



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

First Committee

18th meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

The Chair: The representative of the United States of America has requested the floor on a point of order.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to raise a point of order under rule 113 of the rules of procedure and in connection with document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, according to which the Committee took a decision regarding its programme of work and timetable in which it decided that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions was 18 October. Last night, on 24 October, the delegation of the Russian Federation circulated a draft resolution nearly a week after the deadline. We request, Mr. Chair, that you rule that the draft resolution cannot be considered.

On top of that, I want to point out that the Russian press was briefed about the draft resolution yesterday before any of the members of the Committee. We also think that it sets a very bad precedent for the Committee's work by introducing a bilateral issue into it.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to clarify the Russian Federation's decision to introduce a new draft resolution in the First Committee after the official deadline for the submission of draft resolutions for the Committee's consideration. Regrettably, the developments regarding this treaty have compelled us to react immediately and purposefully to the situation, which we consider critical. On 20 October, United States President Donald Trump announced his country's possible withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

(INF). Subsequently, he announced that the United States intends to build up its nuclear arsenal. We see those two statements as links in the same chain.

A situation is being created in which the international community will soon come up against a new reality, tied to another arms race, a nuclear arms race, and a more dangerous and less stable world. During the general debate and the thematic debates on the cluster on "Nuclear weapons", we heard many statements in this room in support of the INF Treaty and of continuing the dialogue between the United States of Russia under the Treaty, with the aim of preserving it and eliminating mutual concerns. This importance of this multilateral instrument as a cornerstone of European and international security was also repeatedly emphasized, and that is how we view it, like many other States. I do not agree with my United States colleague that in this instance we are submitting some kind of bilateral issue for the First Committee's consideration. At the very least, the withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty will affect the security of around 40 European States. Like many others, we view the Treaty as an important component of our national and regional — that is, European — security and, more broadly speaking, of international security.

I want to say once again that that our decision was compelled by a situation of force majeure related to the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Treaty and build up its nuclear capability. In the circumstances, we believe that the international community is simply obligated to react to this negative and very crucial situation, which could have extremely

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unpredictable, even apocalyptic consequences for the international community.

With regard to the draft resolution itself, to a large extent it is based on a number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Its aim is to strengthen the viability of the INF Treaty and to continue consultations between the Russian Federation and the United States in order to resolve the existing mutual concerns under the Treaty, which would enable us to safeguard it and improve the parties' accountability for enforcing it. Furthermore, preserving this Treaty is clearly an essential condition for making further progress on the reduction of nuclear weapons, which is why the Russian Federation and an overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations all support it. We call on all delegations in the First Committee to support the Russian Federation's initiative in submitting this draft resolution, which among other things responds to views expressed by many States, and to take a decision to consider it in the First Committee as usual.

For our part, we stand ready to work with all delegations on considering the document and to hold the necessary consultations to clarify our position and the significance, purpose and aims of our draft resolution.

The Chair: I myself have only just seen the proposal this morning, half an hour ago. It reached the Romanian Permanent Mission on 25 October, today, at 16 minutes after midnight.

Is the United States delegation asking that no action be taken on the text proposed by the Russian Federation, in accordance with rule 116 of the rules of procedure?

I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Under rule 113, the point of order shall be ruled upon immediately by the Chair. We request that you rule on my original point of order immediately.

The Chair: Let me read out rule 116 of the rules of procedure.

“During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote”.

I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): That is not our proposal. Again, I ask you, Mr. Chair, to rule under rule 113 of the rules of procedure, with regard to my point of order, and request that you take immediate action with respect to it.

The Chair: I will read out rule 113 of the rules of procedure.

“During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the Chairman in accordance with the rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the Chairman's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion”.

If my understanding is correct, the delegation of the United States is requesting that the Chair rule out any consideration by the Committee of the draft resolution. We had a case yesterday that was very different from this one today. Yesterday, the Group of African States asked for a draft resolution to be put on the agenda. But that was a repeat of a draft resolution that was also submitted last year, and it was on the Committee's agenda. The Group was simply late in presenting its proposal because its members had to consult with their capitals, and there are 54 countries in Africa. We therefore cannot use the situation we had yesterday as a precedent.

After consulting with the members of the Bureau, who were unanimous on this question, and based on the technical advice of the Secretariat regarding the rules of procedure and what I have said since the very beginning of this session, which is that I will do my best to find a consensus whenever possible and to consult with delegations and Member States, I suggest that we allow a little more time for discussion, and later today or tomorrow — it will be up to the Committee to tell me when — we will come back to the issue.

I do not know how many members of the Committee are aware of this. I have only just read it. If there is a clear request now, I will proceed to a vote immediately, but that must come from delegations. The Chair is in

the hands of the Member States. My job is to act as an honest broker. Are there any other requests?

I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): We request an immediate vote.

The Chair: Could the representative of the United States please specify exactly what he is asking to have put to the vote?

Mr. Wood (United States of America): We are asking that a decision be taken on document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, which deals with the timetable for the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions.

The Chair: Please forgive me, as I am sometimes slow to understand. Is the representative of the United States requesting that a vote be taken on the deadline mentioned in document A/C.1/73/CRP.1 for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions under all agenda items, which is Thursday, 18 October, at noon. Is that correct? Is he requesting that a vote be taken on respecting the deadline established in document A/C.1/73/CRP.1?

Mr. Wood (United States of America): We are appealing, under rule 113, that you take a decision on this, Mr. Chair. It is not clear to me whether you have taken a decision on how to proceed or thrown that back into the hands of the Committee.

The Chair: I said that unless a delegation is asking for a vote immediately, I would prefer to give representatives more time today for consultations, in my capacity as an honest broker and in trying to seek a consensus. If a delegation is asking for a vote, we will have the vote right now. There was a precedent two weeks ago, when we had a more or less similar situation, so I am following the same approach I took then, trying to reach a consensus.

I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): If you are seeking more time, Mr. Chair, we are appealing that decision and would therefore like to see an immediate vote.

The Chair: I am checking with the Office of Legal Affairs. I want everything I do to be 100 per cent in accordance with the rules of procedure.

The representative of the United States has confirmed that he is challenging the Chair's ruling.

Rule 113 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly is applicable in this case. I will read from the relevant part of rule 113.

“A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the Chairman's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting.”

I shall therefore now put the appeal to the vote. The Secretary has informed me that no one may interrupt the voting procedure except on a point of order about the rules of procedure.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like clarification about what the implications of the approval of the proposal of the United States would be for our initiative. I repeat that in this specific instance, we cannot comply with ordinary procedure because what is at issue is a question of international peace and security, and these issues fall within the purview of the United Nations. That is what the United Nations was founded for, and that is why the First Committee exists, not for confirming or not confirming rules of procedure. We categorically object to such an approach to matters of international peace and security. What is at stake is the future of our entire planet, because the United States intends to withdraw from a treaty and build up its nuclear capacity. And this is not the first time it has happened. There is no need to play these procedural games.

I am sorry to be so emotional, but the situation demands it, because we are looking at a little spark that could set fire to Europe and the whole world at any moment. And sticking to procedure in a case like that is like having a heart attack while the doctor says, “Let me read this manual about the procedure and about how to do it and save you. Give me a minute”, or simply “Let me finish medical school first and then I will save your life.” How would the Committee like that? I do not think anyone would like it. The Russian Federation categorically objects to such an approach. We request that all responsible States support our proposal rather than playing procedural games.

The Chair: I would like to ask all delegations to keep calm. We have to control our tempers. We are all

diplomats, and it is part of our profession to be able to have a dialogue in a civilized way.

What the Secretariat is telling me, after checking the rules of procedure again, is that the voting can be interrupted only on a point of order on the conduct of the voting. Let me clarify. The Chair's ruling is that more time should be provided for consultations on the matter. The United States has appealed the ruling. Those voting "yes" would be in favour of considering the question immediately.

I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): There are a number of points involved here. It is certainly not very clear as to what we would be voting on. The basis of our proposal was document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, which makes clear that there was a certain deadline by which a draft resolution should have been submitted, and this is well past that deadline.

I just want to add, very calmly, that our Russian colleague raised this as a matter of urgent international security. There is a forum in the United Nations system for such issues, and it is the Security Council. Again, what we are asking at this time is that the Committee vote on the matter of document A/C.1/73/CRP.1 as to whether Russia's draft resolution was submitted in a timely fashion under the rules of procedure.

The Chair: I have made a proposal, and the United States has asked for a vote to challenge my proposal. If my proposal is rejected by the Member States, then according to the rules of procedure, we will be able to vote on what the United States is asking for.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): In terms of the procedure and rules that apply in this meeting, the United States delegation indicated that in accordance with document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, the deadline mentioned for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions is Thursday, 18 October at noon, and the United States delegation indicated that it was making this point on rule 113, which is a point of order. After the United States made its proposal on rule 113, the point of order had to be immediately decided by the Chair, in accordance with the rules of procedure. The Chair took the floor in order to propose to the Committee that he be granted more time to consult with as many delegations as possible on the matter. He also indicated

that he would like to get clarification from delegations as to whether or not he should proceed in that manner.

In response, the United States delegation once again indicated that there should be a ruling by the Chair, and the Chair has indicated once again that he would like to have more time on the matter. In response, the United States delegation asked for an immediate vote on the matter. The Chair sought clarification to know if the United States would like to challenge the ruling of the Chair for more time and that is where we are right now. In accordance with rule 113 of the rules of procedure, which the Chair read and I will read again,

"A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the Chairman's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting."

In calling for a vote on the challenge to his ruling, the Chair has therefore sought to clarify for the Committee that his ruling is that more time should be provided for consultations on the matter. In terms of how delegations vote, a "yes" vote will be in favour of immediate consideration of the question, that is, the question of the deadline in document A/C.1/73/CRP.1. A "no" vote will be to allow the Chair to have more time to consult with interested delegations on the matter. Of course, representatives can also abstain in the voting. That is where we are in terms of the vote.

I also want to remind the Committee that given the fact that there is a challenge to the ruling of the Chair, the appeal should be immediately voted on. So the floor should be requested on a point of order with regard only to the conduct of the voting. In accordance with the rules of procedure, representatives should not ask to speak with regard to the substance of the matter under discussion.

The Chair: I hope that everything concerning the procedure we should follow is now clear. I shall now put the challenge to the Chair's ruling to the vote.

I give the floor to the representative of the United States on a point of order.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I think there is a little confusion about what you and the Secretary outlined about the voting procedure. Could you please explain it one more time? I think all delegations would benefit from it.

The Chair: I give the floor to the representative of Belarus on a point of order.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to respond briefly to the remarks by the delegations of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We would like to note that the Republic of Belarus is keen to maintain the integrity of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

The Chair: What you are saying does not concern the conduct of the voting. The procedure is very clear. When a procedural vote has already started, representatives may ask to speak on a point of order only with regard to the conduct of the voting.

I give the floor to the representative of Germany on a point of order.

Mr. Bohn (Germany): I would just like to ask for clarification, Mr. Chair. You have ruled that you would like the Committee to have more time to consider the point of order raised by the representative of the United States. My question is how much time are you planning to allocate to that? Is it just a little while? How much?

The Chair: My proposal was for more time to consult on the matter, not on any specific proposal.

I give the floor to the representative of Belarus on a point of order.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I believe that if representatives are given the floor they should be allowed to say what they have to say in full. Since you did not hear our statement out, Mr. Chair, you cannot know what we intended to say, and therefore to continue what I was saying, we support the proposal of the Russian Federation to submit its draft resolution for the First Committee's consideration, especially given the existence of a precedent.

The Chair: That is not in connection with what we are discussing now. If we reach the point of discussing the Russian proposal, then you may take the floor and speak in support of it, but we are not discussing the Russian proposal now.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would simply like to ask once again for a clarification of the implications of voting in favour or voting against on this question before a decision is

taken and if possible, that what we are voting on be displayed on the screen.

The Chair: It is exactly what the Secretary has already explained.

I give the floor to the representative of the United States on a point of order.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I just want to have my request on how we are going to proceed followed up on.

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

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): To repeat what I said just now more succinctly, the Chair's ruling is that more time should be provided for consultations on the matter. That is in response to a point of order raised by the United States delegation under rule 113, which I will read out.

"During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the Chairman in accordance with the rules of procedure."

The point of order that the representative of the United States referred to is about the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions in document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, where it is indicated that the deadline is Thursday, 18 October, at noon. We are therefore back to the fact that there has been an appeal of the Chair's ruling for more time for consultations on the matter. According to the rules, the Chair has to immediately put this to a vote. I will read from the relevant rule.

"A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the Chairman's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting."

In effect, what that means is that those voting "yes" in the vote that will take place now will be in favour of immediate consideration of the question of whether the Committee will consider a draft resolution submitted after the deadline, while those voting "no" will be against. In other words, they will support having more time for the consideration of the matter. Of course, delegations can also abstain.

The Chair: The representative of the Netherlands has asked to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Gabrielse (Netherlands): I thank the Secretary for her explanation. So the extension gives the Chair a little bit more time for his decision. What has been requested by the representative of the United States?

The Chair: That has been explained twice. We can ask the Secretary to read it a third time if you feel it is necessary, but I think twice is enough. But in order to be crystal clear to everybody, I will ask the Secretary to read it again.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Given the fact that delegations are voting on a very important issue, it is important that everyone be clear about what they are voting on. I will be happy to read it again.

The Chair's ruling is that more time should be provided for consultations on the matter. Consultation on the matter is not about the consideration of one or another specific proposal but is rather in response to the request by the United States that in keeping with the timetable laid down in document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions was Thursday, 18 October, and consultations were needed with the interested parties before having the Committee formally consider the matter. The United States has asked for an immediate vote on the matter, which is therefore a challenge to the Chair's ruling for more time for consultations on the matter. Is that clear?

Since there is a challenge to the ruling by the Chair, in accordance with rule 113, the Committee will go immediately to a vote on the matter. A "yes" vote will mean that a delegation is in favour of immediate consideration of the question of whether the Committee will consider the draft resolution submitted after the deadline. A "no" vote will mean that the delegation will allow the Chair more time to consult with the relevant interested parties. Delegations may also abstain in the voting.

The Chair: If the procedure is now clear to everyone, I shall now put to the vote the appeal against my ruling. I want to point out that those who vote "yes" will be voting in favour of the challenge submitted by the representative of the United States of America.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen

Abstaining:

Australia, Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Japan, Lebanon, Malawi, Mali, Peru, Senegal

The appeal against the Chair's ruling was rejected by 77 votes to 34, with 12 abstentions.

The Chair: My ruling that more time be provided for consultations on the matter has therefore been upheld.

We will now revert to our initial agenda. I will make an announcement later about how I suggest that we proceed.

I wish to remind all delegations that the meeting will be suspended at 12.30 p.m. in order to follow the annual tradition of accommodating the presentation ceremony of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates.

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

The Chair: The Committee will now continue its thematic discussion on the cluster “Conventional weapons”. I once again urge all speakers to kindly observe the established time limit.

Ms. Lahmiri (Morocco): I am delivering the following statement on behalf of my Permanent Representative. It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States, which aligns itself with the statement delivered on this cluster by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16).

The Group remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, especially considering their wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences, particularly on the continent of Africa. The Group therefore attaches great importance to the central role of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons as crucial multilateral instruments dedicated to fighting the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and tackling their multifaceted effects, which pose a threat to international peace and security.

The Group welcomed the successful conclusion in June 2018 of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and urges all States to continue to fulfil their obligations with regard to reporting and technology transfer and by ensuring the unhindered flow of international cooperation and assistance, as mandated by the United Nations.

The Group would like to highlight the extensive efforts made to address the subject of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons since the Bamako Declaration of 2000, which include the Constitutive

Act of the African Union (AU), the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU, the Sirte Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, the Nairobi Protocol, the Southern African Development Community Protocol, the Convention of the Economic Community of West African States, efforts in the framework of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Arab Maghreb Union, the African Union’s Agenda 2063, the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and other relevant subregional initiatives aimed at addressing the issue in Africa.

Despite those efforts, the Group continues to stress that international assistance and cooperation on a broader scale remain essential ingredients for the full implementation of the Programme of Action. The African Group therefore wishes to call on Member States with developed economies to cooperate with and provide increased technical and financial assistance to developing countries in implementing the overall objectives of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument with a view to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that this work will promote national and regional initiatives and assist efforts at the global level.

The actual reduction of military expenditures by major arms-producing countries, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, is a genuine confidence-building measure. In that regard, we urge those countries to devote their resources to global economic and social development, especially the fight against poverty.

The Group of African States acknowledges the efforts made by States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty since its entry into force, as well as by the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, held in Tokyo in August 2018. The Group urges States parties to the Treaty to implement it in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States and not just the major international producing and exporting States, while avoiding any infringement of the legitimate rights of States to satisfy their national-security and self-defence needs in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The full implementation of the Treaty remains achievable with the cooperation of all its parties. The Group urges major arms suppliers to ratify the Treaty and promote its implementation.

The Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Group acknowledges that arms transfers to unauthorized recipients fuels illicit trade and urges all States to refrain from making and to prohibit arms transfers to any recipient without the authorization of a competent national authority of the importing State.

The Group continues to highlight the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in the context of its contribution to disarmament issues and providing the necessary assistance to States members of the Group of African States in the implementation of disarmament, peace and security issues. The Group wishes to stress the need to further strengthen all United Nations regional centres so that they may fully discharge their mandates.

In conclusion, the Group of African States wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group believes that the deliberations over the coming days should be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and enhance the cause of peace.

Mr. Viinanen (Finland): It is an honour for me to address the First Committee on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland.

The First Committee has a unique role to play in promoting gender equality as a cross-cutting theme throughout the entire spectrum of disarmament and arms control. The advantages of the full and equal participation of women in disarmament and arms control are clear. By better including women in decision-making and field-level work, States increase the effectiveness of those activities and pave the way for cost-effective and lasting results in the long run. It is simple — there are no downsides to improving gender equality, only gains.

Armed violence has different impacts on women, men, girls and boys, and we strongly promote the role of women in all actions relating to small arms and light weapons and ammunition control, especially in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit

Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

We thank Ambassador Brunet for his tireless work as President of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action and appreciate the briefing provided on his behalf yesterday. We are particularly pleased that the Review Conference found consensus on highlighting for the first time the importance of combating gender-based violence through small arms control.

All States must adopt a new way of thinking about conventional arms control. Controlling the flows of small arms and ammunition is not only a disarmament issue; it is a development issue and should be addressed as such. We thank the Secretary-General for his agenda for disarmament and note with special thanks its focus on mitigating the humanitarian impact of conventional arms on civilians. We look forward to working with all States and with you, Sir, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and civil-society actors to break silos, focus efforts on saving lives and make the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a reality.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) remains a high priority for the Nordic countries. Regulating the global arms trade is not an easy endeavour, and we thank Japan for having led the ATT process over the past year. Further important steps have been taken to move the work of the Treaty in a substantive direction. The working groups are increasingly focused on practical issues resulting in concrete recommendation. It is also my honour to pledge our continued support to Latvia during its chairmanship of the ATT. The Treaty must be implemented in practice and international assistance for capacity-building will make a difference in many countries. The Voluntary Trust Fund could be a useful tool in that regard.

The ATT provides all States with a fair, transparent and effective platform for conducting legitimate trade in arms and preventing illicit and unregulated trade in arms. We welcome all States that have recently joined that important Treaty and strongly encourage States that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the ATT.

We remain strongly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols. The Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems has provided a useful

format for increasing awareness and bringing States closer to a common understanding on the development and use of new technologies. We welcome the fact that the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) has agreed on possible guiding principles, including the importance of compliance with international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

We also underline the key role, in the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems, of legal and technical reviews in accordance with article 36 of Additional Protocol I of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

There is still much to discuss on this emerging and multifaceted topic. We are not convinced that negotiations on a legally binding instrument would be the best way forward at this stage. For any legally binding instrument, a definition is a basic legal requirement, and it has not yet been possible to reach a common international understanding in that regard. We look forward to continuing the deliberations as concretely as possible in the GGE next year.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which has succeeded in reducing the human suffering caused by such weapons. We remain deeply concerned about the reported use of cluster munitions, which gravely affects civilian populations. The Nordic countries are strong supporters of humanitarian mine action and the implementation and universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The important work being done to rid the world of anti-personnel mines still needs strong and continued commitment in terms of funding and political will. At a time when disarmament and arms-control processes in many forums seem polarized, humanitarian mine action is one area in which real progress is possible that would result in great benefits for the lives of civilians. The goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines is within our reach.

A full version of this statement can be found on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The high incidence of violent crime is among the several challenges to sustainable development in the Caribbean Community. It reduces citizen

security, impedes socioeconomic development, erodes confidence in nation-building and heightens fear among the population. CARICOM therefore recognizes the need to combat violent crime in the region and its main drivers, including the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their associated ammunition.

More than 70 per cent of the people who die by violence in CARICOM Member States are killed by guns — and this in a region that does not manufacture, export or re-export small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Neither do we import them on a large scale. The region, however, continues to battle the adverse effects of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in our territories and we are increasingly convinced of the need for concrete action at all levels to combat that scourge, which we see as a serious impediment to our development efforts.

The Arms Trade Treaty makes a significant contribution to international and regional peace, security and stability. CARICOM remains a strong advocate of the Treaty, which provides for the regulation of the international trade in conventional weapons and addresses critical elements of the trade, including the diversion of weapons to illicit markets. The objectives of the Treaty should remain foremost in our minds until they are achieved.

A strong humanitarian element is needed in decisions on arms transfers. The Secretary-General has correctly observed in his agenda for disarmament that civilians continue to bear the brunt of armed conflict around the globe. The same is true for populations, like those in our region, which are affected by armed violence. We therefore call on all States parties to act in good faith in complying with the provisions of the Treaty and we also call on non-States parties to halt arms transfers that violate the Treaty.

The universalization of the Treaty remains a concern for CARICOM. We urge those Member States that have yet to ratify the Treaty to do so as a matter of urgency and commend those States that have recently ratified it, including CARICOM member State Suriname. We are encouraged by the outcome of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty under the able presidency of Ambassador Nobushige Takamizawa of Japan and we look forward to the working groups' continued progress on the basis of the mandate given to them at the Conference.

CARICOM also welcomes the outcome of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, convened under the leadership of Ambassador Jean-Claude Brunet of France. We acknowledge that the negotiations were tough but note that the spirit of compromise enabled us to make small but significant inroads on a number of key issues. Any discussion of small arms and light weapons is at best incomplete without parallel consideration of their associated ammunition.

For that reason, we welcome the fact that the outcome document of the Review Conference includes that important provision. We also welcome the fact that situations of armed violence have been taken into account in the outcome document as a significant number of deaths and injuries result from the use of small arms and light weapons in such situations.

CARICOM hopes that in the short term, Member States will demonstrate the political will to hold deliberations on small arms and light weapons that are fully practical and address all aspects of the illegal trade in such weapons. We also urge continued focus on the evolving challenges related to the management of small arms and light weapons, including the impact of new and emerging technologies on weapon design. We look forward to actively participating in the biennial meetings of States parties in preparation for the fourth Review Conference.

CARICOM welcomes the increasing attention being given to mainstreaming a gender dimension into disarmament processes, including those related to conventional weapons. We believe that women have a special contribution to make to disarmament processes. That is evident in our own region, where women's influence at the grass-roots level has been important in de-escalating tensions in situations of armed violence. In addition, we recognize that women are often disproportionately affected by violence in situations of conflict and armed violence. Continued attention must therefore be paid to the gender-related impacts of the trade in conventional weapons.

More also needs to be done to promote a common understanding of how disarmament processes, including those relating to conventional weapons, feed into the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including Sustainable Development Goal 16 and its related targets. Such an understanding would give greater

intensity and seriousness to our efforts and reduce the tendency to politicize those important questions. We also believe that the identification of synergies across disarmament instruments would contribute to more effective implementation.

Finally, investing in or financing prohibited weapons undermines the international legal framework that governs their prohibition. Greater attention must be paid to the question of divestment from the manufacture of all types of weapon as that has direct implications for the sustainability of disarmament efforts. CARICOM reiterates its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the various international instruments governing conventional weapons and wishes to reiterate that the success of those instruments requires global commitment and action.

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

Mr. Dvořák (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). A full version of my statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart and our web page.

Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

We support the aspiration of the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament and look forward to further discussion on how to take it forward. We note that it has synergies with EU priorities in many areas, including with regard to promoting respect for international humanitarian law, strengthening the interlinkages between security, development and human rights and integrating a gender perspective in security policy in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

The EU advocates an integrated approach, with prevention at its core, that targets the root causes of violent conflict, while bearing in mind that illicit, poorly regulated or unregulated flows of arms and ammunition contribute to instability and conflicts, fuel terrorism and organized crime and have a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. They continue to claim victims in the hundreds of thousands in the twenty-first century. In addition, they hamper our joint efforts to achieve peace and security and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), to which the EU and its member States are fully committed.

We welcome the renewed international commitment to counter the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as demonstrated by the successful outcome of the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, held under the presidency of France, to which EU-funded thematic and regional seminars made a substantial contribution.

The EU is currently finalizing a review of its 2005 Strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in order to address all phases in the life cycle of small arms and their ammunition: manufacture, export, stockpiling and disposal. Over the past 15 years, the EU has contracted more than €100 million to small-arms and light-weapons-control projects in third countries.

Transfer controls are an important tool in the fight against illicit arms flows. The risk of diversion can be significantly reduced by proper arms-export control and risk assessment prior to authorizing an arms transfer. The EU outreach programme on arms exports control and the EU's efforts to identify and share information on diversion play an important role in that regard.

We call on all States Members of the United Nations, in particular major arms exporters, importers and transit countries, to join the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We strongly appreciate the ongoing active engagement of civil society, non-governmental organizations and international organizations and we believe that States parties should encourage industry to increase its representation.

The ATT, together with the United Nations Programme of Action, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol, represent a set of complementary international tools for regulating the trade and transfer of conventional arms and ammunition and preventing and eradicating illicit trade and diversion, as a contribution to peace, security and stability. They contribute to achieving SDG target 16.4 and combating organized crime, and they also contribute to achieving SDG target 5.2. We recall that all ATT States parties are obliged to assess the risk of serious gender-based violence before authorizing the export of conventional arms.

Within the EU, every request for an arms-export licence for an item listed in the EU Common Military List is required to be assessed on a case-by-case basis against eight risk criteria, including respect for human rights law and international humanitarian law, the risk of diversion and internal or regional instability.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a good example of effective multilateralism. It combines a strong global norm with impressive results on the ground and has resulted in an indiscriminate weapon now being prohibited by 164 States. That work is not yet done, however. New large-scale contamination by anti-personnel mines, including those of an improvised nature, continues to be reported in a number of countries. Particularly worrying is the use of such devices in the context of urban warfare, specifically aimed at terrorizing civilians and hindering the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

The EU will continue to support mine action worldwide, addressing both new threats and legacy contamination, with a view to achieving an anti-personnel-mine-free world by 2025. The combined funding by EU institutions and EU member States, which covers all aspects of mine action, including mine clearance, risk education, stockpile destruction and victim assistance, amounted to more than €600 million in the period 2012-2016.

In this tenth anniversary year of the adoption of the Cluster Munitions Convention, I would like to recall that the EU supports the Convention's humanitarian goal. The EU calls on all actors to refrain from the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions affecting civilian populations and to fully observe the principles of international humanitarian law. We welcome positive developments in the implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan.

The EU supports efforts to universalize and strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and stresses the importance of compliance with all CCW provisions and annexed protocols by the relevant high contracting parties.

We are greatly concerned at the increasing global impact of improvised explosive device attacks worldwide and their indiscriminate use and effects, in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts. We call for more stringent national measures to prevent the supply of weapons and explosive precursors to

terrorists, as set out by Security Council resolution 2370 (2017).

We believe that further expert discussions under the auspices of the CCW on mines other than anti-personnel mines would benefit all States. We recognize the challenges associated with the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas and their impact on civilians, and we call on all parties to armed conflict to fully comply with international humanitarian law. We appreciate the ongoing efforts to raise awareness and the launch of informal talks within the CCW that aim to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law principles and rules.

The EU welcomes the progress made during this year's meetings of the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, notably the agreed guiding principles. We emphasize that all States have the responsibility to ensure that their current and emerging weapons systems comply with the requirements of international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

Human beings must make the decisions on the use of lethal force, maintain control over the lethal weapons systems they use and remain responsible and accountable for decisions over life and death. We underline that responsible innovation and article 36 legal weapons reviews are important. The EU supports the continuation of the GGE's work in 2019 within the framework of the CCW.

We encourage all States to fulfil their financial obligations to the disarmament conventions and to pay their contributions and arrears in full without further delay.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): It is a pleasure to be here and a greater pleasure to see you, Sir, in the chair.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following 50 countries: Angola, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, the Central African Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Zambia and my own country, Ireland.

We remain gravely concerned at the humanitarian harm being caused during active hostilities in populated areas, in particular by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects. Explosive weapons have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects around the world. We must act to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians during armed conflict. That is an obligation shared by all parties involved in armed conflict.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has been shown to cause long-term humanitarian harm that far outlasts the conflicts in which they are used. Beyond the immediate injuries and deaths caused, the destruction of housing, schools, hospitals, water and sanitation systems and other crucial infrastructure means that the civilian population is severely affected over the longer term. Such devastation, in turn, acts as a catalyst for the displacement of people within and across borders, rendering displaced persons and refugees vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

There is overwhelming evidence that the use of such weapons can have a long-term impact on the recovery and development of affected communities. Reports of serious humanitarian harm have been substantiated in many of today's major conflicts. We welcome the ongoing work of civil society to empower and give voice to those affected by armed violence; and we encourage further research into the potential gender-related impacts of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

It is widely recognized that civilians continue to bear the brunt of armed conflicts around the world. In his latest report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, issued in May this year, the Secretary-General reported that "the state of protection of civilians is bleak, and the need for action to address it is urgent" (*S/2018/462, p.2*). The Secretary-General's report calls for efforts to enhance respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians and civilian objects. That is a position we support wholeheartedly, and we know that many other States do, too. It is clear that wherever we cannot prevent or resolve conflict, we must work to strengthen the protection of civilians.

The latest report of the Secretary-General indicates that more than 42,000 people were killed or injured by explosive weapons in 2017 alone, of which 32,000 — three out of every four victims — were likely to have been civilians, a shocking 38 per cent increase over 2016 levels. Moreover, when air- and ground-launched explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 92 per cent of those killed or injured were civilians.

Those statistics are alarming and reinforce the need for States to act — and to act now. We must undertake efforts to reverse that trend and to enhance respect for, and compliance with, international humanitarian law. In many conflict situations, the question is how the existing rules are being interpreted and translated into policies and practice on the ground. Much more must and can be done to reaffirm and clarify the application of international humanitarian law in armed conflicts.

We welcome the priority attached to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas by the Secretary-General in his new agenda for disarmament, and we recognize his call for all States to support the development of measures designed to address the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. That could be achieved through the development of a political declaration, the development of common standards and operational policies and the sharing of policies and practices.

We welcome the range of initiatives undertaken by States to engage constructively in addressing the humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and are encouraged by the increased engagement on that issue, including in different international forums such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Any initiative undertaken should enhance the protection of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict in compliance with international humanitarian law and contribute to alleviating humanitarian harm resulting from the effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

As part of our broader efforts to combat the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, we will continue to support civil society, which has worked tirelessly and effectively over the last several years to address the challenges posed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

We remain seized of efforts to address the humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive

weapons in populated areas by working towards the achievement of a possible future political declaration and by maintaining support for other relevant initiatives, including regional conferences. We strongly value and welcome the support of any State willing to commit to those aims.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of Latvia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.8.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): The Latvian delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

In the early twentieth century, combatants accounted for 90 per cent of conflict-related casualties. Today, 90 per cent of casualties in armed conflicts are civilians. Conventional arms kill approximately 500,000 people per year, 70,000 of them in conflict zones. Those figures clearly demonstrate that the international community must focus not only on weapons of mass destruction but also on conventional arms. Latvia welcomes in that regard the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, which identifies the importance of disarmament in the area of conventional arms, among other things.

A number of international agreements address different conventional arms systems and their use: the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to mention just a few. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the latest addition to that list. Latvia ratified the ATT on 2 April 2014, exactly one year after its adoption by the General Assembly as resolution 67/234 B, thus contributing to the entry into force of the Treaty at the end of 2014. Successful implementation of the Treaty at the national level has been a priority of the Latvian Government.

A wide spectrum of measures and activities have been put in place to maintain the highest possible standards for controlling trade in conventional arms at the national level. Higher standards of responsibility and traceability in the transfer of defence products have been achieved. We are willing to share our experience to assist other countries today in their efforts to develop effective and internationally recognized arms export-control systems.

Latvia assumed the year-long presidency of the ATT on 24 August with that in mind and will spare no effort

to promote the effective implementation of the Treaty and its universalization. The fourth Conference of States Parties set an ambitious agenda for intersessional activities. In addition, Latvia's presidency will focus on gender and arms-related gender-based violence as a priority theme. We call on all interested States and stakeholders to contribute towards that priority in every possible way. We recognize the important contribution of civil society towards the effective implementation and universalization of the Treaty and will actively promote continued cooperation.

Latvia believes that the universalization of the Treaty is key to creating a world without the violence caused by the illegal circulation of arms. We should advocate for the ATT in those 59 countries that have yet to join it and promote it in those parts of the world that are underrepresented, especially Asia and the greater Middle East. We welcome Suriname and Guinea-Bissau as the ninety-eighth and ninety-ninth members of the family of States parties. We also congratulate the Parliament of Lebanon on having ratified the Treaty and hope that the President will sign the ratification into law as soon as feasible.

Latvia is also concerned at the high level of outstanding national assessed contributions. The effectiveness of the Treaty depends on the availability of resources to carry out its mandated activities. Non-payment or delayed payment of contributions seriously hamper the normal functioning not only of the ATT Secretariat's daily work but also of the Treaty as a whole. Such a situation is not acceptable. Latvia calls on all Member States to fulfil their obligations under the ATT and pay assessed contributions on time and in full.

As President of the ATT this year, Latvia is introducing the draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.8) on the ATT to the First Committee. The draft is currently supported by 80 sponsors, and we hope that number will grow prior to adoption. This year's draft resolution places great emphasis on preventing the diversion of conventional arms and ammunition to unauthorized end-users, as well as on ensuring the full and equal participation of women and men in pursuing the objective and purpose of the Treaty and its implementation. I hope that the draft resolution will enjoy further support among members of Committee.

Regrettably, it is not only the activities of the ATT that are affected by arrears in the payment of assessed

contributions. The CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties, which Latvia currently chairs, will examine additional measures that could be deployed to resolve cash-flow challenges and reinstate the permanent secretarial support that has been interrupted due to financial shortfalls.

Let me conclude by reiterating my delegation's support for your efforts in steering the work of this Committee to a successful outcome.

Ms. Rosa Suaro (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Honduras associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16).

For Honduras, as a founding Member of this Organization, maintaining peace and collective security are the fundamental objectives and purpose of the United Nations, as enshrined in Article 1 of the Charter. We will therefore continue working tirelessly to achieve universal agreement on complete disarmament for the benefit of all humankind.

A fundamental part of this disarmament work is the fight against illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Honduras has first-hand experience of the humanitarian damage and violent effects of that illicit trade, in particular in its connection with organized crime and non-State actors such as criminal bands and gangs. That is why my Government is making efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels to put an end to this scourge, which afflicts thousands of Honduran families. We are convinced that only through such a comprehensive approach, bringing together at the same time States and individuals, Government institutions and civil society, local actors and organizations such as the United Nations, will those efforts achieve their goal.

With a view to combating organized crime and the illicit arms trade, the National Congress of Honduras is therefore in the process of adopting a new law on the carrying of weapons, which will include stricter and more effective measures and requirements for the registration and control of weapons and ammunition. At the same time, my country has made major progress through updated mapping of the trafficking routes and modus operandi used for those firearms, with a view to developing an interactive tool for use in national and regional security policy and operational decision-making.

In addition, with a view to establishing and enhancing operational coordinating mechanisms among the competent institutions at the national and regional levels and making the fight against crime more effective, Honduras, together with the other States members of the Central American Integration System, has committed to contributing, through the Central American Programme for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, to controlling and reducing the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, thereby helping to reduce gun violence and build the capacity of specialized units in the relevant institutions by strengthening criminal justice in the areas of prevention and the registration and exchange of information on seized, stolen or lost firearms and related investigations for the prosecution of crimes.

Moreover, a joint proposal on a specialized framework law for the regulation of private security services has been put forward with the Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean Basin with a view to establishing a secure and strictly regulated operating environment for such services.

At the international level, in 2017 Honduras ratified the Arms Trade Treaty and deployed efforts at other levels through the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials.

Finally, my delegation wishes to emphasize that international cooperation and assistance in this area are crucial, especially in terms of increased technology transfers, experience-sharing and the training of relevant officials. Developing countries have limited resources and insufficient institutional structures to combat sophisticated criminal structures operating with vast resources gained through criminal activity.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate once again the commitment of Honduras to the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States is a high contracting party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its Protocols. We view the CCW as an important instrument because it has brought together States with diverse national security concerns as well as shared concern over certain threats that affect us all.

In particular, the United States supported the outcome of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in 2018. The GGE was successful and productive despite some States' efforts to politicize the discussions. States engaged in discussions on complex topics, heard presentations from military experts and adopted a substantive report that included 10 possible guiding principles for future work on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We think it is important to continue to engage in such reality-based discussions.

The United States continues to urge all Member States to implement fully the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument. The third Review Conference of the Programme of Action provided an opportunity to renew our shared commitments to ending the human suffering caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We must build on the momentum of our hard work and focus our efforts on tackling the challenges that Member States face in pursuing its full implementation. We should not create unattainable or unnecessary requirements, particularly beyond the scope of the Programme of Action.

Some Member States have already accomplished a great deal since the Programme of Action was finalized in 2001, yet we still have a long way to go to realize our political commitments made more than 17 years ago. The United States remains committed to seeing the full implementation of the Programme of Action and will continue providing both financial and technical assistance for the destruction of conventional weapons in order to combat their illicit trafficking.

Although it has been some time since the world has seen man-portable air defence systems used to bring down a civilian airliner, that significant threat remains. To advance our efforts towards the full implementation of the Programme of Action, the United States continues to work with partners to deter their illicit trafficking and use, including through training programmes for border security forces, the destruction of excess State-held stocks and assistance with the mitigation of man-portable air defence system threats near critical aviation sites such as international airports.

Since 2003, the United States has cooperated with countries around the globe to destroy more than 38,000

excess, loosely secured, illicitly held or otherwise at-risk man-portable air defence system missiles and thousands more launchers in more than 40 countries.

The United States strongly supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Register pioneered international discussion of international transfers of conventional arms and remains the cornerstone of international efforts to address the problems arising from irresponsible transfers of such arms. The United States urges all States to report data on their international transfers of conventional arms and to include data on transfers of small arms and light weapons along with the traditional categories of heavy weapons.

The United States is committed to ensuring that conventional arms are transferred in a responsible manner. The United States attended the meetings of the working groups and the fourth Conference of State Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty in Tokyo to that end. In addition, we have continued to satisfy our financial and reporting obligations, and we encourage States parties to do the same.

The United States remains the world's single largest financial supporter of conventional-weapons-destruction programmes. We remain committed to providing assistance that reduces excess arms and ammunition from State-held stockpiles, improves stockpile security and remediates landmines and explosive remnants of war in order to facilitate stability, security and prosperity in countries recovering from conflict, and to preventing illicit small arms and light weapons proliferation.

We have provided more than \$3.2 billion in assistance to more than 100 countries since 1993 through our conventional-weapons-destruction programme, which covers both weapons and ammunition destruction and stockpile security, as well as humanitarian mine action. We remain committed to those programmes, particularly as humanitarian mine action plays an increasing role in our effort to deliver rapid stabilization assistance in both post-conflict and conflict zones.

Mrs. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Conventional weapons kill, destroy lives and contribute to the displacement of people every day. Illicit trade in, and the excessive accumulation and abuse of, such weapons exacerbate humanitarian crises,

impede sustainable development and threaten peace and security.

Maintaining and strengthening the international rules-based system is a priority for Switzerland and should underpin our joint efforts. That calls for a two-pronged approach: first, ensuring compliance with existing international law; and secondly, continuously monitoring the potential need for additional norms or actions to minimize the unwanted effects of conventional weapons.

While ensuring respect for international law is primarily the responsibility of the parties to an armed conflict, we must uphold our responsibilities as well, especially in settings such as this. We must not undermine the fundamental concepts of international humanitarian law by, for instance, using misleading language or terms. Regardless of terminology, international humanitarian law and human rights law must be respected under all circumstances.

Moreover, we must also consider developing practical measures to facilitate better implementation of international humanitarian law. To mention a specific example, Switzerland fully supports the Secretary-General's call for the sharing of experience relating to the obligation to review the legality of new weapons.

The increasingly urban profile of conflicts and the direct and indirect effects thereof on people and civilian infrastructure amplify the need for the two-pronged approach. Above all, the actions of certain parties to armed conflicts under way raise questions regarding compliance with international humanitarian law. We urge all parties to armed conflicts to uphold their international obligations.

We call for accountability in that regard for all violations of international humanitarian law. Concrete measures could also be envisaged to ensure and enhance respect for international humanitarian law in the conduct of hostilities in urban areas. We therefore commend efforts to advance discussion on this issue, including under the auspices of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

On account of their humanitarian impact, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) merit our full attention. Given the range of actors involved and the complexity of the threat, we believe that the First Committee is the appropriate body to guide future multilateral action in that area. We underscore in that

regard that for States parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, all victim-activated IEDs fall under the definition of anti-personnel mines. The Convention therefore equips its States parties with a significant toolkit for tackling the challenges presented by those devices and their impact.

Ammunition diverted from poorly secured national stockpiles is frequently used to manufacture IEDs and fuels armed conflicts. Shortcomings in stockpile management also result in catastrophic explosions in ammunition stores.

The third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action demonstrated that there is no consensus in that context to address the challenges posed by ammunition. Switzerland is of the view that the topic of ammunition deserves special attention and warrants being addressed as an entirely separate topic. Establishing a group of governmental experts on ammunition would represent a significant step allowing for focused discussion.

On a more practical level, Switzerland is contributing to efforts by identifying shortcomings in the implementation of existing regional and multilateral instruments and determining what complementary actions are required, in particular through our initiative on the safe and secure management of ammunition. Experience in that regard has shown that the implementation of existing international guidelines, such as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, is essential.

My remarks on lethal autonomous weapons systems can be read in full in my statement, which is posted on PaperSmart.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the League of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.17), the Group of African States, earlier in this meeting, and the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) under this agenda item and wishes to make the following remarks.

Egypt remains fully committed to engaging in any balanced multilateral endeavour that aims to tackle the multiple challenges and threats arising from the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons provided that such an endeavour is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and does not intend to negatively affect the rights of States to meet their legitimate defence needs.

We continue to fully support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and we reiterate the importance of the International Tracing Instrument. We also welcome the constructive outcome document adopted unanimously at the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action in June 2018.

The Middle East and Africa face severe threats due to the increasing illicit flows and intentional transfers of small arms and light weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups. It is obvious that unprecedented flow is conducted with the direct support of a few States that resort to arming terrorists as a foreign policy tool, in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international norms and several Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2370 (2017), adopted unanimously in August 2017.

Some argue that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the solution that will stop all illegal flows of conventional arms. We reiterate in that regard that several shortcomings, especially a lack of clear definitions, greatly undermine the Treaty's possible effectiveness and make it possible for some States to abuse the Treaty as a tool to manipulate and monopolize the legitimate trade in conventional weapons in a politicized manner, while ignoring the prevention of the intentional supply of weapons to unauthorized recipients, such as terrorists and illegal armed groups. We reiterate our call on the States parties to the ATT to ensure that its implementation is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations without any infringement on the rights of States to meet their national security and self-defence needs.

Egypt is one of the States that have suffered most from the use of landmines. Twenty per cent of the world's landmines were laid in Egyptian soil during the Second World War and there is a continued need to intensify international cooperation to tackle that major threat. With full knowledge of the humanitarian considerations, Egypt imposed a moratorium on the production and export of anti-personnel landmines in the 1980s, long before the conclusion of the relevant conventions, including the Ottawa Convention, which fell short of addressing many key elements associated with the threat of landmines.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that most of the challenges we face today regarding the provision of conventional arms to terrorists and illegal armed

groups are not primarily due to a lack of proper export controls or inadequate stockpile security but to the fact the certain States continue to deliberately and illicitly supply weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups and to obstruct international prohibitions against the supply of weapons to unauthorized recipients, in contravention of several principles enshrined in the Charter. That phenomenon requires the immediate attention of, and more tangible action from, the United Nations.

Ms. Dunawa-Pickard (Canada): Weapons of mass destruction may pose an acute threat to humankind, but it is conventional weapons that kill, injure and irrevocably impair the lives of thousands of men, women, boys and girls every year.

Indeed, conventional weapons constitute the majority of weapons employed in conflict; may intensify and prolong conflict and contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law; are used to perpetuate sexual and gender-based violence; hinder development; and exacerbate structural gender inequalities, undermining our collective commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. That makes it imperative for Member States to reaffirm their commitments to implement, uphold and universalize international laws and norms on conventional weapons.

Canada has been encouraged to see the broader impacts of conventional weapons figure in recent discussions at the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We support the Small Arms Survey's research into the proliferation and illicit flow of arms, as well as the increased participation of women in multilateral policymaking forums and the inclusion of gender analysis in arms control discussions.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was in many respects the first Convention to consider disarmament from a humanitarian impact perspective. It is critical that we continue building political momentum towards universalization and the goal of a mine-free world by 2025. We also call on States to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions to help achieve the goal of a world free of the devastating humanitarian impacts of cluster munitions by 2030.

(spoke in French)

As a precursor to those agreements, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons remains at the intersection between conventional weapons and international humanitarian law, including its current work on lethal autonomous weapons systems. For Canada, the implementation of all those international instruments reflects not only our commitment to international law on conventional weapons but also our responsibility to uphold a rules-based international order.

That is why Canada prioritizes accession to the Arms Trade Treaty. As president of the Group of Seven this year, Canada ensured that conventional weapons had a new focus in our discussions. Within the First Committee, we reiterate our call for the States Members of the United Nations to uphold our collective obligations to protect and reinforce conventional-weapons non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament institutions.

Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay) *(spoke in Spanish)*: I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Paraguay, as a contribution to today's thematic debate on conventional weapons. It will focus on three issues: universalization, implementation and cooperation.

The delegation of Paraguay recognizes the universalization of the commitments undertaken in treaties and other international instruments on conventional arms as an effective collective measure to prevent and eliminate threats to international peace and security, in accordance with the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. It is through those international instruments that States, which have the primary responsibility in that regard, will be able to offer a coherent and comprehensive response to the multidimensional threat that conventional weapons pose to the international community.

We therefore call on States that have not yet done so, as appropriate, to ratify or accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, and to refrain from any act that is contrary to their respective objects and purposes. The Paraguayan delegation favours the adoption of a framework complementary to the Arms

Trade Treaty that would address the production and reduction of existing conventional weapons.

With regard to the implementation of international commitments on conventional arms, the delegation of Paraguay believes that the interpretation of the right to self-defence should not be undermined in the pursuit of justifications for the rearmament and proliferation of armaments, stresses the need to promote the participation of women in debates, decisions and measures relating to conventional arms, and urges the resolute and coordinated implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Paraguay also urges States to place explosives and ammunition on an equal footing in their small arms and light weapons regulatory frameworks and to reflect on the possibility of including in their respective regulatory frameworks references to the production and marketing of different ballistic calibres. We underline the value of confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels, recognize the periodic submission of national reports as a tool to ascertain the status of implementation of international commitments and to facilitate cooperation among States and with other actors, and appreciate the work of international organizations, civil society and academia in the pursuit of disarmament and the non-proliferation of conventional weapons.

The universalization and implementation of international commitments on conventional arms depend on international cooperation. This is Paraguay's third point in its contribution to today's debate. First, we stress the challenges that such commitments pose for developing countries like Paraguay, such as the need to train human resources, obtain adequate economic resources and technology and meet the related logistical requirements. We also stress the role of technical assistance, technology transfer and international cooperation in addressing those challenges.

We recognize the value of today's and other debates as forums for sharing experiences on good practices and lessons learned in the various fields related to conventional weapons, encouraging confidence-building among States and facilitating initiatives on normative harmonization and political coordination among them. We reiterate the importance of shifting resources allocated to the modernization of

stockpiles towards efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 16.4 to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime. We therefore invite members to explore the possibility of establishing mechanisms that allow for the interlinking of resource offers with cooperation needs in support of the coordinated and effective implementation of commitments on conventional weapons.

Finally, we appreciate the initiatives of the Control Arms Coalition undertaken in cooperation with the Paraguayan Government, which were implemented last year. We highlight the work of the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund, which has approved funding for a project entitled "Implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in Paraguay", to be realized in the period 2018-2019, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project will consist of a series of training courses for Government officials on the emerging obligations of the Treaty and the detection of the trafficking of arms, parts and components at customs.

Mrs. Mills (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and to highlight a few points of particular importance to Jamaica.

We share the concern of the international community about conventional weapons and the impact they continue to have on civilian populations and societies as a whole. We are struck by their devastating impact, not only in situations of armed conflict but in societies like ours where the incidence of armed violence has increased significantly. Against that background, we reiterate that it is important for our discourse on such weapons to reflect that dynamic.

Jamaica, like many other CARICOM countries, is not a manufacturer or net importer of conventional weapons. Nonetheless, we are exceedingly vulnerable to violent crime and criminal activities associated with the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, due in part to our porous borders and geographical location. To respond to that challenge, Jamaica has been working to ensure that the requisite legislative, policy and operational measures are in place to prevent

the diversion that leads to the illicit proliferation of small arms.

A major feature of that undertaking is the comprehensive review of the Firearms Act of 1967. As a result, a bill is being prepared that would seek to include new provisions to make various stockpile-management activities, such as the marking of small arms and light weapons, record-keeping and the capturing of ballistic signatures, mandatory by law. The review will ensure a legislative basis for the establishment of a firearms registry, the creation of a national inter-agency committee and the development of a national control list, which will be harmonized with other strategic and dual-use goods. That process will, in turn, provide the impetus to synchronize implementation efforts across international conventional arms instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty, which require similar expertise and national control mechanisms.

In addition, we now have a standards manual for marking firearms, which we shared as a paper for best practices during the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument.

We also have a national action plan and have been reviewing the operations of our Institute of Forensic Science and Legal Medicine and our Firearm Licensing Authority to increase the focus on improving accountability and strengthening the procedures that govern the civilian use of small arms. Specialized training for law enforcement and other stakeholders, as well as other capacity-building measures, have also been pursued with our partners at all levels.

I am also pleased to highlight that we have been working with private security firms to improve the regulatory framework governing the private security industry. We will continue to rely on the kind assistance of all our partners as we seek to address those issues and enhance our capacities.

We welcome the various reviews that have been undertaken over the past year, most notably for the third Review Conference and the fourth Conference of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, in which my delegation actively participated. Our appreciation goes to the French and Japanese presidencies for steering the deliberations in the respective forums. We look forward

to the implementation of the outcomes emanating from those processes.

We are equally pleased to hear of the continued support being provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to the countries of the region. As a beneficiary of the technical and other assistance provided in that regard, we express the hope that the Centre will be appropriately resourced so that its support can be sustained. We continue to encourage the consideration of the special needs of Latin America and the Caribbean, with due regard for the dynamics that exist at the subregional level.

Jamaica is pleased to note that work has been ongoing with respect to the development of indicators to assess the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, in particular target 16.4. We encourage a comprehensive approach that takes account of the interlinkages and the interrelated nature of the SDGs in order to promote the well-being of our citizens.

The Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, in particular its focus on disarmament that saves lives, will no doubt also be central to our collective endeavour. We trust that we can really begin to witness the kind of coordinated action by the United Nations that would overcome the fragmentation that the Secretary-General has himself highlighted. Data collection and information-sharing, including of best practices, will remain essential.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for today on the cluster "Conventional weapons". We will hear from the other speakers tomorrow.

(*spoke in English*)

As I noted earlier, the award ceremony for the 2018 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates is scheduled to begin in a few minutes in this conference room. As is customary, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, will address the graduating fellows. For that purpose and in accordance with established practice, I shall suspend the meeting at this point. I kindly ask all delegations to remain in their seats for the ceremony in order to congratulate and encourage our junior colleagues.

The meeting was suspended at 12.35 p.m. and resumed at 12.50 p.m.

The Chair: We have almost exhausted the time available for today's meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. sharp in this conference room. The Committee will continue its consideration of the cluster "Conventional weapons". In the meantime, the Bureau of the Committee will meet immediately

after this morning's meeting to discuss how we will proceed in relation to the decision taken earlier today by Committee members. All delegations will be informed in the afternoon of the Bureau's position as to how we will proceed on the matter.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.