



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

## First Committee

**13**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 22 October 2018, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

### Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the Committee is scheduled to begin its consideration of the cluster “Other weapons of mass destruction” this morning. However, we still have a total of 53 speakers remaining on the list for the cluster “Nuclear weapons”, that is to say, between four and five hours of statements. We therefore will first hear from those speakers before moving to the next cluster.

All delegations taking the floor are reminded to observe the speaking limits of five minutes for national statements and seven minutes for those speaking on behalf of groups. The buzzer will continue to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

**Ms. García Gutiérrez** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica considers it urgent to advance towards universal nuclear disarmament. We can attest to the fact that inaction is not an option when it comes to nuclear disarmament. The maintenance of the status quo exposes us to increasingly dangerous international insecurity on a daily basis, which is why we have been ardent supporters of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. With its adoption in July, the international community sent a strong and clear signal

to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the function of nuclear weapons from their political security doctrines and military strategies. The ban contributes to strengthening non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament and promotes the understanding that nuclear weapons are unacceptable, through the establishment of a global standard that stigmatizes them. As of today, just over a year after its adoption, the Treaty has garnered 69 signatures and 19 ratifications. Costa Rica ratified it on 5 July. We urge all States to sign it and those States that have already done so to ratify it as soon as possible, so as to take resolute steps towards its full and effective implementation.

The very existence of nuclear weapons poses a constant threat to international peace and security and to humankind in general. That is why we regret that the fulfilment of commitments related to nuclear disarmament and those concerning non-proliferation has not been accorded the importance it warrants. Thousands of nuclear warheads remain in the world and, instead of efforts being made to eradicate them, billions of dollars are spent every year on their modernization, thereby increasing the nuclear threat.

Costa Rica reiterates its total rejection of the modernization of nuclear weapons, the extension of their service life and their continued development. Such actions are inconsistent with existing obligations and the goal of a world free of nuclear threat. Similarly, we condemn nuclear tests, which undermine international security by endangering all humankind.

Likewise, Costa Rica reiterates the need for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for

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nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices that includes existing materials, verification mechanisms and confidence-building measures. Any such treaty must be an integral part of the international legal non-proliferation framework, in particular with the main goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.

The complete elimination of chemical and biological weapons is imperative in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. We stress the importance of the universalization of conventions in that area, as well as their implementation. We reiterate that the indiscriminate use of chemical or biological weapons, especially against civilian populations, is unacceptable, as well as a clear violation of international law.

My country is deeply concerned about the lack of progress made in the area of nuclear disarmament, which has been compounded by language that attributes a predominant role to nuclear weapons in security doctrines. The scant progress made in the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by the nuclear-weapon States, as well as non-compliance with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the inability to achieve its universalization, are unacceptable. That situation affects not only the credibility of nuclear-disarmament treaties but also the maintenance of international peace and security. We look forward to concrete results at the 2020 NPT Review Conference, as a stalemate such as the one experienced in 2015 is simply unacceptable.

As a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Costa Rica underscores the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones in preventing the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, building regional confidence and security and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. In that regard, we express our firm support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

It is up to Member States to step up their resolve and initiatives to revitalize the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery and enable us to respond to the challenges facing the international community in this area. Costa Rica also calls for the strengthening of cooperation and the increased participation of women in disarmament efforts, and considers the role of civil society as key in that area. My country reiterates its commitment to meeting those goals.

**Mr. Kafle (Nepal):** As this is the first time I take the floor at this session, let me begin by congratulating

you, Mr. Chair, on your election to chair the First Committee at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. I assure you of my delegation's full support for productive deliberations and a successful conclusion of this session.

The United Nations has accorded high priority to nuclear disarmament since its establishment. In fact, the first-ever resolution of the General Assembly — resolution 1 (I) of 1946 — highlighted the importance of nuclear disarmament. With the objective of saving succeeding generation from the scourge of war, the United Nations was established after the first use of atomic bombs, which not only destroyed cities but also was shattering to the conscience of the world.

My delegation takes this opportunity to emphasize that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is not only immoral but also illegal. The 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex) affirms that the threat or use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. Nepal expresses its conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In that regard, Nepal reaffirms its principled position that universal peace and security can be ensured only through the time-bound, general and complete disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Nepal reiterates its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of the intended or accidental detonation of nuclear weapons and their indiscriminate impact.

Nepal emphasizes that States possessing nuclear weapons should respect the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and the verifiability of nuclear weapons for their total elimination. In addition, we call for an early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty to address the existing stockpiles of fissile materials and prohibit their future production.

Nepal also supports the timely convening of a high-level conference on nuclear disarmament. My delegation believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones in various regions will help achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Nepal does not believe that nuclear weapons are useful deterrents. Instead, they are the cause of security dilemmas among the nuclear States. Therefore, nuclear weapons should

not find any place in the national security doctrine of any country. The modernization of nuclear arsenals, ongoing research on new nuclear warheads and the development of new delivery systems need to be halted.

Nepal was one of the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year. I would like to inform the Committee that the national parliamentary process is under way for its ratification. As a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Nepal also urges all Member States to demonstrate genuine political will and exercise the utmost flexibility to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

However, Nepal also supports the inalienable rights of all States to develop, research and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in accordance with the NPT. There is an urgent need for a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument requiring nuclear-weapon States to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances.

In conclusion, my delegation urges an end to heavy investments in the modernization, trading and accumulation of armaments, to achieve the goals of sustaining peace and shared prosperity. My delegation also urgently calls for ending the Faustian bargain that is plaguing humankind. If such resources were diverted to social and humanitarian causes, they would help to achieve many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the eradication of poverty and hunger — well before 2030 — and improve the quality of life for all humankind.

**Mr. Hwang** (France) (*spoke in French*): I also congratulate you, Sir, on the manner in which you are guiding the work of the First Committee.

I would first like to say that France fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I wish to add several remarks in my national capacity.

The deterioration of the international security environment has become acute and is reflected in a French Government document of December 2017 entitled “Strategic review of defence and national security”, which draws lessons from the emergence of an unstable and unpredictable strategic situation.

It reminds us that only coherent efforts to de-escalate international tensions and prioritize unfailing respect for international law and the need for dialogue and cooperation at every level will validate our ambitions in the area of disarmament and arms control.

With regard to the situation in North Korea, France remains fully vigilant. We take note of the statement of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea announcing the suspension of nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches, as well as the closure of its nuclear test site. North Korea’s commitments must be quickly followed by concrete and verifiable results.

Nevertheless, those encouraging developments cannot cover up North Korea’s violations of the non-proliferation regime. Increases in capabilities are changing the nature of the North Korean crisis and the threat it poses to Asia and the world. France therefore reiterates its support for the sanctions regime and will also ensure that the review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to prioritize the resolution of this crisis.

With regard to Iran, France continues to strongly support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This robust agreement, reached in Vienna, was unanimously endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2231 (2015). We call on all parties to continue to support its full implementation and act in a responsible way. Iran must comply with all the provisions of the agreement. In that regard, France is concerned about the steady development of the Iranian ballistic programme.

France is fully aware of its special responsibilities, particularly with regard to its status as a nuclear-weapon State under the NPT. In particular, France is in full compliance with its commitments under article VI of the NPT. It does so within the framework of a progressive and pragmatic approach — the only realistic one — in order to promote regional and international stability on the basis of undiminished security for all.

We share the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons when the strategic context allows. Since the end of the Cold War, my country has taken significant unilateral measures. Our well-known and exemplary record is a testament to our sincere commitment to nuclear disarmament, translated into action. As we again find ourselves in a deteriorated strategic environment, we must work to recreate the conditions that enabled such progress to be made.

France attaches great importance to efforts towards transparency and offers negative security guarantees to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT that respect their non-proliferation commitments. France also considers nuclear deterrence as strictly defensive, for the protection of its vital interests in extreme circumstances of self-defence.

It would be dangerous to believe that it is possible to separate the issue of nuclear disarmament from consideration of the security context. That is why France is opposed to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That Treaty is likely to undermine the NPT, the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, by creating an alternative and contrary standard.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is in danger of tearing down much more than it claims to achieve. Nuclear disarmament cannot be decreed, it must be built. It cannot be achieved in opposition to the nuclear-weapon States. It can be built only with them, through constructive and responsible dialogue. My country will continue its efforts to promote nuclear disarmament based on consensus in legitimate disarmament forums. That is the only effective and responsible way forward today.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a priority in that regard. France calls on all States that have not already done so to sign and ratify the CTBT. The negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate it establishes, is also a vital and irreplaceable step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Consultations on the technical issues of nuclear disarmament verification between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States are also important for building understanding and trust among NPT States parties.

I know we are pressed for time, but just want to add that France believes that efforts to reduce the global stockpile of nuclear weapons must continue, particularly in the context of a dialogue between the United States and Russia. It is also essential to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in Europe. France calls on Russia and the United States to avoid any unilateral initiatives and to continue to discuss the future of the INF Treaty at their next

bilateral dialogue session this week in Moscow, with the objective of preserving Euro-Atlantic security.

I will stop here, but the full version of the statement will be submitted right after the meeting and will be available through the PaperSmart e-portal.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): It is up to the Member States to decide how we are to proceed, but if we do not respect the five-minute limit, there is a good chance that we will spend Christmas here.

**Mr. Abbani** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I, too, wish to congratulate the Chair for the able manner in which he runs our work. At the outset, we align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States; and Egypt, on behalf the League of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11) regarding nuclear weapons.

Nuclear disarmament is an urgent priority for the international community in establishing peace, security and stability in the world. That goal cannot be achieved, however, without the total elimination of such weapons and ridding humankind from using them or from the threat of using them. In that regard, my country's delegation would like to stress the following positions of Algeria.

First, Algeria believes in full and unconditional compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the mainstay of the international multilateral order for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We call upon all parties that have not yet done so to accede to the NPT unconditionally and without delay.

Second, the NPT is extremely important in that it brings us closer to the total elimination of nuclear weapons and towards achieving the ultimate goal — a world free of the threat of nuclear weapons.

Third, there is an urgent need to conclude a legally binding international instrument on passive security safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States.

Fourth, it is also extremely important to ensure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) so as to promote the international order on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we call upon all the parties concerned to accede to the CTBT in order to eliminate any related dangers or risks.

Fifth, Algeria expresses its deep satisfaction at the consensual adoption of the outcome report (see A/73/159) of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group. We hope that it will eventually contribute to holding future negotiations on this important issue, as it is one of the 13 steps adopted by the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Sixth, while my country attaches great importance to the issue of nuclear disarmament, we also realize the importance of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as the cornerstone of efforts seeking to eliminate such weapons. Nuclear non-proliferation is incumbent upon us all.

Seventh, regarding the peaceful uses of atomic energy, Algeria reiterates the sovereign and inalienable right of all State parties to develop their national capacities to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and serve the socioeconomic development of all peoples, especially in developing countries.

Eighth, Algeria supports the current efforts by the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We hope that the Group will eventually adopt a consensual report that will contribute to giving impetus to future negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Algeria stresses the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide, as that would greatly contribute to achieving the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation while promoting peace, security and stability at the regional and international levels. On that basis, Algeria was one of the first African States to ratify the Treaty of Pelindaba, which established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. We call on all relevant States to sign and ratify the Treaty's three protocols.

Algeria expresses its deep concern with regard to the impediments that have hindered the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East since the adoption of the resolution at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. In that regard, Algeria calls on all States to support the draft decision submitted by the Group of Arab States that calls for the holding of a conference in 2019 to negotiate the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. That would be a practical step of paramount importance towards

establishing security, stability and peace in the region and throughout the world.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.23 and A/C.1/73/L.24.

**Ms. Tichy-Fisslberger (Austria):** During the Cold War, the existence of nuclear weapons brought us to the brink of complete annihilation. Today, developments in technology and geopolitical challenges make nuclear weapons more dangerous than ever. Disarmament efforts have slowed and confidence-building measures have been eroding. Nuclear-weapon States have entered a new cycle of modernization, investing billions of dollars into upgrading their arsenals and making nuclear weapons of reduced size and weight that are easier to deliver. Decision-making time has been further shortened, while nuclear weapons remain on high alert and central to strategic defence planning.

The overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership engaged in the Humanitarian Pledge initiative and made it clear — the risks and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons make the standstill in nuclear disarmament and the persistent lack of fulfilment of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) unacceptable.

With our traditional co-sponsors, I would like once again to introduce draft resolution “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons” (A/C.1/73/L.23). It contains only technical changes in comparison with its predecessor (resolution 72/30). We hope for delegations’ co-sponsorship and support.

In addition to the standstill in nuclear disarmament, the risks inherent in these abhorrent weapons systems continue to increase as a result of technological issues related to cyberthreats, terrorism and faster delivery systems, to mention but a few. As the Secretary-General points out in *Securing our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, there is a widespread perception that progress towards nuclear disarmament has stalled, and there are troubling signs that the nuclear agenda is now moving in the wrong direction.

Those developments have contributed to galvanizing a majority of Member States to demand concrete progress on nuclear disarmament and adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). As the Secretary-General has suggested,

the TPNW is a historic instrument that, once it enters into force, will form an important component of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and will enable States that so choose to subscribe to some of the highest available multilateral norms against nuclear weapons.

The TPNW has closed a legal gap by establishing a comprehensive legal norm for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, placing nuclear weapons in the same category as other weapons of mass destruction, which are unconditionally outlawed because they constitute fundamentally unacceptable means of warfare. It now forms part of the established international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

The TPNW reaffirms the NPT's role as the cornerstone of that regime. It fosters NPT implementation, in particular as it stipulates progress towards the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world, in accordance with article VI of the NPT. The TPNW strengthens nuclear non-proliferation and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards systems.

It goes even beyond the NPT provisions. First, it obliges States parties to maintain, at a minimum, their existing IAEA safeguards standards, while at the same time encouraging them to strive towards a higher standard. Secondly, the TPNW — unlike the NPT — obliges States parties that possess nuclear weapons to directly negotiate, conclude and maintain an adequate safeguards agreement, a major advancement over the NPT, which does not subject nuclear-weapon States' stockpiles to any safeguards.

The TPNW also strengthens the global norm against nuclear testing, as demonstrated most recently by one State ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the TPNW at the same time. The CTBT is a key instrument of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We call on all remaining States, especially the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT. The entry into force of the CTBT is of the utmost importance.

As to the TPNW, we warmly welcome the most recent ratifications and signatures. The Treaty is swiftly progressing towards entry into force, faster than all other treaties on weapons of mass destruction to date. Austria calls on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the TPNW as soon as possible and to join efforts for its universalization.

The TPNW is an indispensable step on the path towards a world without nuclear weapons. Without such a prohibition norm, how would it be possible to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons? But let us be clear: further legal and practical measures are required to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. The TPNW is only the first step, but an essential one.

I would also like to introduce this year, together with others, a draft resolution entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" (A/C.1/73/L.24), as announced in resolution 72/31, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations". This short and technical draft resolution resembles familiar draft resolutions dedicated to other disarmament treaties. We ask for delegations' co-sponsorship and support.

All States share the objective of a world without nuclear weapons. While we welcome all the steps that have been taken by nuclear-weapon States on reductions, changes in nuclear doctrines and transparency measures, we are very worried by the current standstill with regard to any of such measures and the indications of even a possible reversal of the positive Cold War developments of the past. We are alarmed that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty could be ended. That would trigger a new arms race.

In that context, we also call on the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, as well as to negotiate a follow-up instrument in a timely manner. We cannot accept the argument that it would be owing to a lack of the right conditions that nuclear disarmament would not be able to progress. It was exactly at the height of the Cold War when significant nuclear-disarmament measures were adopted that contributed in an important way to relaxing tensions. Disarmament measures constitute a decisive positive factor for improving the international political situation.

Furthermore, the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament drives the risk of further proliferation. The continued possession of nuclear weapons by some States is a strong incentive for some others to strive for them too.

The existence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile programmes is of grave

concern to the international community. It is essential that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea return to compliance with its international obligations. We welcome the recent high-level efforts and encourage all the parties concerned to continue to build trust and agree on the path towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is critical to reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and globally. We therefore deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States. We call on Iran to abide by its obligations, as Teheran has been doing so far according to the judgment of the IAEA. We reiterate our commitment to working with the international community to preserve the nuclear deal.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important means to reinforce the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute to nuclear disarmament. We reiterate our 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.

We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

**The Chair:** I am sorry, but the representative of Austria went two and half minutes beyond her time limit. I would urge her to do her best to finish.

It is my duty and my job as Chair to enforce and maintain the time limit. That applies to everybody. I am an Ambassador, and I expect my Ambassador colleagues to be the first ones to respect the time limit.

**Mr. Dinh (Viet Nam):** My delegation would like first of all to thank all the panellists who joined us in previous meetings for their thoughtful expert views on this topic.

Viet Nam associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively, on the thematic debate on the cluster "Nuclear disarmament" (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

Much effort has been devoted since the founding of the United Nations to turning the desire and aspiration for a world free of nuclear weapons into a reality. We know that that problem is critical to international peace and security, but it is an unfortunate fact that the continued

existence of nuclear weapons and other emerging risks remain a serious concern of the international community amid increasing global tension.

Viet Nam pursues a consistent policy that supports all non-proliferation and disarmament efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. In line with that policy, we welcome the goals, risk-reduction measures and multiple policy options that were outlined in the new agenda for disarmament of the Secretary-General with a view to eliminating nuclear weapons and preventing the emergence of new and destabilizing strategic weapons. We would like to take this opportunity to call for broader participation by Member States in existing international legal instruments in that regard.

With regard to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be held in 2020, we believe that political will, negotiation in good faith, transparency and inclusiveness are important to the success of the NPT review. In addition, we look forward to more vigorous commitments and the implementation of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Viet Nam welcomes and supports the relevant parties in continuing to promote recent positive outcomes regarding the Korean peninsula and strengthening cooperation in building a nuclear-free area, thereby laying a firm foundation for peace, stability, cooperation and development on the peninsula and in the world. We also call on parties to implement the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, including establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we support its early entry into force. Together with all the current parties to the CTBT, we call on the remaining annex 2 States to consider joining the Treaty so that we can further strengthen the existing nuclear-test-ban regime.

We welcome the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017, after more than 70 years of tireless efforts by the international community in striving towards further disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Viet Nam is proud to be the tenth country to ratify the Treaty. We take this opportunity to call on Member States to engage

in that process and consider joining the Treaty so that we can build a safer world for generations to come.

Viet Nam commits itself to upholding its obligations under all nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and prohibition instruments. At the same time, we would like to reiterate the inalienable right of all the parties to the NPT to develop the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under article IV of the Treaty. We follow a consistent policy of pursuing the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy while ensuring nuclear safety and security. We undertake to continue our close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in that field.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that it is vital that Member States shoulder their responsibilities in achieving further nuclear disarmament, thereby contributing to sustainable peace, security and development and saving future generations from the threat of nuclear weapons.

**The Chair:** I would like to request delegations conducting consultations to do so outside the Conference Room so that speakers can be heard.

**Ms. Higgin** (New Zealand): New Zealand's statement during the First Committee's general debate during the opening week of this session (see A/C.1/73/PV.4) gave little cause for comfort, as we surveyed the international security and disarmament scene. That is certainly the case with regard to nuclear disarmament, and indeed announcements over the weekend may suggest that the international climate is getting even less favourable to nuclear disarmament undertakings.

Of particular concern to New Zealand is the fact that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) commitment to "accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals" — given unequivocally by the nuclear-weapon States in 2000 and reaffirmed again in 2010 in the final document of the NPT Review Conference — is increasingly being prevented as if it were a conditional undertaking, conditioned in particular upon a range of prior security outcomes.

Just as New Zealand has long rejected any suggestion that there can be security conditions that warrant the proliferation of nuclear weapons, equally security conditions must not be allowed to block progress on their disarmament. If that were to be the case, our NPT commitments, just as we are about to

go into the Treaty's second half-century, would lose their vibrancy. More generally, the value and certainty that the international community attaches to Treaty obligations, indeed to the global rules-based system, would be diminished.

One positive development on nuclear disarmament that we can note is the recent advent of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). New Zealand's ratification of that significant legal instrument was deposited in July.

There was an assertion during the debate in the Committee in our first week that supporters of the Treaty see it as the silver bullet for nuclear disarmament. I have not hitherto seen anything to suggest that advocates for the Treaty view it in that light, and certainly any such claim would be wildly overblown. A more accurate assessment would describe it, I think, as the current silver lining to an otherwise unpropitious state of affairs.

Even silver linings can have downsides, however, and supporters of the TPNW, such as New Zealand, have been up front in acknowledging those. The Treaty was not negotiated or favoured by some very important members of the international community and, like quite a number of treaties, including such cornerstone treaties as the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, it was not adopted by consensus, but was adopted by a vote — one supported by the overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership.

The Treaty has no necessary connection with any reduction in the number of nuclear warheads in any arsenal. Indeed, given the non-involvement of the nuclear-weapon States throughout its negotiation, any requirement or schedule for such reductions would certainly have been farcical. Accordingly, the TPNW has been framed in large part simply as a legal advance on the status quo.

In that regard, I would draw the attention of colleagues in this room to the very recent publication by the Norwegian Academy of International Law of a comprehensive assessment of the legal implications and standing of the new Treaty. Copies of the publication, which is entitled *The TPNW: Setting the Record Straight*, have been made available at the back of the room. I note the Academy's concluding observation that objections to the Treaty



“end up masking the most important political fault line of the debate, namely a profound disagreement over the acceptability of nuclear weapons and the legitimacy of nuclear deterrence.”

In the choice between the adoption of the TPNW or no Treaty, a large majority of States chose the TPNW as presenting for us a clear advance on the status quo in both humanitarian and security terms. Perhaps it is with the example of the TPNW in mind that the Secretary-General, in his Agenda for Disarmament, points to a continuing conundrum for multilateralism — how it is that profound disagreements between United Nations Members on core issues such as non-proliferation and disarmament can come to be accommodated on a broadly satisfactory basis.

The Secretary-General’s agenda puts forward some interesting suggestions in the hope that majority-initiated processes in the General Assembly can be reconciled to a degree with the retention of some of the procedural protections that are available for negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and are valued by a number of its members. We look forward to exploring those options in the subsequent debates, while observing that it has been many years since the CD was able to begin, let alone conclude, a negotiation on any topic within its remit.

I would like to register New Zealand’s support for the statements made on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and the De-alerting Group (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

**Mr. Kuatbekov** (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan remains firmly committed to nuclear disarmament and continues its efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. We have proved our determined and unflinching commitment by our example. We therefore once again urge everyone to actively strive for a future free of nuclear threats.

For more than four consecutive decades, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been a fundamental and integral part of the international security and nuclear disarmament process. Despite the Treaty’s potential, we have to admit that progress in that area is slow and does not meet the expectations of the members of the world community. With that in mind, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, presiding over the Security Council briefing on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on 18 January, reiterated the need to achieve a world free

of nuclear weapons by the United Nations centenary in 2045 (see S/PV.8160).

Member States have not been able to adopt a consensus document on nuclear disarmament for the past several decades. It is the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament that resulted in the negotiations process on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) taking place outside the boundaries of the Conference. We believe that that Treaty adds additional momentum to the stagnated disarmament process and, at the same time, complements and strengthens the NPT regime.

The TPNW is a strong and important signal that the overwhelming majority of Member States are ready to take concrete action to combat nuclear threats. Unfortunately, the gap between the nuclear and non-nuclear communities is becoming increasingly wider, which leads to a complete loss of trust and mutual confidence, greater disagreements and disputes and, more critically, to a much more dangerous confrontation in the world. Catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences from nuclear tests in Semipalatinsk — and other nuclear-test sites around the globe — have proved once again that the consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are uncontrollable in both time and space.

My country therefore remains a staunch supporter of the global process of nuclear disarmament. Kazakhstan’s commitment to nuclear disarmament was also seen in our country’s engagement in the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty). Those international treaties have significantly contributed to disarmament and strengthened the non-proliferation regime at the end of the Cold War. Kazakhstan supports the preservation of those Treaties and strict compliance with the provisions of the INF Treaty by all its parties. That Treaty has contributed to the successful destruction of an entire class of nuclear weapons. Statements about a possible exit from the INF Treaty are regrettable. Moreover, as a confidence-building measure, we urge other countries with missile technology capabilities to join in.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones remains one of the most effective measures for combating the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The zones play an important role in establishing regional and international peace and stability, advancing disarmament processes

and strengthening the NPT regime. In the pursuit of sustainable peace, we attach great importance to the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East, North-East Asia and other parts of the world.

We commend the two Korean States for their recent meaningful efforts and joint projects to restore and support an inclusive dialogue. We also highly appreciate the decision of the United States and the Republic of Korea to suspend their joint regional military exercises. Such continued friendly political dialogue and mutually acceptable solutions have the potential to become a sound basis for the full, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In that regard, because of its prior experience, Kazakhstan is ready to share its know-how and lessons learned. We can provide technical expertise to realize a phased and transparent process of denuclearization.

As a complementary measure to remove incentives for possessing nuclear weapons, we believe it is necessary to develop a legally binding system of assurances by nuclear Powers to those States that would voluntarily renounce possession of nuclear weapons, as well as to the States with non-nuclear status. That is a fair proposition and can be done without significant expenditure. It would help solve many of the current problems associated with nuclear disarmament.

Finally, let me join the appeal made by others that humankind should use every opportunity to carry forward the momentum for disarmament, wherever it already exists, and to generate new impetus where it is needed in order to achieve a safer and more secure world for all.

**Mr. Przeniosło** (Poland): At the outset, let me say that Poland fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). We also fully subscribe to the statements made earlier by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, as well as by the representative of Australia on behalf of the group of 30 States (*ibid.*). We would like to share some remarks in our national capacity.

Let me start by reiterating the key importance that Poland attaches to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in all its three pillars. Sharing the commitment of a world without nuclear weapons, we all bear responsibility to further reinforce and uphold the NPT regime — the fundamental part of the

global collective peace and security architecture. That conviction was at the heart of our decision to assume the chairmanship of the 2018 NPT Preparatory Committee.

During that time, we spared no efforts to uphold the integrity and credibility of the Treaty; to create an environment for an inclusive, mutually respectful and transparent dialogue; and to deliver practical solutions for the 2020 Review Conference, which will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force. We hope that progress achieved in that regard will contribute not only to the positive outcome of the 2020 Review Conference but also to enhancing the Treaty and its further implementation.

The process of nuclear disarmament depends largely upon the regional and international security environment. We believe that the positive dynamic generated in that regard on the Korean peninsula will spill over to other pockets of instability. We hope that further steps in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will follow intensive talks among the United States, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this year.

In that context, we welcome the announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the suspension of nuclear missile tests and the destruction of the Punggye-ri test site. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to shut down the Yongbyon facility as well.

Despite positive developments, Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programmes still pose a threat to international security and the stability of the region. Lasting peace will not be achieved without the denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

On the same note, we are convinced that it is in our common interests to stabilize the situation in the Middle East, reduce tensions in the region and, most important, prevent further proliferation of nuclear weapons. To that end, we strive to ensure that the Iranian nuclear programme remains peaceful by encouraging Iran to fulfil all of its nuclear-related commitments under the NPT and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, an instrument that helps to verify Iran's capabilities and activities.

Poland deeply believes that progress in nuclear disarmament is not possible without the creation of

an appropriate international security environment in the existing strategic context. To that end, we should focus our efforts on improving geopolitical conditions and developing confidence- and transparency-building measures. In that respect, we welcome the completion of reductions by the United States and the Russian Federation under the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. We count on further disarmament measures being taken after 2021.

In the same vein, we call on the Russian Federation to address in a substantial and transparent way all concerns regarding its compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We deplore the fact that trust in negative security assurances has been damaged by the breach of the Budapest Memorandum.

Poland remains convinced that a progressive approach based on the 2010 Action Plan remains the only realistic and valid road map for nuclear disarmament. In our view, only through real engagement by all States can we make real and stable progress towards nuclear disarmament. Allow me to mention a few actions that need to be undertaken towards that objective.

First, we consider the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its entry into force to be a top priority. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty. The early accession by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Treaty would be a good step and tangible proof of its strong resolve towards denuclearization.

Secondly, starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) remains of great importance for Poland. In that regard, we welcome the report of the High-level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group (see A/73/159). We hope that it will facilitate the process of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

Thirdly, initiatives on nuclear-disarmament verification are also vital for the advancement of nuclear disarmament and establishing enhanced transparency and confidence. We appreciate the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, as well as the progress achieved so far in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV).

Poland's commitment in those areas was proved by the participation of our experts in the work of the High-

level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group, the IPNDV and the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Sidharta** (Indonesia): Indonesia reaffirms the statement made earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

At the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26 September, we heard once again strong calls from all corners of the world to eliminate nuclear weapons. It is clear that the overwhelming majority of the international community not only considers nuclear weapons to be the greatest threat to humankind but also demands that the States possessing those weapons take urgent and concrete action.

Nuclear disarmament remains Indonesia's highest priority. It is in that context that Indonesia ardently supports the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We believe that that instrument could significantly contribute to efforts to break the ongoing deterioration in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, as well as to addressing the real threat of the catastrophic humanitarian impacts in the event of a detonation of nuclear weapons.

To that end, we stand ready to work together with the relevant non-governmental organizations and civil society partners to ensure the early entry into force of TPNW and its universalization. Together with Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and Thailand, Indonesia is this year proposing a new draft resolution on this matter (A/C.1/73/L.24). We seek all delegations' support for the consensus adoption of the draft resolution.

Indonesia's commitment to the new Treaty, however, should not be interpreted as a diminishing commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On the contrary, as a faithful party to the NPT, Indonesia continues to believe that the NPT is a cornerstone instrument in the prevention of global nuclear proliferation and nuclear disarmament, with the eventual objective of achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons and promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Balanced progress on all three NPT pillars is critical not only to preserve the Treaty's credibility but also to ensure a successful 2020 Review Conference.

On nuclear-weapons-free zones, Indonesia emphasizes the importance of a Middle East zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and urges the convening of the long-delayed conference. We welcome the recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by Thailand and urge the annex 2 countries that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty to do so. We underscore the necessity of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We believe that, pending the achievement of total global nuclear disarmament, security assurances are one of the additional methods that could be concluded as a matter of urgency. For countries that never took or have rescinded the nuclear-weapon path, it is important that we be given unambiguous, legally binding and universal security assurances by States possessing nuclear weapons.

Indonesia believes that, given geographical limitations, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is not sufficient to guarantee security assurances, and neither are the declarations by States that possess nuclear weapons. Those zones and unilateral declarations may constitute efforts to provide security assurances. However, they cannot serve as a substitute for universal legally binding security assurances that are designed to convince States not to pursue the nuclear-weapon option. Consequently, Indonesia wishes to underline the urgent need for an early agreement on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure States that do not possess nuclear weapons against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

We deeply regret the long and protracted stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We believe that members of the CD need to show flexibility and go beyond their long-held positions to agree on areas of commonality, as well as address the issue of the trust deficit among members. In that context, we welcome the recent decision by the CD on the establishment and work of the subsidiary bodies. As an expression of our commitment to nuclear disarmament, Indonesia agreed to be the coordinator of subsidiary body 1, on the cessation of a nuclear arms race and on nuclear disarmament. We believe that those small steps will contribute to the resumption of negotiations in the CD.

It is regrettable, however, that the CD failed to reach consensus on the report of subsidiary body 4, on negative security assurances. We would like to

reiterate that for our country, it is important that the CD resume its work in 2019 at the earliest and agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work to fulfil its mandate.

The international community's collective wisdom in opposition to nuclear weapons benefits the nuclear-weapon States too because, unlike the Cold War era, the world is today more multipolar, complex and unpredictable. Threats also come from nefarious non-State actors in some places. It is a context in which the danger of nuclear conflict, either by design, accident or miscalculation, is growing. The focus must shift from the principle of undiminished security for all to increased security for all.

**Ms. Tromsdal** (Norway): Norway aligns itself with the statement made by Australia on behalf of a group of countries on a progressive approach (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). Norway's position on nuclear disarmament was described in detail in the Nordic statement and in our national statement in the general debate (see A/C.1/73/PV.2). I will make some additional comments.

Norway is fully committed to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which can be achieved only through the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of those weapons. Norway is working for the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Progress on nuclear disarmament will take place through reinforcing building blocks.

Even though the wider security environment will define the possibility for progress, it is our obligation to work towards substantive results in that area by taking concrete steps in the right direction. Although the nuclear-weapon States have the main responsibility for making progress on nuclear disarmament, we, as non-nuclear-weapon States, cannot simply walk away from our own responsibility.

One of the key building blocks we have for making progress on the disarmament pillar of the NPT is nuclear-disarmament verification. A verification regime that is trusted by nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike is crucial for building confidence and achieving future reductions in nuclear arsenals. Norway is pleased to be leading the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

Norway has been working on multilateral disarmament verification for more than a decade. The United Kingdom-Norway initiative demonstrated that it is possible for non-nuclear-weapon States to take part in nuclear disarmament verification without breaching their non-proliferation obligations. The partnership has now expanded to include Sweden and the United States and has become the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, which conducted its first multilateral nuclear disarmament verification exercise last year.

Norway also remains an active member of the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which plays a key role in developing the capacity and knowledge that are crucial for verification purposes.

Norway welcomes the report of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group. We are of the view that future FMCT negotiations should include the question of the phased inclusion of stocks in order to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

Norway also calls on all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome Thailand's recent ratification.

Non-proliferation is crucial to working towards and achieving global zero. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a key role in the international non-proliferation regime. The comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol constitute the global standard for verification.

Much has been achieved in the field of nuclear security. We must ensure that the IAEA has the means to carry out its nuclear security mandate. We urge all Member States to accede to the relevant instruments as quickly as possible.

Norway is engaged in efforts to minimize and eliminate stocks of highly enriched uranium and to reduce its use in civilian nuclear facilities. In June, we hosted the third international symposium on highly enriched uranium minimization, in collaboration with the IAEA. We are pleased to note that significant progress has been made in terms of the reduction of highly enriched uranium. Further minimization will require sustained technical, financial and political commitments. We encourage more Member States to subscribe to the joint statement contained in the IAEA document INFCIRC/912.

**Mr. Al-Durra** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and of Egypt, on behalf of the League of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with its three pillars, includes a number of interdependent commitments as well as measures that are mutually reinforcing, which have prompted States to adhere to the Treaty, but their level of implementation to date has not fully met those commitments. The Treaty remains clearly imbalanced because the nuclear-disarmament commitments of nuclear-weapon States have not yet been translated into a tangible reality as set forth in article VI of the NPT and the relevant resolution of the 1995 NPT Extension and Review Conference.

For that reason, all States parties have a duty to establish a fair balance among the various pillars by upholding their responsibilities, regardless of whether or not they have nuclear weapons, with a view to the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the sole guarantee against their use or threat of use. The international community must therefore make concerted efforts to achieve the universal ratification of the relevant conventions and treaties in order to rid the world of those lethal weapons and thereby promote international peace and security. To that end, my country voted in favour of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the conference that brought us together here in New York in July 2017, pursuant to resolution 71/258, paragraph 8, of 2016.

Nuclear terrorism currently represents the gravest threat to international security. We need more robust nuclear security measures in order to prevent terrorist groups or other unauthorized groups from obtaining nuclear materials. Some terrorist groups have the intention and the potential to bring the world to the brink of a nuclear disaster through the use of technologies to which they can obtain access on the black market. For that reason, it is perfectly legitimate to request that nuclear weapons in the world be definitively disposed of so as to eliminate that threat.

Iraq reaffirms the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon free zones, particularly in the Middle East. That must begin with fundamental steps,

including the nuclear disarmament of the Israeli entity, which must accede to the NPT as a nuclear-weapon State and submit its nuclear sites to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Iraq reiterates its deep concern over the failure of efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The three depositary States of the NPT must uphold their commitments in that regard, in line with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the action plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which is a cornerstone of disarmament.

The Arab Group has submitted a draft decision (A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1) requesting the Secretary-General to call upon States in the region, in particular the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, as well as the relevant international organizations, to participate in the negotiating conference in 2019 to arrive at a treaty that establishes a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We call upon all Member States to support the draft decision, which will help to promote and maintain regional and international peace and security.

Iraq attaches particular importance to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is a key instrument for enhancing international efforts leading to nuclear disarmament. The entry into force of the CTBT will clearly help to bring an end to the dangers and threats associated with nuclear testing. Having co-facilitated negotiations on article XIV of the CTBT with Belgium, we call upon the remaining parties to sign and ratify the CTBT, especially the eight remaining annex 2 States.

My country welcomes the bilateral and multilateral efforts undertaken to reach a lasting peaceful and diplomatic solution with regard to the nuclear crisis involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My Government has ratified the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, as well as taking all measures to implement those two treaties through the work of specialized committees. My country's Government is working to dispose of nuclear remnants from the 14 July site, through direct coordination and technical cooperation with the International Atomic Energy

Agency. The task will be accomplished only through sincere national efforts.

**Ms. Çalışkan (Turkey):** Our ultimate objective is the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, we are not close to achieving that shared goal and need to intensify efforts to bridge our differences and take joint responsibility in that endeavour.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the centrepiece of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We do not repeat that assertion every year just for the sake of repeating it. At the fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty, we should all be working towards strengthening the Treaty and its three pillars — non-proliferation, peaceful uses and disarmament — and ensuring its universalization.

The 2020 NPT Review Conference and its preparatory process is an opportunity to protect and strengthen the Treaty. Bearing in mind the unfortunate conclusion of the previous Review Conference without a consensus outcome, it is in our common interest to work constructively towards a successful 2020 Review Conference. We need to make progress on the 2010 NPT action plan and on the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East.

We maintain our firm position of not supporting any action that undermines the integrity of the Treaty or creates an alternative to its full implementation. The NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regimes, which underpin the NPT, should be upheld. Efforts to reach the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world should be realistic and include nuclear-weapon States as well.

There are several steps that could be taken in the process ahead. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should enter into force and be universalized. We welcome the recent ratification of the Treaty by Thailand and its signing by Tuvalu. We also welcome the moratoriums regarding the nuclear tests. Nevertheless, moratoriums are never a substitute for a legally binding treaty, and we join others in urging the remaining States, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, whose ratification is necessary for it to enter into force, to become parties to the Treaty. We would like to express our support on this occasion to the

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its valuable work on the verification regime.

The commencement of negotiations in Geneva on a fissile material cut-off treaty will also contribute to non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Nuclear-disarmament verification and enhancing transparency will be no less important in that regard.

On the other hand, we welcome the establishment of five subsidiary bodies by the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the adoption of four substantive reports resulting from their work. We hope that that work will provide a solid basis for the future work of the CD. We ask in particular that the nuclear-weapon States remain engaged in active dialogue to preserve hard-won existing treaties and ensure their full and verifiable implementation, which is crucial for global security.

The IAEA has a central role in international nuclear cooperation. Its international safeguards system, through which the Agency is able to provide credible assurances that States are honouring their international obligations under the NPT, is a vital component of the global non-proliferation regime and a confidence-building mechanism in itself. The Agency now implements safeguards in 181 countries, helping to ensure that nuclear materials are not diverted from peaceful purposes. States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology.

We need to protect the international non-proliferation regime and stand against any threat against it, first and foremost, any violation of international law and Security Council resolutions. While we very much welcome inter-Korean talks and the dialogue between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the announcement by the latter country on the suspension of nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches, we need to see concrete steps towards full and verifiable denuclearization of the peninsula, which will contribute to regional and international security. The signing and ratifying of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as the return to the NPT and the IAEA safeguards regime by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, will be important steps in that regard.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is one of the foremost achievements of multilateral diplomacy. All reports of the IAEA confirm Iran's compliance with the deal. The JCPOA should be

preserved and implemented fully and without interruption, in a transparent manner and under the monitoring of the IAEA.

The topic of today's discussion is obviously not one of the easiest. Nevertheless, recent history provides plenty of examples of how a common understanding can be achieved even at the height of tensions, when there is political will and a spirit of compromise.

**Mr. Ataíde Amaral** (Portugal): Portugal fully aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and by the representative of Australia on behalf of a broad list of like-minded countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I would like to make additional remarks in my national capacity.

Today more than ever, the role of the United Nations and the existing rules-based multilateral system should be, and needs to be, strengthened. Portugal remains fully committed to nuclear disarmament. The well-documented catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons should reinforce our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. It is, indeed, a moral imperative.

My country shares most of the concerns and frustration about the lack of concrete steps on nuclear disarmament, which concerns and frustration led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. But, in our view, a process of gradual reduction of nuclear weapons, taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, is the best approach to ensure sustainable progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations. That inclusive step-by-step approach has been driving progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons since the Cold War.

But the gains made may be at risk, as we are witnessing a rise in global and regional tensions. We call in particular on the United States and the Russian Federation to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and ensure its full implementation, which is crucial for the security of Europe and the world. We also underline the need to extend the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and negotiate further nuclear-arsenal reductions.

The threat of nuclear proliferation remains a serious cause for concern. For Portugal, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the future development of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. We hope that the ongoing review cycle will result in a more robust and effective Treaty. Portugal will undertake every effort to achieve a substantial outcome at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

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

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is supported by the majority of Member States. As confirmed by the IAEA, the deal has been serving its purpose. Therefore, we strongly encourage its implementation by all parties.

The early entry into force of the CTBT should be a top priority. We call upon all States, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty. Portugal has been actively involved in the efforts to promote the universalization of the CTBT and welcomes Thailand's recent ratification of the Treaty.

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

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to rebuild confidence in order to achieve significant nuclear arsenal reductions. We are also convinced that taking immediate concrete steps to reduce those arsenals will contribute to building trust and creating a virtuous cycle on nuclear disarmament. Portugal looks forward to the renewed resolve of the international community to

confront common nuclear challenges and to advance our shared goal of a peaceful, nuclear-weapon-free world.

**Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina gives priority to the issue of nuclear disarmament and has made important efforts in that area, which reflect a clear and sustained commitment to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

My country maintains an active nuclear programme for exclusively peaceful purposes. Argentina is a producer and exporter of nuclear technology, within the framework of the strictest respect for the norms enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Argentina reiterates the ongoing and lasting relevance and legitimacy of the safeguards system administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency as the axis of the non-proliferation commitments contained in the NPT.

With regard to non-proliferation and the potential hostile or non-peaceful use of nuclear materials, verification is essential. The important work carried out by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, an innovative mechanism dealing with reciprocal inspections of nuclear facilities in both countries, should be highlighted.

Argentina deems it essential that countries comply with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and relevant safeguards agreements, without reservations and in good faith, which implies active cooperation in the provision of relevant information regarding their respective nuclear programmes. For Argentina, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons continues to be the cornerstone of the regime on disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The three pillars of the Treaty are the reflection of the legal and political framework that underlies the nuclear strategies of all our countries, whether or not in possession of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, that framework derives substantial content and meaning from the international context, which today is clearly replete with challenges and questions as to our way forward as a global community with shared objectives.

The upcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference is particularly meaningful as it will mark 25 years since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. As the members of the First Committee are aware,



Argentina has the regional endorsement to preside over the Conference and will spare no effort to ensure its success.

In terms of nuclear disarmament, Argentina joins in the calls made at the international level to demand a reaffirmation of political commitment and the adoption of concrete measures by nuclear-weapon States aimed at achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Argentina's commitment to continue working towards the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons motivated it to participate in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons negotiation process, in July 2017. The spirit that sustains the Treaty is shared by Argentina, which is why we voted in favour of adopting the text.

However, Argentina is analysing the impact that that instrument could have, not only in terms of disarmament but also in other relevant areas of the current regime on non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the cornerstone of which remains the NPT.

The international community must approach general and complete disarmament in a manner that is constructive and based on broad consensus to ensure that it is done in an internationally verifiable way as well as to guarantee its irreversibility. The NPT review process will be the next opportunity to promote that joint effort.

Argentina hosted the fifth plenary of the International Partnership for the Verification of Nuclear Disarmament from 29 November to 1 December 2017. We participated in that initiative as well as that of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, convinced that in order to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons, it is essential to maintain constructive dialogue between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Argentina welcomes the process of dialogue initiated recently involving, in different forums, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China and the United States. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with Security Council resolutions, rejoin the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State and rejoin the International Organization of Atomic Energy safeguards regime.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a concrete measure that will create trust and make it possible to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Gabrielse** (Netherlands): In addition to the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union, by the representative of Australia on behalf of a group of countries, and by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (see A/C.1/73/PV.11), my delegation would like to make some additional remarks.

Nuclear weapons have again been at the forefront of global politics this year. We all know that the issue is of perennial importance and urgency. There have been both positive and negative developments. Last year, the nuclear threat on the Korean peninsula loomed large. It is good to note that we have seen a significant improvement in the situation on that front. On the other hand, we have unfortunately seen a withdrawal by the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which we regard as vital to international security.

In a similar vein, the Netherlands regrets the intention of the United States to leave the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. While it is indeed very likely that Russia has been in violation for some time, that Treaty remains of great importance to both stability and security worldwide and to the arms control regime. We therefore urge Russia once again to address our compliance concerns in a substantial and transparent way, and we hope that the parties to that Treaty will come to a negotiated solution.

For us, like so many others, the centrepiece of our efforts to curtail the threat of nuclear weapons is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is about to head into a crucial period. The year 2020 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force, and in April next year we will gather here for the last Preparatory Committee before the tenth NPT Review Conference. The Netherlands will work as part of the Bureau of the Chairs to make the 2020 Review Conference a success. We fully support our Malaysian colleague as Chairman of the 2019 Preparatory Committee.

However, not only the Chair but all of us are responsible for formulating a shared vision of the Treaty and its implementation. We need to start thinking ahead to what we want from the NPT regime

over the next five, 10 or even 50 years. In that regard, we need leadership from the nuclear-weapon States. For example, we call for increased transparency regarding nuclear arsenals, which we regard as a crucial first step of the disarmament process. Furthermore, more can be done in the field of improving lines of communication, training of personnel, sharing information and increasing decision time in order to minimize the risk of nuclear weapons use.

The Netherlands also renews its call for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As our Minister for Foreign Affairs emphasized at the recent ministerial meeting, the CTBT has lost none of its relevance.

In our view, the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is ripe for negotiations, and we were encouraged by the constructive, albeit overdue discussion in subsidiary body 2 of the Conference on Disarmament, which I was honoured to chair. The in-depth substantive discussion illustrated a number of points on which general agreement seems possible. That followed the successful conclusion of the High-level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group process, whose report (A/73/159), together with the report of the previous Group of Governmental Experts (A/70/81), brings us a step closer to our goal of an FMCT.

We should harness the momentum to continue making progress. The resumption of the P-5 process is a good start, as all progress begins with dialogue. We welcome the progress that is being made in the field of nuclear-disarmament verification by the United Nations Group of Experts as well as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Last but not least, we welcome the invitation by our United States colleagues to start a dialogue on creating circumstances conducive to nuclear disarmament. I would like to reiterate our readiness to have that dialogue.

In conclusion, 2020 may still seem like it is far off, but it is not. In 2020, we must review what we have done and decide what we are going to do in future. We all must bring something to the table, and there is precious little time to do that.

**Mr. Suárez Moreno** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of

Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The climate of mistrust and political instability that has persisted in the current international system for almost a decade continues to have a negative impact on peace and security. Faced with that complex panorama, the risk of the possible use of nuclear weapons increases along with its devastating consequences — the annihilation of the human species. That is why the adoption of disarmament and non-proliferation measures is becoming increasingly urgent. In that regard, we appreciate the contribution made by the Secretary-General in assessing the matter and presenting his agenda for disarmament. We appreciate in particular his call for renewed discussion to promote a world free of nuclear weapons.

The objective of eliminating nuclear weapons is a political and moral imperative that requires the commitment of all States Members of the United Nations Member States. The nuclear-weapon States can no longer expose humankind to the danger of a nuclear conflagration or to that of its extinction. The use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

No security doctrine, no country, no military alliance can justify the mass murder of human beings or the destruction of the planet. In that regard, we reject the preservation of military doctrines by the nuclear powers that seek to legitimize the possession and possible use of those systems.

Likewise, we urge the nuclear powers to reduce their arsenals of nuclear warheads and to put an end to the upgrading and development of new systems of that type, in accordance with the obligations entered into in their capacity as States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular the full implementation of article VI of the Treaty. We reiterate our call on the nuclear States to correct their actions and take steps towards the achievement of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as their sole objective.

Moreover, we deplore the United States decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which is contrary to the objectives of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, as well as to the spirit of dialogue and cooperation that must prevail in order to ensure the peaceful coexistence of nations.

That landmark agreement represents a remarkable contribution on the part of multilateral diplomacy to the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament. We appreciate the pronouncements of the other signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, whose authorities have expressed their steadfast will to preserve the validity and integrity of that instrument, in accordance with international law.

Venezuela welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, given that it is a measure of great significance for humankind and complementary to the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones. It declares, for the first time, the illegality of such systems and reinforces the commitment of an overwhelming majority of countries to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Venezuela has acceded to the NPT based on its clear and peaceful will and undeniable commitment to strengthening international peace and security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant agreements on the subject. In that regard, we invite those countries that have not yet signed or ratified that instrument, particularly the nuclear Powers, to join that collective effort for the cause of disarmament and peace.

More than 20 years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, that decision has not yet been implemented because of the lack of political will shown by some co-sponsoring States. In that regard, we support the draft decision on the convening of a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East by 2019 that will be presented by the Group of Arab States to the First Committee at its current session. Venezuela is convinced that the establishment of such a zone would positively contribute to peace and stability in the region.

In conclusion, our country reiterates its call for progress on nuclear disarmament in order to achieve a safer and more stable world. We must work to promote and implement concrete actions that will enable us to pave the way towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

**The Chair:** I give the floor to the representative of Australia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26.

**Ms. Mansfield (Australia):** Australia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Philippines on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and with its own statement made earlier on behalf of a group of countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

This has been an eventful year, with both positive and negative developments regarding nuclear weapons. The United States and Russia reached the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty central limits within the agreed time frame, but there is more work to be done. An extension to that important Treaty should be a crucial objective for both nations and the international community. Both Washington and Moscow should resist allowing other differences to divert them from that key objective.

While there is promising dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, there is also some way to go. Useful practical work continues on many fronts, including disarmament verification. The international security environment is more complex and uncertain. Disarmament is more difficult, yet more necessary. Those trends reinforce our conviction that patience, pragmatism and practicality — a progressive approach — is the most sustainable and realistic way to move forward on nuclear disarmament. Australia remains committed to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. There is much to do to achieve that goal. It will be neither easy nor quick.

Always cognizant of the prevailing international security environment, we must address some crucial questions. For example, what will deterrence look like without nuclear weapons? How can we make sure that deadly conventional conflicts do not become more likely? What verification and enforcement tools would provide sufficient confidence that commitments to dismantle nuclear weapon arsenals are upheld? We must discuss such issues and build trust and cooperation among nuclear-weapon States and between those States and non-nuclear-weapon States. That is a crucial challenge.

Fifty years after the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) opened for signature, it continues to enable access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. It constrains nuclear proliferation and provides the framework for nuclear disarmament through the acceptance by all nuclear-weapon States of legally binding disarmament commitments. The NPT

has delivered in many important respects and continues to do so. It makes us more secure and is a critical part of the rules-based order. We must continue to strengthen its implementation.

In less than two years, NPT States parties will convene here in New York for the 2020 review conference, marking half a century since the Treaty's entry into force. That will be a golden opportunity to reflect in depth on past implementation and how we can do better in future. With our partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, Australia looks forward to working towards 2020 with all States parties on further strengthening the Treaty's review process, improving transparency and addressing a number of other important issues.

Progress requires patient, difficult work on disarmament verification, including through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification; a treaty banning production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; and increasing transparency and other risk-reduction measures. Our shared interests in strengthening the NPT and what it stands for greatly outweigh our differences. We must create space for dialogue and foster the political will needed to forge agreement.

We very much welcome this year's significant efforts at dialogue on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme and look forward to those efforts yielding positive and concrete results. The Australian Government remains committed to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That will benefit not only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but also the international community.

Turning to Iran, it is in our collective interest that Iran not be able to develop nuclear weapons.

Strengthening the norm against nuclear testing through the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a high priority. We encourage States to co-sponsor this year's draft resolution on the CTBT (A/C.1/73/L.26), which we are running with our partners, Mexico and New Zealand.

We welcome the increased use this year of disarmament forums such as the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for important

substantive discussions. For instance, we underline the timely priority given to exchanges on nuclear risk reduction, which was also highlighted as a priority in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. We were pleased to chair this year's UNDC, which laid the groundwork for a consensus outcome in 2020, and to note the CD's consensus adoption of some subsidiary reports.

We champion full participation by both women and men in international security forums. In the current environment, it matters more than ever to build trust, confidence and respect, as well as to listen and include diverse voices. That can only lead to better outcomes.

**Mr. Choi Won-seok** (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea reaffirms its unwavering commitment to achieve the shared vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Taking into account the devastating power of nuclear weapons, we must make every effort to advance nuclear disarmament, including through peaceful dialogue and confidence-building measures. In that regard, we welcome all relevant work done and progress made in various multilateral mechanisms this year.

My delegation is of the view that among the competing approaches to nuclear disarmament, a progressive approach is the one that reflects the political reality. In that regard, the Republic of Korea emphasizes the significance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and an essential foundation in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

I would like to note that, given how the three pillars of the NPT mutually reinforce one another, we must enhance the credibility and integrity of the regime by implementing the Treaty in its entirety, including through the fulfilment of the 13 practical steps to advance the implementation of article VI adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

I would like to highlight the ongoing efforts regarding a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and nuclear-disarmament verification. My Government supports an early commencement of negotiations on an FMCT and in that regard has actively participated in the work of the High-level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group. We welcome the adoption of the Group's report and its submission to the General Assembly.

Subsidiary body 2 of the Conference on Disarmament has also made meaningful efforts through a substantive discussion on that important issue. My delegation sincerely hopes that those efforts will translate into more concrete outcomes in the not-too-distant future.

As for the CTBT, its entry into force is long overdue, and my Government urges all non-members of the Treaty, in particular those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty in the near term. In the meantime, nuclear-disarmament verification is a key area for enhancing transparency and building confidence. Against that backdrop, the Republic of Korea hosted a working-level meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification in Seoul in July. We also welcome the commencement of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and look forward to its substantial contribution.

When the Committee met last year, there was escalating tension on the Korean peninsula. However, since the Pyeongchang Olympic Winter Games held early this year, the international community has witnessed a series of positive developments towards the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

Three inter-Korean summits and the first-ever, historic United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea summit were held in less than six months, and more summits are expected to follow in the months to come. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula has been high on the agenda of those summits, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has confirmed and reaffirmed its commitment to complete denuclearization.

Such commitment was accompanied by a series of first-time actions that were unthinkable only one year ago. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced a moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic-missile tests and dismantled the Punggye-ri nuclear test site. In addition, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is committed to dismantling the Dongchang-ri missile engine test site and launch platform under the observation of experts from relevant countries. It also expressed willingness to take additional measures, including the permanent dismantlement of the nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, as the United States takes corresponding measures.

Hopes are high for more concrete outcomes in the coming months, and as my President said in his address to the General Assembly last month:

“Regardless of the challenges that lie ahead, the leaders of the South, the North and the United States will move, step by step, towards peace based on mutual trust.” (*A/73/PV.8, p.40*)

Denuclearization and the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean peninsula will have a far-reaching impact on global nuclear-disarmament efforts. The Republic of Korea will continue to closely cooperate with the international community as we navigate that uncharted course, and I would like to ask for the full support of the members of the First Committee in that regard.

**Ms. Razafitrimo** (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee and all the members of the Bureau. Rest assured of my country's support, in particular through the active participation of our Permanent Mission in the work of this very important Committee.

Madagascar fully subscribes to the respective statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

I am speaking in my national capacity today to remind members of the First Committee of a few points.

Madagascar aspires to lasting peace and security, both as a full Member of the United Nations community and as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Accordingly, we support all efforts aimed at the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In 2017, Madagascar signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to participate in the international community's process to ensure and bequeath a safe and secure world to future generations. The challenge now is to sustain the momentum initiated in 2017 and strengthen efforts towards the effective implementation of the Treaty.

Madagascar, for its part, has a national institute of nuclear science and technology that works towards the well-being of the population. Its activities cover energy planning, health, agriculture and the economy. On the latter point, Madagascar, as a developing country, joins the call, which has been renewed from year to year, on the crucial need to strengthen technology transfers.

Nevertheless, the country participates in global decisions on nuclear disarmament and remains active in multilateral arenas. We welcome the visit to Madagascar in 2017 of the Director of the Division for Africa of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Department of Technical Cooperation, held as part of the Agency's sixtieth anniversary celebration, which paved the way for further cooperation after 42 years of collaborating with Madagascar.

History has shown us the devastating short- and long-term impacts of the use of nuclear weapons on humankind and its future, and Madagascar, since the 1970s, has been a strong advocate for the establishment of nuclear-free zones, particularly in the Indian Ocean, as some of those of my generation who are present today may remember. Forty years later, concerns remain regarding the stagnation or even regression in the implementation of international nuclear-related texts. By building on the transparency required on that issue, Madagascar urges the States concerned to adopt more measures that will safeguard the world from the risks associated with nuclear weapons and their production.

We call on all countries to demonstrate a genuine will to promote nuclear-weapon-free zones. We encourage all actors that can still decide to do so to decelerate the first possible use or modernization of nuclear weapons, which is difficult to control. Madagascar also calls for the restriction or even elimination of funding related to nuclear weapons in order to realize the intrinsic value of the 2017 Treaty and achieve its vision.

In lending its support to every initiative and endeavour to provide resources and mechanisms to foster international security and always welcoming ideas to develop positive perspectives on global nuclear energy, Madagascar intends to remain confident and optimistic about the international community's momentum towards broadening the horizon of common security in the world.

**Mr. Viinanen** (Finland): Finland subscribes to the statement made by the observer of the European Union and the joint statement made by the representative of Australia on behalf of 28 countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). Let me deliver the following remarks in my national capacity.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a resounding success. It is a cornerstone of international peace and security. It has prevented nuclear weapons from spreading in the

world. The vast majority of countries have committed themselves to never possessing or acquiring nuclear weapons. At the same time, the NPT has made it possible for millions to benefit from peaceful applications of nuclear technology and indeed has laid the foundation for nuclear disarmament, paving the way for us to eventually meet our common goal — a world free of nuclear weapons.

The fiftieth anniversary of the NPT in 2020 deserves to be a celebration of that success story. However, we cannot ignore the challenges that we are facing. The rules-based order is being challenged, treaties are not respected, big-Power relations have worsened and the pace of nuclear disarmament is dismally slow. Article VI of the NPT provides a permanent and universally recognized framework for pursuing nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament requires practical steps to be taken by the States possessing nuclear weapons, whether or not they are parties to the NPT. In particular, the Russian Federation and the United States bear a unique responsibility as holders of the overwhelmingly biggest nuclear arsenals.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Agreement (INF) Treaty was a landmark agreement that abolished a whole category of weapons in Europe. It is an important part of the international arms control architecture and plays a significant role in ensuring European security. We have long been worried about the plausible Russian violation of the INF Treaty. We are disappointed that the parties have so far not been able to find a solution to the non-compliance allegations and we regret the United States decision to withdraw from the Treaty.

We encourage the Russian Federation and the United States to avert a nuclear arms race and to continue their dialogue on strategic stability with a view to extending the New START Treaty and to achieving further reductions in their nuclear arsenals.

We recognize that nuclear disarmament is a gradual process, and we call on all nuclear-weapon States to take concrete action in the area of nuclear disarmament. Let me highlight some actions by which we believe it is possible to make tangible progress.

First, we should increase transparency concerning nuclear weapons. There are many ways to do that, and let me highlight just one — national reporting in the NPT review process. One practical step could be the proposal by the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament

to convene a session during the third Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, at which nuclear-weapon States would explain their national reports followed by an interactive discussion with other States parties.

Secondly, we should pursue and conclude arrangements on negative security assurances. In our view, non-nuclear-weapon States that comply with their NPT obligations have a legitimate right to receive legally binding negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. While we recognize the value of the unilateral declarations, we believe that it is time to move forward and transform them into multilateral arrangements. That would make a huge difference in increasing trust and confidence within the international community, especially with regard to the NPT.

Thirdly, we should address the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe. It is our understanding that those weapons are not operationally deployed on a day-to-day basis because the actual nuclear weapons are kept separately from their delivery vehicles. It would make sense to codify current practices into a mutual arrangement. The first step could be unilateral declarations confirming the current situation, followed by verifiable bilateral and multilateral arrangements at the appropriate time.

Concrete steps with regard to transparency, negative security assurances and non-strategic nuclear weapons would be tangible nuclear disarmament deliverables at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

**Mr. Ahmed** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving us the opportunity to address the First Committee.

The Sudan aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM); the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the League of Arab States; and the representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

My delegation reaffirms its firm position on the need to achieve nuclear disarmament because it is the only guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used and the principal mechanism for ensuring peace, security and stability throughout the world. My country therefore believes that diplomatic and multilateral efforts afford us the opportunity to strengthen our

commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is an additional tool to realize the concept of criminalizing nuclear weapons so that we can enjoy a world free of those deadly weapons.

The Sudan would like to take this opportunity to renew its full commitment to the NPT. At the same time, we call on all non-party States to accede to it without delay. We call on nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear stockpiles so as to avert their potentially disastrous consequences for humankind. We reiterate our support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which we helped draft and voted in favour of.

We look forward to signing and ratifying the Treaty in the near future. It provides a firm foundation for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons that will allow us to avert the disastrous humanitarian consequences that the use of such weapons entails. My delegation calls on all Member States, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible.

The Sudan has always been an active partner in international efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. It was among the first countries to accede to many relevant international conventions and instruments. Our ultimate goal is the total elimination of those weapons and the prevention of their use or threat of use. That will be achieved only through the implementation of a treaty banning the use, possession, stockpiling or export of such weapons, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the NAM initiative, because we firmly believe that international peace and security cannot be achieved through security doctrines based on nuclear deterrence.

My delegation reiterates the importance of the NPT through the full implementation of the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as confirmed by the General Assembly's annual adoption of a resolution in that regard. We call on all States that have not acceded to it yet to promptly do so. We take this opportunity to voice our sincere and deep concern about the obstacles standing in the way of achieving a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the lack of progress on that core issue, which poses an obvious threat to the peace and security not only of the countries of the region but of the entire world.

My country's delegation emphasizes its full support for the draft decision (A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1)

submitted by the Group of Arab States, which requests the Secretary-General to call on the countries of the region to convene a negotiating conference to establish a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East.

In conclusion, my delegation confirms the full and unconditional right of all States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in order to achieve sustainable development, especially in developing and least developed countries.

**Mr. Muhammad Bande** (Nigeria): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation for the efforts and able leadership of the Chairman and by further assuring him and the Bureau of our continuing cooperation and support.

The delegation of Nigeria aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The continued existence of nuclear weapons remains an existential threat to humankind. The cost of maintaining and modernizing such weapons is both outrageous and inexcusable when compared with resources allocated by States for more useful and productive ventures that could further the growth and peaceful development of societies.

My country expresses its concern about the slow pace of progress by nuclear-weapon States towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In that regard, we stress that the universalization of the NPT is dependent upon strict compliance with its three pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

As preparations for the 2020 NPT Review Conference have begun, with the first meeting of the NPT Preparatory Committee held in 2017 and the second Preparatory Committee in 2018, my delegation calls on all States to work towards the actualization of the goals and objectives of the Treaty and previously agreed outcomes of its review conferences.

My delegation reiterates the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from either the deliberate use and/or the unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons. It is in the light of that possibility that Nigeria calls on all States, in particular

the 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 necessary measures to dismantle and renounce such weapons.

My delegation seizes this opportunity to again highlight the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which affirms that the threat or use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

Nuclear weapons remain the ultimate agent of mass destruction, and their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations. To that end, my delegation would recall the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which opened for signature on 20 September 2017.

My delegation remains proud to have actively participated in the processes leading to the adoption of the Treaty and to have been one of the first countries to sign it. Our commitment was guided by Nigeria's principled position on global denuclearization. In that regard, Nigeria calls on all States to consider the overall gains of that seminal Treaty and to work stridently to ensure its entry into force.

In Africa, we have long acknowledged the existential threat that nuclear tests pose to the existence of humankind. To that end, the countries of Africa adopted the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, renouncing the acquisition of nuclear weapons for military purposes and declaring Africa as a nuclear-weapon free zone to serve as a shield for the African territory by, *inter alia*, preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of such weapons in the entire space that constitutes the African continent.

Nigeria welcomes the continued efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in particular with regard to its role in monitoring and inspecting nuclear facilities. We urge States to ensure observance and compliance with IAEA safeguards and standards at all times. States must equally be alive to their responsibilities pertaining to compliance and adherence to other measures, including the NPT and other mechanisms that seek to promote nuclear



disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as full commitment to the Conference on Disarmament by its members.

The many benefits of nuclear disarmament are never in doubt. They range from investing in numerous developmental projects to ensuring the survival of the human race. As such, Member States must concretely demonstrate the sincerity of their purpose and commitment to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. While there are no easy solutions, as we confront the gravest threat to our survival as a human race, we must remain undeterred and committed to a world of safety and security, one without the dangers posed by nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Mwewa (Zambia):** My delegation wishes to align itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Morocco (see A/C.1/73/PV.11), on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively.

In the interest of pursuing an effective and collective holistic approach to preventing and removing the never-ending threats to international peace and security, my delegation unequivocally condemns the slow pace of comprehensive nuclear disarmament despite the various initiatives that Member States and non-State actors have proposed. We note that since 1968, when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was concluded and its entry into force in 1970, very little or insignificant progress has been made in nuclear-weapons non-proliferation and comprehensive disarmament.

My delegation acknowledges that more than 190 States are party to the NPT, including the five nuclear-weapon States, but is concerned about their slow pace towards step-by-step nuclear disarmament. Since the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995, the world has witnessed review conferences every five years, in addition to interim preparatory committee meetings. Those conferences and meetings have resulted in several NPT reports, yet only minimal headway has been achieved.

We recall the collapse of the May 2015 NPT Review Conference due to disagreements over proposals for a Middle East disarmament conference, which was to have been held in 2016 after the failure of the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East

zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation also notes with concern that banning the testing of nuclear weapons has been a key objective of the United Nations since the 1950s. Despite 183 countries having signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the world still looks to the remaining States to do the right thing by signing and ratifying the Treaty, which would definitely give impetus to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation shares its deep concern about the ever-present threat that nuclear weapons pose to humans and the environment because the use of such weapons, whether intentional or accidental, would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences owing to the devastation caused by nuclear explosions and radioactive contamination. In addition, many of the survivors would suffer from after-effects, including the disruption of the climate and the destruction of agriculture.

Zambia, which is a party to the NPT, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the CTBT, will continue to work together with other Member States in ensuring that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted 7 July 2017, produces the desired result of eliminating nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth. In that connection, Zambia will only promote and subscribe to the secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies for developmental purposes, as endorsed by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**Mr. Medeiros Leopoldino (Brazil):** At the outset, our delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

Over the past year, we have witnessed with apprehension an intensification of brinkmanship and volatile behaviour from nuclear-weapon States. We have also followed with grave concern the prolonged standstill in their disarmament initiatives and dialogue. The nuclear-weapon States have apparently softened their adherence to disarmament commitments, and some of them have said that certain conditions are required for disarmament talks to even take place. We hope that such tendencies can be reversed. Brazil stands ready to support resumed disarmament talks in multiple formats and frameworks, to the extent that they comply with our shared multilateral disarmament obligations.

We have also learned, with apprehension, of the disquieting nuclear-weapon modernization programmes that were recently announced or set in motion, including new types of arsenals for use in a broader number of theatres, with variable yields that may reduce the threshold for decisions to use weapons of mass destruction.

The sensation of security imparted by the possession of nuclear weapons is illusory. History demonstrates that the decisions made by several countries to dismantle their existing nuclear-weapon stockpiles or to terminate their nuclear-weapon development programmes have enhanced security and stability in their regions. In contrast, countries that continue to rely on nuclear weapons often find themselves locked in dangerous and unstable interactions with one another, marked by permanent tensions, mistrust and the risk of miscalculations and catastrophic accidents. The decision to disarm should not wait for optimal security preconditions that may never materialize. Nuclear disarmament must be an integral part of any effort to reduce tensions and build lasting and stable peace, at all levels.

The devastating, indiscriminate and long-lasting consequences of nuclear weapons make such weapons inherently incompatible with international law, particularly international humanitarian law. Yet, they were the only weapon of mass destruction not explicitly prohibited. At long last, that gap has been filled by the adoption, in July 2017, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW is an integral part of international law and of the rules-based disarmament regime, and it has come to stay. Its entire structure is designed to uphold and advance the obligations enshrined in the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In particular, the TPNW is consistent with, and complementary to, article VI of the NPT, which obliges all States parties to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.

At a more technical level, the TPNW sets the highest legally binding standard for nuclear-non-proliferation verification. While the NPT obligations to adopt comprehensive safeguards agreements apply only to its non-nuclear-weapon States parties, the TPNW obliges all its States parties, without discrimination, to maintain, at a minimum, their existing International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards obligations at the time of entry into force of the Treaty — without

prejudice to any additional safeguards instruments they may adopt in future, which they would also be under an obligation to maintain.

We reaffirm the crucial role of the NPT in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It is incumbent on all parties to engage constructively to reach a successful outcome for the current review cycle. A repetition of 2015 would further erode the relevance and credibility of a treaty we all deem to be the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The present review cycle must be used to increase commitment to, and the effectiveness of, a concrete road map to nuclear disarmament.

Brazil reiterates its frustration at the failure to date to convene a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as provided for by the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. That issue cannot be left in limbo.

Brazil reiterates that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will provide the only legally binding assurance against the recurrence of nuclear testing. In that regard, we renew our call on all States, in particular those listed in annex 2 to the CTBT, to demonstrate their commitment to the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime by signing and ratifying the Treaty without further delay.

Brazil is pleased with the results of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group. We hope that its consensus report will be fully utilized as a sound basis for further discussions at the Conference on Disarmament with a view to commencing negotiations on the important step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Mrs. Palacios Palacios** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Australia on behalf of a group of States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The nuclear non-proliferation regime is facing tension and uncertainty, but the situation is not unprecedented. We have already experienced extremely complex cycles in the past. It is at such times that a regime's stability is put to the test, as it is directly linked to the conduct of all members of the international community and to their commitment, capacity for

dialogue and willingness to face a global challenge from the only feasible perspective — consensus.

We encourage all efforts to achieve the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation before its expiration in 2021. We note with great concern the deterioration of the arms-control regime in the Euro-Atlantic area — an entire architecture of conventional instruments that for decades have fostered peace and stability on the European continent. At such crucial times, it is our view that we must continue to perceive international law as the best way to settle disputes, regulate the conduct of States so as to make it predictable and condemn and punish possible breaches.

We need dialogue on strategic security among the nuclear-weapon States that will allow for stable and predictable relations, the strengthening of channels of communication, mutual visits and exchanges and increased transparency and trust, which are objectives that will be facilitated by a robust and credible verification regime. In that regard, we support the efforts of the International Partnership for the Verification of Nuclear Disarmament. Nuclear risk reduction measures also offer possibilities for progress. The action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) invites us to discuss policies that can prevent the use of nuclear weapons and reduce their role in military and security doctrines.

The NPT is the key reference for international disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy and has led to indisputable gains in containing vertical and horizontal proliferation threats. It is essential to preserve and strengthen that instrument. To that end, the 13 practical steps outlined in the final outcome document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the 2010 action plan provides us with concrete benchmarks for implementation. The preamble to the NPT itself invites us to consider the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Awareness of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons should alert us to the need to eliminate them.

Let us not forget that achieving the objective of global zero is the ultimate and defining goal of the Treaty. We cannot consider article VI on disarmament measures as a mere convenience or simply a desirable objective, but rather as an international legal obligation

whose fulfilment in good faith must be urgent for all. Moving forward in a practical and efficient way in that objective cannot, however, embrace solutions that disregard the dimension of security and strategic stability. The prohibition of nuclear weapons will not necessarily lead to their elimination, which is an objective we must achieve through ambitious measures that are also realistic and achievable.

The negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices is a priority. In our view, the Treaty should include both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. It is essential to address that logical step, which cannot be postponed, with the necessary flexibility, in the knowledge that the beginning of negotiations can never prejudice — nor should it prejudice — their final outcome.

Another essential objective is the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its universalization. In addition, strengthening the provision of negative security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States would be a way to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime.

We take note of the commitments announced by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend its nuclear and ballistic-missile tests and close its testing facilities. The process of open talks is hopeful. We hope that it will lead to tangible progress towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We believe that the current Security Council sanctions regime should be maintained until that occurs.

The nuclear agreement negotiated with Iran and endorsed by Security Council resolution 2231 (2018) is a very relevant instrument for consolidating non-proliferation efforts. Its rigorous implementation by all parties must continue, including Iran's full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**The Chair:** I give the floor to the representative of Myanmar to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28.

**Mr. Tun** (Myanmar): The delegation of Myanmar aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), and by the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

During the general debate, many delegations, including that of Myanmar, called for a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament is urgently and unequivocally needed for the whole world, as the proliferation and possession of nuclear weapons poses a horrible threat to the very existence of mankind and the survival of civilization. In her address to the First Committee during the general debate, the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session highlighted the outcome document of the first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978 (resolution S/10-2) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), noting that all peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations and that, consequently, all States have the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament.

Therefore, the delegation of Myanmar welcomes all initiatives taken by delegations for a nuclear-weapon-free world. Such initiatives include, among others, submitting draft resolutions, concluding a treaty, commemorating 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and organizing a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament.

Myanmar has been advocating for a world free of nuclear weapons over the past two decades in the Committee. The annual draft resolution on nuclear disarmament proposed by our delegation with the wide support of States Members of the United Nations, in particular the States members of NAM and ASEAN, aims to achieve peace and security for present and future generations.

On behalf of the sponsors to date, namely, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Honduras, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Swaziland, Thailand, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe, I would like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28, entitled "Nuclear disarmament". The draft resolution calls for the international community to take concrete practical steps towards achieving the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the advent of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of

use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, the draft resolution underlines the importance of the unequivocal undertaking by all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to take interim measures to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament.

We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the draft resolution also stresses that the 13 practical steps mentioned in the final document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty are pivotal and also affirms that the 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament is an impetus to intensifying work aimed at beginning negotiations for a nuclear-weapons convention. Furthermore, the draft resolution calls for the early entry into force, universalization and strict observance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as a contribution to nuclear disarmament.

I believe that such steps and others in the draft resolution are pragmatic and feasible for realizing our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We should all renew our political will for nuclear disarmament. My delegation would like to express its sincere thanks to member States for their invaluable support for the resolution on this topic in the previous years and to invite all member States to lend their continued support to the draft resolution that I have just introduced by co-sponsoring and supporting it, in the spirit of making the world free of nuclear weapons and a safer place for our future generations.

**Mr. Sun Lei** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At present, the international strategic security environment is undergoing profound and complex changes. As uncertainties and instability increase, the international process of nuclear arms control has reached a crucial crossroads. China believes that the international community should hold fast to the concept of a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, maintain strategic balance and undiminished security for all and make every effort to promote nuclear disarmament and strengthen international peace and security.

First, we should actively pursue a new concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. We should fully respect and accommodate the legitimate and reasonable security concerns of all countries and strive to create a peaceful and stable

international security environment in order to eliminate the root causes of nuclear proliferation, providing common security for all.

Secondly, we should firmly safeguard the authority of existing arms-control and disarmament regimes, such as the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Although they are not perfect, such regimes represent the greatest common denominator acceptable to all as they are rules-based, strike a balance between rights and obligations and follow the principle of equal participation by all countries. Therefore, with regard to such regimes, countries should avoid seeking to select only what suits their interest and abandoning what does not.

Thirdly, countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear a special and ongoing responsibility for nuclear disarmament. They should in earnest comply with the treaties already concluded on the reduction of nuclear weapons and further substantially reduce nuclear arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is an important treaty on arms control and disarmament reached between the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. As such, the Treaty has played a crucial role in easing international tensions, advancing the nuclear disarmament process and maintaining global strategic balance and stability. It remains relevant in today's world. We hope that countries concerned will cherish that hard-won achievement by engaging in dialogue and consultations to properly address related issues.

Fourthly, the will and rights of non-nuclear-weapon States to be free from the threat of nuclear war must be respected. Policies and measures such as pre-emptive strikes and the development of low-yield warheads, by lowering the threshold of using nuclear weapons, may lead to a higher risk of their use and of nuclear war. Therefore, such policies and measures should be abandoned as soon as possible.

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. We have always pursued the nuclear strategy of self-defence and consistent nuclear policies. China is committed to the policy of the no-first placement of weapons in outer space and refrains from the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones, in an attempt to maintain

nuclear strength at the minimum level required by national security.

China has always actively supported international nuclear-disarmament efforts by fulfilling relevant international obligations in good faith and by taking practical steps to promote a nuclear disarmament process. China has attached great importance to, and has actively participated in, the review process of the NPT. We have been strictly fulfilling NPT treaty obligations and ardently implementing its review outcomes and are committed to maintaining and enhancing its authority, universality and effectiveness.

China is the coordinator of the P-5 cooperation process and will actively arrange activities to strive for positive progress on treaty review progress. China has always supported the purposes and objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and has honoured its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear tests. We are committed to the early entry into force of the Treaty. Since last year, a batch of International Monitoring System stations in China has been certified, which highlights our firm commitment to the Treaty.

We have been proactive towards the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the only and most appropriate venue for the negotiation of such a treaty. China supports the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the CD on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and the Shannon mandate. China has participated actively in the discussions in the United Nations High-Level Expert Preparatory Group and in the relevant subsidiary body of the CD and has made positive contributions to the outcomes of the relevant mechanisms.

We attach importance to nuclear-disarmament verification. We believe that adequate and effective verification measures constitute significant technical guarantees to the total prohibition and complete destruction of nuclear weapons. China has constructively participated in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We support the GGE in working in strict accordance with the mandate of relevant United Nations resolutions in a positive and steady manner. China is ready to work with the international community to make unremitting efforts to achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I would like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is nearly 50 years old. Brokered by consensus, underpinned by the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime and offering tangible benefits to all its signatories, it has helped make us more secure. The dark predictions cast in the 1960s and 1970s of dozens of nuclear-armed States have not come true. The United Kingdom remains strongly committed to the NPT and the step-by-step approach to disarmament. We will actively work for a successful outcome at the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and continue to campaign for the universalization of the Treaty.

We will continue to support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and Organization and the completion and sustainment of its verification regime. The invaluable work carried out by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization relies on its member States paying their dues, on time and in full. We support the start and early conclusion of negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament as an essential step to complete global nuclear disarmament.

We will continue our leading role in disarmament verification, including through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership with the United States, Sweden and Norway. We do not intend to support, sign or ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which risks undermining the NPT and ignores the security situation and the considerable technical and procedural challenges involved in nuclear disarmament.

We have a collective obligation to support and reinforce the existing counter-proliferation framework. Along with NATO allies, we have supported United States efforts to bring Russia back into compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which has been crucial to Euro-Atlantic security. Russia has developed capabilities that are destabilizing European security and has offered no credible response to our serious concerns. The United Kingdom would like to see the Treaty continue to stand but it requires two parties to be committed to it and, at the moment, one is

in breach of the agreement. Russia needs to respect its Treaty obligations.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran represents a major step forward in preventing Iran from developing a nuclear-weapons capability. The United Kingdom is committed to the full and long-term implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by all remaining parties to the deal. At the same time, we have significant concerns about Iran's ballistic-missile programme, which is inconsistent with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

The United Kingdom welcomes the opportunity created by the Singapore Summit between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is vital for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete actions towards denuclearization, as agreed at that summit. International pressure and robust United Nations sanctions have played a key role. Sanctions must continue to be strictly enforced until the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

Given the unpredictable security environment we face today, the United Kingdom must maintain our nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. States might use their nuclear capability to threaten us or try to constrain our decision-making in a crisis, and there is a risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons. The threats from nuclear-capable States are very real, and any potential aggressor must be assured that the consequences of an attack far outweigh the benefits.

The United Kingdom takes its responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State very seriously, as demonstrated by our negative security assurances regarding the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, our commitment to a minimum credible deterrent and our transparency about our arsenal and declaratory policy. We maintain the voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices, which has been in place since 1995. We have met our 2010 strategic defence and security review commitment to reduce the number of deployed warheads. We have reduced the number of operationally available warheads to no more than 120. We remain committed to reducing our overall nuclear-weapon stockpile to no more than 180 warheads by the next decade.

Despite the challenging security backdrop, we remain determined to work with partners across the international community to prevent proliferation, improve verification and make progress on nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Klíma** (Czech Republic): As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of our delegation's full support.

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The Czech Republic is strongly committed to the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in all its aspects, including nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The NPT remains an indispensable multilateral legal instrument for upholding international peace, security and stability. We call upon all States parties to implement the Treaty obligations and commitments set by respective NPT Review Conferences.

We consider the NPT to be an adequate platform to advance towards the objective of a world without nuclear weapons. We are not convinced that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) will help to enhance the security of any country or diminish nuclear arsenals. On the contrary, we see the risks it poses to nuclear disarmament.

The Czech Republic encourages those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to do so without delay. We would like to reaffirm our support for the process leading to an early entry into force of the CTBT, which will significantly strengthen the international security architecture.

We hope that efforts towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East will be resumed in a constructive, inclusive and consensus-based manner. It is necessary to identify opportunities for regional dialogue and encourage a solution that takes into consideration the legitimate interests of all States in the region.

The Czech Republic welcomes the current diplomatic efforts and calls upon the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea to maintain its declared suspension of the testing of nuclear weapons and of ballistic missile launches, comply without delay with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, the NPT and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and sign and ratify the CTBT.

The Czech Republic is a steadfast supporter of the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, exercised in a responsible manner and honouring non-proliferation obligations and safeguards agreements. In that regard, it is important to reaffirm the central role of IAEA. We actively participate in, and contribute financially to, the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative. We are convinced that exercising the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in a responsible manner can provide numerous benefits in non-energy nuclear applications, such as advancements in cancer therapy, disease control, food and water safety and so on.

The Czech Republic attaches great value to the role of export control regimes and the Nuclear Security Summit and its follow-up, as well as relevant international initiatives and confidence-building measures on non-proliferation, thereby fostering nuclear security and building trust among all players. We call on those still outside that ever-growing system to adhere to the norms and principles embedded therein.

**Mr. Kazi** (Bangladesh): Under this agenda item, Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

Nuclear weapons pose an overriding security threat to humankind as a whole. As global awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons expands, we become increasingly sensitized to the risks of inadvertent nuclear-weapons use that could arise from accidents or miscalculation. The threats of nuclear weapons and related materials falling into the hands of terrorists and other unauthorized actors continue to deepen our concerns about the existence of those and other weapons of mass destruction.

There is no doubt in our mind that all responsible member States share a firm commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. However, there are divergences of views on the ways, means and pace of achieving that objective. Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be ensured only by the total elimination of nuclear

weapons. We take note of the progress made in the area of nuclear arms reduction but remain concerned about the sustained and enhanced investments in further improvement, planning and research on nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and related facilities. We reiterate the urgent need for reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons, including through complete deprogramming and de-alerting.

Bangladesh remains committed to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects and considers nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation to be mutually reinforcing. We support the effective implementation of all three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and hope that the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT would be able to overcome the setback suffered in the preceding one. We appreciate the spirit of engagement witnessed during the Preparatory Committee meetings.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a significant development towards nuclear disarmament. Bangladesh considers it to be a critical instrument in delegitimizing nuclear weapons, thereby mitigating the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their potential use. It is unwarranted to project the Treaty as a divisive instrument when its avowed objective is to further complement and reinforce the NPT, in particular its article VI. We would see merit in including the TPNW on the First Committee agenda.

We believe the potential contribution of non-nuclear-weapon States to discussions on nuclear disarmament verifications should be duly utilized. We reiterate our support for commencing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on an effective, non-discriminatory, legally binding and internationally and effectively

verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, including existing stocks. We thank the High-level Expert Preparatory Group for its work, in particular for holding informal consultations with the wider membership.

Bangladesh continues to align itself with other State parties that advocate the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome Thailand's ratification of the Treaty and urge the remaining annex 2 member States to expedite their ratification. We thank the Executive Secretary of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization for his visit to Bangladesh last month. We remain particularly concerned about the continued lack of progress in the CD on a legally binding instrument providing assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

Bangladesh remains convinced that the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, with the safeguards and verification regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in place, can effectively contribute to our common endeavour to achieve sustainable development. With our foray into nuclear-power generation, we attach importance to IAEA standards and technical cooperation on nuclear safety and security.

In conclusion, we consider the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and accession to their protocols to be useful interim steps towards providing negative security assurances and achieving global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. Bangladesh would remain in favour of sustained deliberations on a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*