States in the United Nations from the moral standing that it claimed to have. The United States representative talks about it not being appropriate to deal with us. I think that everybody is now questioning whether they should deal with the United States, or trust it. Nobody is questioning dealing with us; it is about the United States.

Please understand what is going on in the world. Everybody is afraid of the United States. They cannot trust it anymore. It is not reliable. It is not abiding by its international commitments. It is not implementing what it has promised. It is not respecting international law. Essentially, it is not worth dealing with anymore, based on such facts. So it must be realistic, wake up to the realities of the world that it has itself created and listen to the people in this Committee. They are concerned about the non-implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations, mainly because of the United States nuclear policy. They are seeking answers as to why the United States is trying to mobilize countries against the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. They expect to hear from the United States representative why that country is sending billions of dollars' worth of weapons to countries that have launched aggressions against Yemen and are killing Yemeni civilians on a daily basis and violating international humanitarian law. It thinks only of its money and of how a billion dollars should go to the United States.

This is the free fall of the United States in international relations. We therefore expect explanations from the United States with regard to those questions. We are tired of listening to its laughable list of acts that have no relation to Iran.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic): Even though my preference would have been to use my mother tongue, Arabic, as we are now forced to go on without interpretation, I will make just a few comments.

The representative of the Georgian regime once again tried to defend what cannot be defended, which is the violation committed by the country in allowing itself to be a proxy and a base for the export of terrorists and weapons, including chemical weapons and toxic chemical materials to be used as a weapon in Syria.

We hope that one day we will hear a mea culpa from Georgia for having allowed the export, or smuggling — since toxic chemical materials cannot be exported, but they can be smuggled — of chemical weapons and for what that has done to my people.

In response to the accusation made by the representative of the Israeli regime, international reports, as well as United Nations reports, prove that the Israeli regime has used chemical weapons and toxic chemical materials against civilians, including white phosphorus, as I mentioned earlier, and depleted uranium. All other kinds of internationally prohibited weapons are also being used. The Israeli regime threatened to use nuclear weapons in the 1970s against Syria and Egypt during the 1973 war.

The Israeli regime, as I already mentioned and now must reiterate, has brought terrorism in all its forms to our region. It has brought us nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, in addition to terrorist organizations, which have killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our area. The Israeli regime has violated every convention to which most of us are party, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as the few conventions pertaining to disarmament and arms control to which the Israeli regime had committed itself.

Members have only to look to any part of the world where there is instability to find that the Israelis have supplied all types of armaments and ammunition to that area in order to destabilize it. They are the number-one actor known to have engaged in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in destabilized areas. Those



present need to look at the issue and do a little research to determine who took a certain type of weapon to a given area in order to destabilize it.

**The Acting Chair:** We have exhausted the time available to us this morning.

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee for some announcements.

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

First, the delegations of the Netherlands, Poland and Malaysia are inviting delegations to a joint briefing on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons review cycle by the Chairs of the 2017, 2018 and 2019 sessions of the Preparatory Committee. That will take place tomorrow, 16 October, from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. in Conference Room 12. A light lunch will be served.

Secondly, on behalf of the United States delegation, an invitation is extended to all delegations to informal consultations on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. That will also be held tomorrow, from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. in Conference Room A

**The Acting Chair:** The next meeting of the First Committee will be held tomorrow, 16 October, at 3 p.m. in this Conference Room. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs will join us on the follow-up to the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions, and then we will continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Delegations are reminded that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions under all agenda items is this Thursday, 18 October, at noon.

*The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.*