



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

## First Committee

**11**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thursday, 18 October 2018, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

*In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Edwards (Guyana),  
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

Excellency Ambassador Knut Langeland, Special Representative for Disarmament of Norway.

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

I would like to welcome Ambassador Langeland to this meeting. Following his statement, the Committee will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Immediately thereafter, the formal plenary will resume for a briefing by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, His Excellency Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota, Special Representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament.

### Programme of work

**The Acting Chair:** Before proceeding further, I would like to consult the Committee on its organization of work for today. As members are aware, the Committee had agreed that at least one and a half hours of the general debate would be devoted to statements by civil society.

Following his statement, the Committee will change once again to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Thereafter, the Committee will begin listening to statements on the “Nuclear weapons” cluster.

Due to time constraints, however, the Committee was unable to hear all the statements yesterday afternoon and we still have 13 civil society speakers remaining to be heard in the general debate. After consulting the Bureau, I would like to propose that the Committee consider resuming the general debate immediately after the two special presentations this afternoon in order to hear the remaining civil society representatives today and conclude the general debate. Immediately thereafter, the Committee will begin its thematic discussion on the “Nuclear weapons” cluster, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable.

Before proceeding further, I would like to remind delegations that the deadline for submission of all draft resolutions and decisions was today, Thursday 18 October, at noon.

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

I now give the floor to Ambassador Langeland.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting Chair:** In accordance with the programme of work, the Committee will first hear a briefing by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, His

**Mr. Langeland** (Norway), Chair, Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification: Two years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/67, on nuclear disarmament verification. The resolution affirms that verification, while not an end in itself, remains important in achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. The resolution calls for enhanced cooperation

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

18-32743 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



among States to advance verification. It also requests that the Secretary-General seek the views of Member States on nuclear disarmament verification. Finally, it requests that the Secretary-General establish a group of governmental experts of up to 25 participants on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

The mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) is set out by the resolution. It instructs the group to consider the general role of nuclear disarmament verification in achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. The group is also asked to make use of the Secretary-General's report on the views of Member States on nuclear disarmament verification (A/72/304).

In 2017, Member States were invited to submit their views on the development and strengthening of practical and effective nuclear disarmament measures and on the importance of such measures in achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. The Secretary-General issued the report of the national views to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and the GGE will take it into account in its work.

Last year, the views of Member States were presented at the First Committee in the margins of the session. At the end of last year, the GGE was set up by the Secretary-General, and Norway and the United Kingdom organized a preparatory meeting for the members of the Group at Wilton Park at the end of January.

Unlike resolution 71/259, on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which was adopted two years ago, our resolution did not stipulate that the GGE was to hold open-ended consultations with the broader United Nations membership. We therefore could not organize formal open-ended consultations. In order to compensate for that deficit, Norway and others organized various informal open-ended consultations in New York, in the margins of the First Committee; in the Conference on Disarmament, under the Swiss presidency; and at the margins of the meetings of the Preparatory Committee to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Also unlike the FMCT process, the nuclear disarmament verification process is not aimed at a specific treaty. Nevertheless, we do not start from scratch. The purpose of our exercise is to look at how verification can help us in achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. We look at past

experiences in general verification, consider recent initiatives and deliberate with a view to adopting a consensual report to submit to the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. It is evident that others will have to follow up after the lifespan of the GGE.

The first session of the GGE was held in Geneva from 14 to 18 May. Following the procedural decisions, including electing me as Chair, we exchanged views on how verification can achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. It was affirmed that the work of nuclear disarmament verification can offer valuable input for future treaties. It was, however, recognized that verification arrangements have to be linked to the specific treaty obligations.

Regardless of differing views on how to achieve a world without nuclear weapons or whether the security environment was conducive to disarmament, it was affirmed that working on nuclear disarmament verification may help lay the foundations. Furthermore, it can foster a more inclusive process by engaging non-nuclear-weapon States. That is important given the fact that all States have a responsibility to contribute to nuclear disarmament. It was also affirmed that non-nuclear-weapon States have much insight to offer on verification in general, not least the experience gained from safeguards and civil nuclear applications. The Group placed a particular emphasis on its goal and scope. It was recognized that effective verification could lead to trust and confidence. That will become even more important as stockpiles are reduced.

Achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons would mean addressing the whole weapons lifecycle. That is also linked to irreversibility. Indeed, there was a lengthy discussion on the relationship between verifiability, transparency and irreversibility. A number of experts provided technical briefings on past verification experiences, including those of South Africa, Kazakhstan, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. Following those presentations, there were a number of questions raised and some members of the GGE shared some of their own reflections.

I note that during the discussion, several speakers underlined the importance of political will. Another important dimension is flexibility, but not to the detriment of treaty obligations. Lastly, the utility of having joint bodies in place to address practical issues and/or to resolve outstanding matters was also emphasized. Others stressed that only parties to the treaty concerned would be given a role in verification.

There was also a presentation on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, since the GGE is asked to address verification in relation to both achieving and, not least, maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. Regardless of the views on the role of the IAEA on disarmament, it will remain a key partner in maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

A number of experts also made presentations on past initiatives and exercises. Those include the United Kingdom-Norway initiative, the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Those initiatives are exploring ways to engage non-nuclear-weapon States in verification activities, while being mindful and sensitive to non-proliferation and the need to protect sensitive information.

There are many ways that the GGE could contribute to future work, such as looking at common denominators from past verification experiences and identifying relevant principles for nuclear disarmament verification. It was, however, emphasized that the GGE is not creating any specific regime. It will not prejudge the scope and nature of any future disarmament treaties, nor will it bind the hands of future negotiators. The GGE will not replace the existing machinery. I emphasize that it is important to bear in mind what the GGE will not do. On the other hand, the GGE could motivate other institutions and actors to follow up after it has fulfilled its tasks. Its mandate ends in April of next year.

The GGE spent a considerable amount of time discussing principles. Our point of departure was the general and generic principles of verification, as identified by the Disarmament Commission in 1988. It was agreed that such principles could provide a source and inspiration for moving forward. We went through the principles with a view to considering their relevance for nuclear disarmament verification in the light of the experiences gained over the past 30 years. This discussion will be continued at the second session,

next month, and will also include a definition of nuclear disarmament verification. The GGE may also take into consideration principles developed elsewhere.

The first session was conducted in a constructive and collegial atmosphere, with substantial and high-quality discussions. During our discussions, we used our first names in the interest of fostering an informal dialogue. In November, we plan to go into greater detail about what constitutes verification, including working further on definitions and principles. The Group will also explore how verification can be carried out in the light of past experiences. Additionally, it will discuss who should carry out verification and how it should be organized.

We will look at three keywords. Our first keyword is “what” — what constitutes effective and adequate nuclear disarmament verification? That will include a discussion on principles and definitions. The second keyword is “how” — to what extent can we draw on lessons from past experiences and how can we identify common denominators? The last is “who” — who will assume the various roles and functions in support of nuclear disarmament verification and its different phases? Do we need separate bodies to that end? Who will finance those efforts and what sort of capacities will we need?

Right now, a number of working papers are being submitted to the Secretariat. I hope they will enable us to prepare for excellent constructive discussions in November. The last session of the GGE will be held in April, and then we will report back to the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Secretariat for its excellent services, as well as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. I also wish to thank, in particular, Annette Schaper and Wilfred Wan for their valuable contributions.

**The Acting Chair:** I thank the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification for his statement.

In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I shall now suspend the meeting so as to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the briefing we just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.20 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.*

**The Acting Chair:** The Committee will now hear a briefing by the Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, His Excellency Mr. Guilherme De Aguiar Patriota, Special Representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament.

I now give the floor to Ambassador De Aguiar Patriota.

**Mr. De Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) Chair, Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space: The Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space was created by resolution 72/250 of 24 December 2017. Up to 25 Member States, chosen on the basis of fair and equitable geographical representation, were to meet twice, once in 2018 and once in 2019, in order to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including, inter alia, on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. The Secretary-General was requested to transmit the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session and to the Conference on Disarmament prior to its 2020 session.

With the objective of transparency and inclusiveness, the Chair of the GGE was requested to hold a two-day open-ended intersessional informal consultative meeting, in 2019. We have agreed that that meeting will be held in New York on 31 January and 1 February 2019. All United Nations Member States will have an opportunity to interactively share their views and will be informed of the work in progress under resolution 72/250 in a report by the Chair of the GGE, in my own capacity.

I was designated by my Government as Brazil's GGE member and was chosen as its Chair. I will search for commonalities and strive to facilitate significant agreed outcomes. I am committed to exercising the role of Chair in a fair and balanced manner and I must underline that Brazil's position is to support a successful rendering of the mandate as a contribution to advancing the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is important to recall that resolution 72/250 was adopted by a recorded vote of 108 to 5, with 47 abstentions. Nevertheless, three of the five

States that voted against the resolution have nominated experts to the GGE and have taken part constructively in the discussions, as indeed have all its other members. I would like to highlight, therefore, the quality and engagement of all the members.

Prior to the first session, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), with the support of China and Russia, organized a preparatory workshop in Beijing on 4 and 5 July 2018 for designated members of the GGE. The workshop was also assisted by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and a number of experts. It facilitated a first round of exchanges on the topics to be addressed. Although a few designated members were not able to attend, the workshop provided an opportunity for experts to better understand each other's positions and concerns. It helped to jump-start substantive discussions and to formulate and organize the agenda for the first session of the GGE, which was especially useful given that resolution 72/250 established only two two-week sessions for the completion of its work, whereas for GGEs it is often the case that three sessions are held.

When the first session was convened in Geneva from 6 to 17 August, the Group was guided by a detailed indicative timetable in a manner that would articulate discussions around relevant segments of a possible legally binding treaty, addressing the following aspects: the international security situation; the existing legal regime; the right to self-defence; applicable existing general principles and any new principles that may be required; the scope and objective of obligations, including prohibitions, measures shaping State behaviour and limits on the use of force; terms requiring definition; monitoring, verification and transparency- and confidence-building measures (TCBMs); international cooperation for capacity-building; final provisions and institutional arrangements; and organization of the work of the second session.

The first session benefited from the participation of selected experts to assist with the background on some specific issues. The Group made good use of presentations by its own members, beginning early in the first week, with the consideration of a paper providing preliminary reflections on how to approach the work, followed by a preliminary debate of several interlinked aspects at once, thereby revealing a range of views that could be further explored and built upon in accordance with the detailed timetable. All members

seemed willing to work within the established mandate, contributing to the debate on elements of a possible legally binding instrument while exploring different approaches towards this goal.

The draft treaty on the prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space was a recurring point of reference as the debate progressed, although substantive exchanges were not limited to it or by it. The members generally concurred that whatever normative action may be taken in the future, it must retain full consistency with relevant existing treaties, in particular the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and its principles and obligations.

Work in related forums was considered to the extent that it interfaced with the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including the guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space; the discussions of the Disarmament Committee on the recommendations of the 2013 report of the GGE on transparency- and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (A/68/189); and the discussions of subsidiary body 3 of the Conference on Disarmament during its 2018 session, as reflected in its adopted report contained in document CD/2140.

Differences between the militarization and the weaponization of outer space were outlined. The applicability to outer space of the Charter of the United Nations, of international law in general and of international humanitarian law was debated to a considerable extent. There seems to be a tendency to keep these dimensions more general than specific. The technical, legal and political viability of the verification of commitments was debated, offering a mix of possibilities and limitations in that respect. There was no outright perception, however, that it is not possible to verify commitments to a reasonable degree. Cost implications, technical feasibility and institutional arrangements were all relevant to this and other discussions.

Different types and levels of obligations were envisioned, including prohibitions on the placement of weapons in outer space and prohibitions on the use or threat of use of force against space objects, both of which are exemplified in the draft proposal on the prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space.

Other formulations were put forward and considered as well, such as seeking to influence the responsible behaviour of States, for example through TCBMs. An important perspective was presented for organizing threats by categories, including higher- and lower-level threats, debris-generating and non-debris-generating threats, and dealing with such threats accordingly.

There could be provisions to address, among other threats or concerns, the jamming of signals; the use of lasers against space assets; ground-based anti-satellite capabilities; dual-use in-orbit satellite-servicing capabilities; and space-to-Earth threats. This list is illustrative and non-exhaustive. For each type of threat or concern, there could be a specific obligation attached, as well as TCBMs and monitoring and verification undertakings, which would be a broader way of dealing with the challenges that we have before us. Such a varied-matrix approach to the core obligations should increase the coverage of a possible instrument and provide a broader platform for expressing, refining and accommodating the diverse range of positions.

To better explore the potential of such an approach, the Group will proceed to elaborate a grid containing placeholders for receiving inputs to be provided in writing by experts on all segments of importance to a possible legally binding instrument. With assistance from UNODA and UNIDIR, I have circulated a more comprehensive version of the grid proposal made and discussed by members of the GGE so that each expert can provide input on as many elements as the expert may deem necessary by the end of November. Inputs will be circulated among all experts and will be used as a basis for the preparation of a draft report for consideration during the second and last session of the GGE, to be held in March 2019.

**The Acting Chair:** I thank the Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space for his briefing.

In keeping with the Committee's established practice, I shall now suspend the meeting in order to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the briefing we have just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

*The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.05 p.m.*

**Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)****General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items**

**The Acting Chair:** In accordance with the decision taken by the Committee earlier today, the Committee will now hear statements by the representatives of non-governmental organizations in the general debate. I would request all speakers to kindly make their statements brief and no longer than four minutes.

In keeping with the Committee's established practice, I shall now suspend the meeting to enable us to continue in an informal meeting.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.55 p.m.*

**The Acting Chair:** The Committee has thus concluded the general debate segment of its work. One hundred and thirty-five delegations participated in the debate, compared to one hundred and thirty-one last year.

**Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)****Thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items**

**The Acting Chair:** The Committee will now begin the second phase of its work, namely, thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee. The thematic discussions will be held from today, 18 October, until Wednesday, 31 October, for a total of 12 meetings. In accordance with established practice, our discussions during this segment of our work will focus on specific issues grouped under the following seven agreed clusters: "Nuclear weapons", "Other weapons of mass destruction", "Outer space (disarmament aspects)", "Conventional weapons", "Other disarmament measures and international security", "Regional disarmament and security" and "Disarmament machinery".

Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes for statements delivered on behalf of several delegations. We will

continue to use a buzzer to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

In keeping with the indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, the Committee will now take up the cluster "Nuclear weapons".

**Ms. Krisnamurthi (Indonesia):** I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The Movement reaffirms its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which remains the agreed highest priority for the United Nations in the area of disarmament, in accordance with the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2). The Movement remains extremely concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use.

The situation in the realm of nuclear disarmament continues to be characterized by an alarming impasse. Nuclear-weapon States have not made progress in eliminating their nuclear weapons. The role of nuclear weapons in the security policies of nuclear-weapon States has not diminished. Nuclear-weapon States are modernizing their nuclear arsenals and planning research on new nuclear warheads, or have announced their intention to develop new delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons, as provided for in the military doctrines of some nuclear-weapon States, including the United States Nuclear Posture Review. The Movement is deeply concerned by this dismal state of affairs resulting from nuclear-weapon States' non-compliance with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings.

The international community has waited too long for the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the launching of negotiations on effective measures related to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament. It has become obvious that the existing approach adopted by nuclear-weapon States — the so-called step-by-step approach — has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Despite the tangible and indisputable positive developments on nuclear non-proliferation in recent decades, forward movement on nuclear disarmament continues to be held hostage to misguided notions, including that of strategic stability.

It is time to take a new and comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament.

NAM reiterates that the convening of the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, as decided through the General Assembly resolutions, would provide an important opportunity to review progress made in nuclear disarmament and to further promote this noble objective.

The Movement welcomes multilateral efforts towards nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the Movement takes note of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017 at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination. It is hoped that, when entered into force, the Treaty will contribute to furthering the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

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

NAM once again renews its strong call upon nuclear-weapon States to fully and urgently comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons without further delay in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. The Movement also calls on nuclear-weapon States to immediately cease their plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

NAM reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances as a matter of high priority, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. NAM expresses concern that, despite the long-standing request of the non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved.

NAM reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never

be produced again are the only absolute guarantee against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their use. Furthermore, NAM calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to immediately reduce the operational status of their nuclear weapons, including through complete de-targeting and de-alerting, in order to avoid the risks of unintentional or accidental use of such weapons.

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

NAM States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regret the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite the efforts made by NAM delegations, and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate political will to enable the 2020 Review Conference to issue concrete recommendations for achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT.

NAM reiterates the essential contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to furthering nuclear disarmament and calls for the establishment of such zones where they do not yet exist, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, especially in the Middle East. In that context, NAM strongly supports the proposal on the convening of a conference for the States of the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and based on consensus, to negotiate a legally-binding treaty on the establishment of such a zone.

In the interest of time, I will stop here. The full version of this statement will be submitted and be available through the e-portal, PaperSmart.

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

The Group aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and wishes to make the following remarks on this cluster.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. In that context, the Group reiterates the urgent need for our planet, including outer space, to be free of nuclear weapons, as their presence constitutes an existential threat to global peace and the future survival of humankind. In that connection, the Group notes the awarding of the 2017 Noble Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Africa supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament as the fundamental prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. In that context, the African Group welcomes the historic adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 7 July 2017. The African Group stresses that the Treaty does not undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but rather complements and strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its foundation. The Group therefore urges all States to support the TPNW by signing and ratifying it at an early date. We hope that all members of the international community, including nuclear-weapon States and those under the so-called nuclear umbrella, will seize the opportunity to pursue the goal of a nuclear-free world.

For the African Group, the highest priority remains nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the overall objective of the NPT. The Group restates its deep concern over the slow pace of progress by the nuclear-weapon States towards accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under article VI of the NPT. The Group therefore insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by nuclear-weapon States under the Treaty.

The African Group further welcomes the fifth General Assembly plenary meeting in commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which took place on 26 September, and underscores the importance of the Day as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort.

The Group reaffirms the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world to the overall

objectives of the NPT. They represent a significant milestone towards achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, thereby enhancing global and regional peace and security. In that context, the African Group reiterates its commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and as a shield for the African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear-explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of such weapons in the African continent.

In the same vein, the African Group restates its deep concern about the fact that commitments and obligations related to the implementation of the 1995 resolution providing for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, including those contained in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference have not been fulfilled. In particular, the Group remains deeply disappointed at the inability to convene the agreed conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which should have been held in 2012. The Group calls for convening a United Nations conference, with the participation of the States of the Middle East, as soon as possible in order to negotiate a legally binding treaty on the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The Group wishes to further stress that the 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package and the basis upon which the NPT was indefinitely extended. The Group underlines the continued validity of that resolution until its objectives are achieved.

The Group reiterates its regret that the ninth NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on a final outcome document, despite the concerted efforts of non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly those of Africa. As preparations for the tenth NPT Review Conference have begun, with the first Preparatory Committee held in May 2017 and the second held in April 2018, the Group calls on all States to work towards the actualization of the goals and objectives of the Treaty and the previously agreed outcomes of its Review Conference.

The African Group underscores the importance of the continued respect of the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and stressed the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in that regard through technical assistance and cooperation



and maximizing the use of science and technology for socioeconomic development, as well as by continuing to ensure States' commitments to implementing the comprehensive safeguards agreement. The Group stresses the importance of nuclear knowledge and the sharing and transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries, including African countries, and highlights the potential contribution of nuclear energy to promoting sustainable development and prosperity across the world. The Group stresses that, as the main vehicle for the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, the IAEA technical cooperation programme should continue to be formulated and implemented in accordance with its statute.

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

**The Acting Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2.

**Mr. Hassan** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me express the solidarity of the Group of Arab States with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The Group of Arab States welcomes the successful negotiations on the first Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we will continue to positively contribute to all efforts to completely eliminate nuclear weapons. The Group expresses its concern about the continued failure to make concrete progress in achieving nuclear disarmament and to implement the relevant commitments. In that regard, the nuclear-weapon States are avoiding the setting of any time frame for the implementation of commitments aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Group expresses its rejection of the continued adoption by the nuclear-weapon States of military doctrines that authorize the use of nuclear weapons and even allow

their use against non-nuclear States. In that regard, the Group stresses that the total and final elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), subject to international verification, is the only guarantee against the use of such weapons.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference means that we have an even greater responsibility for preserving the credibility and continuity of the regime established by the Treaty. Given the delay in implementing the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, the Arab Group has sought to end the current stalemate through the new, constructive proposal that was put forward in the Arab working paper and adopted by NAM and an overwhelming majority of States parties to the Treaty. However, that positive proposal was met with a disappointing result, as three States undermined the consensus and prevented the Conference from issuing a final document, including practical measures on the implementation of the resolution concerning the Middle East.

We underscore the fact that the responsibility of ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons is a collective international one. The Arab Group has demonstrated its commitment in that regard and is now waiting for the other parties to do the same. Their failure to do so could undermine the credibility of the NPT and threaten the stability of the disarmament regime and non-proliferation in general.

The Group of Arab States stresses the importance of taking practical steps and immediate measures that are in keeping with the Arab draft resolution submitted annually, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", as well as the draft decision calling on the Secretary-General to convene a conference bringing together the States of the region to conduct negotiations on the issue. We call on all peace-loving States that stand ready to respect their obligations and previous commitments to support that proposal as a practical and constructive step towards establishing security for all. Such a process would involve diplomatic efforts and dialogue leading to consensual arrangements among the States of the region.

We take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the many groups and States that have

effectively supported our initiative, either in their statements during the Committee's deliberations or in the broad consultations held under the Group's auspices.

We are concerned about the ongoing security threat caused by Israel's continued refusal to accede to the NPT. Israel is the only actor in the Middle East that has not acceded to the Treaty and refuses to subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In addition, some of Israel's old installations in that regard pose a dangerous environmental threat.

The Group reiterates that the continued delay in the implementation of the international commitment to establish a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, pursuant to the resolution of the 1995 NPT Review Conference, has seriously set back nuclear-disarmament efforts, undermining the progress made in achieving not only nuclear non-proliferation, but also lasting peace and security in the region and throughout the world.

In conclusion, the Group calls for the universalization of the NPT, which is the fundamental pillar of the international multilateral system for disarmament and international security. It emphasizes the importance of striking a balance among the three pillars of the Treaty and of fixing the flaws that lead some to focus on non-proliferation at the expense of disarmament. In addition, cooperation must be promoted in the area of peaceful uses of atomic energy in order to enable States parties to the Treaty to exercise their inalienable right to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

**The Acting Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.64.

**Mr. Kellerman** (South Africa): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), namely, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and my own country, South Africa. I will be delivering a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which will be made available electronically.

As mentioned during the general debate, the NAC is once again submitting the draft resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments" (A/C.1/73/L.64). I take this opportunity to speak to its key elements.

The issue of nuclear disarmament has been high on the international agenda since the adoption by the General Assembly of its very first resolution, in January 1946 (resolution 1 (I)). This year also marks 20 years since the Foreign Ministers of the NAC issued their 18-point declaration entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", and, despite the many efforts and initiatives that have been guided by the objective of achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons, much, regrettably, remains to be done to achieve that goal. The NAC is firmly committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world and actively contributing to the achievement of that goal. The NAC draft resolution therefore addresses a number of nuclear-disarmament issues on which progress is essential for the achievement, as well as the maintenance, of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In introducing the NAC draft resolution, I would highlight that, given the lack of progress in the implementation of long-standing nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments, much of the text is unchanged from previous NAC resolutions. Although we look forward to this no longer being the case, for the time being we are obliged to continue to focus on the fulfilment of existing obligations. The draft resolution reiterates that each article of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is binding on the States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and that all States parties should be held fully accountable with respect to strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. It calls upon all States parties to comply fully with all decisions, resolutions and commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. The draft reiterates deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, including their gendered impact, and calls upon Member States to give due prominence to the humanitarian imperatives that underpin nuclear disarmament, as well as to the urgent need to achieve that goal.

The draft resolution calls on the nuclear-weapon States to take all steps necessary to accelerate the fulfilment of their commitments, including their commitment to undertaking further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminating all types of nuclear weapons. It urges nuclear-weapon States to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems as an interim measure and encourages them to make concrete reductions in the role and significance of

nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, pending their total elimination. The draft resolution also highlights concerns related to the rising tensions in international relations and to the increased prominence being given by some States to nuclear weapons in their security doctrines, including through modernization programmes. It also encourages further steps by all nuclear-weapon States to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material designated by each such State as no longer required for military purposes, and calls on all States to support, within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the development of appropriate nuclear-disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements.

With respect to the Middle East, the draft resolution urges the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to exert the utmost efforts to ensure the early establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as set out in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, including through support for the convening of the conference on the establishment of such a zone. The draft resolution also stresses the fundamental role of the NPT in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and calls upon all States parties to spare no effort to achieve the universality of the Treaty. The draft resolution also urges all States to work together to overcome obstacles within the international disarmament machinery that are inhibiting efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context.

The draft resolution highlights an area of focus for us in the current NPT review cycle, namely, our call on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations flowing from article VI without further delay and the importance of the NPT review process evaluating compliance with existing obligations and developing new measures. The draft resolution urges Member States to pursue multilateral negotiations without delay in good faith on effective measures for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world, in keeping with the spirit and purpose of resolution 1 (I) and article VI of the Treaty. In that regard, the NAC is particularly pleased to be able to welcome the adoption on 7 July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the progress made towards its entry into force.

The NAC encourages all Member States to support the draft resolution. As it seeks to uphold previous commitments and obligations that were agreed to by consensus, we therefore believe that it has been drafted in a manner that all States should be able to support. We are confident that as we move towards 2020, all delegations will want to join us in signalling a strong wish to see the full implementation of the NPT and make progress towards the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Ms. Dell Higgie** (New Zealand): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the De-Alerting Group—Chile, Malaysia, Nigeria, Sweden, Switzerland and my own country, New Zealand—on the issue of decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems, or de-alerting.

This issue is not new. It has been under discussion in a number of international forums, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for many years. It has been a formal part of the General Assembly's agenda since 2007, when the De-Alerting Group was founded. Since that time, our group and our annual draft resolution in the General Assembly have continued to call for the de-alerting of nuclear-weapon systems, both as a risk-reduction measure and as a concrete step towards nuclear disarmament. We agree with the Secretary-General's acknowledgement, in his Agenda for Disarmament, of the urgency of risk reduction and nuclear disarmament, and we agree, too, that de-alerting should be an issue on which there is strong international consensus.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs highlighted in her opening remarks here last week (see A/C.1/73/PV.2) that nuclear weapons pose grave risks, which will remain as long as nuclear weapons exist. It is well known that those risks multiply significantly when nuclear weapons are on high alert and include inadvertent launches due to technical failure or operator error; the possibility of misinterpretation of early-warning data; failures of and false reports by early-warning systems; and the use of nuclear weapons by unauthorized actors, such as rogue military units, terrorists or cyberattackers. It is also widely acknowledged, including by former military leaders from those States with the largest nuclear arsenals, that de-alerting is of most value during times of heightened tensions—times, as we have been reminded once again in the Committee by those same States, such as now. Against that backdrop, the case for taking urgent action

with regard to de-alerting should be compelling. That is not just a theoretical concern, but one substantiated by the significant history of accidents and close calls, particularly on the part of those in possession of the largest nuclear arsenals. Over the past decades, both the United States and Russia have received erroneous information from early-warning sensors or have misinterpreted warning data. There have been other similar accidents. In every case, we have been extraordinarily fortunate that disaster was averted, but, given the devastating consequences of even the accidental use of nuclear weapons, it is not sufficient to have to continue our reliance on good fortune.

We regret that some nuclear-weapon States have moved away from their earlier acknowledgement of the risks of having nuclear forces on high alert and have, instead, sought to assert that de-alerting could create dangerous deterrence instabilities and lead to a rush to re-alert in a crisis or conflict. We would highlight that, apart from being circular, arguments defending and promoting the retention of nuclear weapons on high-alert status reflect a shift away from existing commitments to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, to recognize the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear-weapons systems and to take concrete agreed measures to de-alert. At this time of heightened international tension, it would indeed be more stabilizing to provide reassurance of an intention to fulfil existing obligations and commitments.

It is against that backdrop that the De-Alerting Group will once again submit its draft resolution, entitled “Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems” (A/C.1/73/L.52). The draft resolution features very limited updates to resolution 71/53, of 2016 — the most recent resolution on de-alerting — which achieved its highest level of support yet, as 175 States voted in its favour, with a significant number of States also sponsoring it. The 2016 resolution sent a clear message about the need to renew efforts to ensure that the commitments to take nuclear weapons off high alert are fulfilled. That message is even more crucial today. The nuclear-weapon States should urgently implement previously agreed commitments on de-alerting and take steps to rapidly reduce operational readiness unilaterally, bilaterally and multilaterally, with a view to ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high-alert status. We call on all States to support our resolution this year,

including by co-sponsoring it, and look forward to working together in all relevant forums to make much-needed progress on de-alerting.

**Mrs. Andamo** (Thailand): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

A key aspiration for our ASEAN community is a rules-based, people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN in a region of peace, stability and prosperity. From the establishment of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in South-East Asia, and thereafter of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), the ASEAN community has long viewed nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament to be fundamental to realizing that aspiration.

ASEAN reiterates its commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the SEANWFZ Treaty and the ASEAN Charter. We stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, including under the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty (2018-2022). We reaffirm our commitment to continuously engaging the nuclear-weapon States and intensifying the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty. ASEAN experts should explore ways to bridge differences, including the possibility of engaging with experts of nuclear-weapon States.

At the international level, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) constitutes a vital step towards global nuclear disarmament and complements existing instruments. At the same time, we continue to recognize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We call on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under article VI of the Treaty. We commend the work of the Netherlands in chairing the first NPT Preparatory Committee and Poland in chairing the second, and we are especially pleased that Malaysia, a fellow ASEAN member State, will chair the third NPT Preparatory Committee, leading up to the review conference of the Treaty, in 2020.

As we continue to learn and understand more about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, we reiterate our firm belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Earlier this year, in September, many ASEAN member States took further steps to realize our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

On 25 September, Thailand ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), making all ASEAN member States ratifying parties to the CTBT. Bearing in mind the significance of the CTBT, ASEAN joins others in urging the annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible in order to realize its entry into force.

On 26 September, Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar became signatories to the TPNW. Their signatures and those of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand, as well as the ratification of the Treaty by Thailand and Viet Nam, are significant steps towards an early entry into force of that historic legal instrument.

ASEAN welcomes the three inter-Korean summits and the summit between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was hosted in Singapore. We reiterate our support for all efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which will contribute to peace and stability in the region.

ASEAN reaffirms the inalienable right of every State to the peaceful use of nuclear technology for its economic and social development. As such, it is our firm belief that the five-year work plan, for the period 2018-2022, of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy will ensure that peaceful uses of nuclear energy in ASEAN will always be coupled with safety, security and safeguards implementation. We also look forward to the formalization of relations between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We welcome the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda and its recently launched implementation plan. The highest disarmament priority of the United Nations, the elimination of nuclear weapons, reflects ASEAN's will and resolve to achieve such a goal in our region. We stand ready to work together with all relevant parties — States and civil society — to that end. ASEAN reiterates our strong commitment to move the global non-proliferation and disarmament agenda

forward. We call on all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to show goodwill, promote mutual understanding, enhance trustworthy cooperation and ensure responsible collective actions in striving for a world without nuclear weapons.

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

This year's session of the First Committee is an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which opened for signature 50 years ago, on 1 July 1968. In less than two years' time, NPT States parties will meet here in New York for the 2020 Review Conference, 50 years after its entry into force. The NPT is a success story. It is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, contributing to peace and security with its safeguards and verification arrangements.

The fiftieth anniversary of the NPT obliges us to be forward-looking and to focus on common interests in supporting and strengthening the Treaty. We need to narrow differences and find space for compromise to advance towards our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The original negotiators of the NPT knew that the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons, and possibly even nuclear conflict, was too big to contain alone. They realized that a multilateral approach was the only way.

That is still true today. We are firmly committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and believe that it is best pursued through a progressive approach consisting of pragmatic, inclusive and effective steps. Such steps include but are not limited to the universalization and prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, cooperative international efforts on nuclear-disarmament verification, greater transparency and more dialogue with the engagement of the nuclear-weapon States.

A progressive approach takes into account the international security environment without losing sight of the concerns about the risks posed by nuclear weapons. Indeed, the NPT has always been an instrument for pursuing ambitious aims while taking into account geopolitical realities.

We are concerned by challenges to long-standing norms and the rules-based international order. We appreciate that there are differences of opinion across a range of multilateral forums about how best to advance nuclear disarmament. While we acknowledge the concerns about the perceived lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and about the deteriorating international security environment, those dynamics should not inhibit our efforts to collaborate on areas where common ground exists to reinforce the NPT. We all bear the responsibility for making progress on disarmament; we must all overcome our differences and find common ground.

The status quo is not an option, but it is difficult to conceive of concrete progress on nuclear disarmament without the direct involvement of those possessing nuclear weapons. We need their leadership. We need nuclear-weapon States to assume the particular responsibilities that they have undertaken in the NPT and to move forward on meeting their article VI obligations. Building trust and confidence will play an important role in that regard. That is possible only through the constructive and sustained engagement, across regions, of all stakeholders.

We urge countries to use the time we have at the First Committee to direct efforts towards identifying and building upon areas of common ground in the interest of a successful NPT Review Conference in 2020.

**Mrs. Azucena** (Philippines): On behalf of the States members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) — Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates — I congratulate the Chairman on his election to preside over the First Committee at its seventy-third session. He can be assured of the NPDI's strong support for his leadership.

We, the members of the NPDI, reaffirm, in the fiftieth year since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) opened for signature, the critical importance of concerted action to achieve our

shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are deeply committed to our core mandate, as declared in the first NPDI ministerial statement in September 2010 and reaffirmed in the recent NPDI ministerial statement of 21 September 2017, to strengthen the NPT based on the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan. The current geopolitical situation underlines the need to strengthen and uphold the NPT, and we highlight the need for further bold steps in that respect, including in the 2020 NPT review cycle.

The NPDI remains intent on contributing to a successful outcome of the current NPT review cycle, based on the need to comprehensively address all three pillars of the NPT: peaceful uses, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The NPDI's engagement is further reflected in the fact that the Netherlands and Poland chaired the 2017 and 2018 NPT Preparatory Committees, respectively.

We urge all States parties to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under the NPT, particularly through the full and prompt implementation of the 2010 action plan. The NPDI will continue to build on the agreed 2010 NPT action plan by developing new ideas and initiatives that can help build bridges among NPT member States. We reiterate our commitment to continuing our constructive dialogue with the five NPT nuclear-weapon States, especially regarding transparency and further strengthening the NPT review process. We remain united and focused on the NPT's objective to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons technology, promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

The NPDI resolves to actively work towards further progress and concrete results on nuclear disarmament. Sustained, high-level political leadership, as well as an unwavering commitment to the NPT, are needed to make concrete progress towards achieving deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals worldwide and towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that context, the NPDI would like to reiterate the need for trust and confidence-building measures to contribute to improving the deteriorated security environment.

Notwithstanding our hope that ongoing dialogue will yield meaningful progress on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes

are in clear violation of international law and must be dismantled completely, verifiably and irreversibly.

Increasing the transparency of all States parties on the implementation of NPT commitments remains a signature NPDI initiative. The NPDI calls on the nuclear-weapon States to use a standard reporting form to provide regular reports to NPT States parties on the implementation of their obligations and commitments under the NPT, especially on disarmament efforts. Following useful consultations with other States parties at the 2018 NPT Preparatory Committee, the NPDI will continue to advocate for improvements to all States parties' national reporting practice on NPT implementation, while ensuring that reporting obligations are not unduly onerous relative to the extent of States' engagement in nuclear-fuel-cycle activities.

NPDI members are supportive of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which was established pursuant to resolution 71/67. We welcome the participation of nuclear-weapon States in those processes and continue to press for the inclusion of measures of disarmament verification in the NPT.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another essential component for achieving nuclear disarmament. We therefore urge all States that have yet to sign and ratify the CTBT to do so without delay, especially the remaining annex 2 States, whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force.

For its part, the NPDI is actively working towards the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the report of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group on that issue (see A/73/159). The NPDI endorses that report's recommendation that the Conference on Disarmament launch negotiations on such a treaty without delay.

As a diverse cross-regional group of non-nuclear-weapon States, the NPDI will continue to play a constructive and proactive role in facilitating discussions on those and other challenging issues and bridging diverse positions to help reinvigorate the NPT review cycle process.

Noting that the 2020 Review Conference will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into

force, the NPDI remains committed to supporting a productive outcome to mark that important occasion by progressing global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

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

**Ms. Kemppainen** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union reaffirms its strong support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which must be preserved in its integrity. We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States and we call upon all States parties to implement their Treaty obligations and the commitments undertaken during the previous review conferences.

We reiterate the EU's strong support for all three pillars of the NPT and continue to call for the comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the 2010 Review Conference action plan. Its concrete, equally important and mutually reinforcing steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy remain valid and provide a mutually acceptable basis for advancing towards the ultimate objective of a world without nuclear weapons.

We recall that all States parties have committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. All States parties have also committed to applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their Treaty obligations.

The European Union contributes actively to global efforts to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT, in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. In this context, we call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament to enhance global security. While we are all concerned by the current security conditions, we believe that there is room for further progress in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

EU member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the NPT. We stress the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of article VI, especially through the overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals.

We call on the Russian Federation to address serious concerns regarding its compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and ask the United States and the Russian Federation to preserve the INF Treaty, which is crucial for Europe's and other regions' security.

We encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and seek further reductions to their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, to include non-strategic nuclear weapons in arms control and nuclear disarmament processes, pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting, and to reduce the operational readiness of their nuclear-weapon systems to the minimum level necessary. Given the current severe security environment, we encourage all States concerned to take appropriate, practical risk-reduction measures, which are important to also ensure the safety and security of their nuclear arsenals.

We deeply regret the fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is not yet in force and reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT. In the meantime, we call on all States to abide by a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosion. We welcome the latest ratification by Thailand, increasing the number of ratifications to 167 States. Last February, a new EU Council decision was adopted, worth more than €4.5 million, in order to maintain the EU's long-standing support for the strengthening of the monitoring and verification capabilities of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

In the Conference on Disarmament, our long-standing priority is to immediately commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We commend Canada for bringing

the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group to a consensual outcome. We call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The EU welcomes the ongoing work on nuclear disarmament verification. With regard to negative security assurances, the 2010 NPT Review Conference stated that the Conference on Disarmament should immediately begin discussion with a view to elaborating recommendations on all aspects of the issue, without excluding an international, legally binding instrument. The EU calls on all nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm existing security assurances noted by relevant Security Council resolutions, and to sign and ratify the relevant protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, drawn up following the requisite consultations.

The European Union recalls that Russia has specifically committed to refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on security assurances, in connection with Ukraine's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. We call upon Russia to honour and fulfil this commitment.

The EU reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, and the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We maintain the view that dialogue and building confidence among all stakeholders are the only sustainable way towards a meaningful conference to be attended by all States of the Middle East on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them.

The European Union notes the severe consequences associated with the use of nuclear weapons and emphasizes that all States share the responsibility to prevent such an occurrence. All proliferation crises must be addressed in a resolute way. The EU urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage seriously in negotiations and embark on a credible path towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and the abandonment of all its weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes to maintain its declared suspension of testing of nuclear weapons, to extend its declared halt of intercontinental ballistic



missile tests to all kinds of ballistic missile launches, and to comply with its obligations.

The full version of this EU statement will be published online.

**The Acting Chair:** I now call on delegations that have requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention in the right of reply is limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I am taking the floor in exercise of my right of reply to respond to some remarks that were made by the Egyptian representative on behalf of the League of Arab States.

The United States supports the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, but we cannot support initiatives that are not a product of direct dialogue or of consensus among all countries of the region. The Arab League draft decision (A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1) is the antithesis of direct dialogue, inclusiveness and consensus. As many delegations will remember, the

United States put forth, at the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) earlier this year, a working paper that offered some ideas on how to strengthen trust, build confidence and help create a climate that would put us on a path to a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The Arab League initiative, however, seeks to impose a solution on the countries of the region. We cannot support such an initiative and will therefore strongly oppose it.

My final point is that the only realistic path to a Middle East WMD-free zone is through direct dialogue, a willingness to deal with the true WMD threats to the region, and on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by all States of the region. Any efforts to try to hold the 2020 NPT Review Conference hostage to the zone issue will fail, and those promoting such efforts will have to answer to NPT States parties.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*