



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

First Committee

27th meeting

Friday, 2 November 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Ataíde Amaral (Portugal), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

Action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items

The Acting Chair: Today we will be guided by the same procedure that I explained yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26). I trust that all members have a copy of the ground rules for reference. If members do not, then I ask them to request a copy from the Secretariat.

We will begin by hearing from the delegations that requested the floor to explain their votes after the voting on the draft proposals submitted under cluster 1, entitled “Nuclear weapons”, as listed in informal paper No. 1/Rev.3. Thereafter the First Committee will take up the draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 2, as listed in informal paper No. 1/Rev.3.

Information on additional requests for votes that may have been made since the issuance of informal paper informal No. 1/Rev.3 will be posted on the southern wall of Conference Room 4, to the left of the podium. Once the Committee concludes its work concerning the draft proposals in informal paper No. 1/Rev.3, it will take up informal paper No. 2/Rev.1. In that regard, the Secretariat has clarified that no vote has been requested on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.65/

Rev.1. Informal paper No. 2/Rev.1 has been reissued accordingly, and it too is posted on the southern wall.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria): I speak on behalf of Greece, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Spain and my own country, Bulgaria.

Last year, our delegations could not support resolution 72/251. Unfortunately, this year we are not in a position to support draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.14 either. The concerns we expressed last year remain valid. We believe in a world free of nuclear weapons and consider disarmament and non-proliferation to be mutually reinforcing goals that should be pursued through successive and gradual steps, involving all nuclear-weapon States in the process.

We would like to stress the fundamental role that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and its complete implementation. While it is regrettable that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT was unable to achieve consensus on an outcome document, our efforts should be aimed at ensuring the success of the review cycle that commenced last year.

In that context, we continue to see the convening of another high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, as outlined in the draft resolution, as parallel and likely to distract our focus from the NPT. We appreciate the reference to the NPT in the preambular part to the draft resolution, but the emphasis is on only one of the pillars. In our view, nuclear disarmament is directly linked to the strengthening of the

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

18-35708 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



non-proliferation regime, and NPT obligations should therefore not be approached selectively. Achieving progress on those commonly shared goals requires the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices.

We agree that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) should start substantive work as soon as possible. However, we do not see a nuclear-weapon convention as its first priority. Rather, we should aim at a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that includes the CD's four core issues. As was agreed on at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the CD should be the single negotiating body in disarmament affairs, and it is unclear to us whether a high-level international conference would contradict that consensus decision. We believe in a cooperative and inclusive approach in order to make real progress in nuclear disarmament.

Finally, we share the concerns about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. However, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will not contribute to their elimination. Only by recognizing both the security and humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons will we be able to achieve our goal of a world free of such weapons.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar): At the outset, our heartfelt thoughts are with the Chair of the First Committee, Ambassador Jinga, and his family.

(spoke in Arabic)

On behalf of the Group of Arab States, I would like to make the following statement in explanation of the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28, entitled "Nuclear disarmament".

The Arab Group voted in favour of the draft resolution yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26) because we are committed to nuclear-disarmament efforts and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Arab Group also condemns the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): I would like to deliver an explanation of vote on behalf of France, the United States and my own country, the United Kingdom, on three draft resolutions that were voted on yesterday.

First, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.14, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", we believe that nuclear proliferation and non-compliance by a few States with their respective non-proliferation obligations, as well as nuclear terrorism and the deterioration of the international security environment, constitute serious threats to international peace and security. Unfortunately, the draft resolution calling for the establishment of a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament does not address those threats.

Halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and addressing the deterioration in the overall international security environment are crucial to creating conditions conducive to further progress on nuclear disarmament. The only reference to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the draft resolution is to the Treaty's article VI. That is insufficient, incidental and unbalanced. The NPT as a whole constitutes the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential basis for nuclear-disarmament efforts. Convening another conference to discuss nuclear disarmament without consideration of the NPT as a whole will lead to another futile outcome.

Furthermore, the draft resolution takes note of the adoption of the text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We strongly oppose that Treaty, which was negotiated and concluded without the participation of any of the nuclear-weapon States, or any State that possesses nuclear weapons. Progress on the nuclear-disarmament agenda will be possible only through an incremental, inclusive, consensus-based multilateral process that takes into account the prevailing international security environment.

Secondly, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.46/Rev.1, "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, as NPT nuclear-weapon States, we reaffirm the shared goal of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament, as referenced in the preamble and provided for in article VI of the NPT. In that regard, we remain steadfast in our commitment to seeking a safer world for all and achieving a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT. We continue to pursue progressive and concrete steps towards that end, including the relevant recommendations of the 2010 Action Plan, in a way that promotes international stability, peace and security and

is based on the principles of increased and undiminished security for all.

We continue to believe that an incremental, progressive approach is the only practical option for making progress towards nuclear disarmament, while taking into account the prevailing security conditions and upholding global strategic security and stability. That goal is what motivates our concerted efforts to pursue practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. All States can help to fulfil that goal by creating the necessary security environment by resolving regional tensions, tackling proliferation challenges, promoting collective security and making progress in all areas of disarmament.

France, the United States and the United Kingdom believe that the declaration referred to in the draft resolution does not contribute to that goal, neither by reinforcing the three pillars of the NPT nor by acknowledging the needs to make the security environment more conducive to further practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. The text contains a number of elements and assertions with which we fundamentally do not agree and are not compatible with our national security policies and doctrines, including unfounded assertions regarding nuclear-weapons use and international law.

Furthermore, the draft resolution takes note of the adoption of the text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We strongly oppose that Treaty, which was negotiated and concluded without the participation of any of the nuclear-weapon States, or any State that possesses nuclear weapons. Progress on the nuclear-disarmament agenda will be possible only through an incremental, inclusive, consensus-based multilateral process that takes into account the prevailing international security environment.

Lastly, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.64, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", our reasons for voting against the draft resolution are founded on the same concerns that we had with the texts of previous years. It continues to welcome the adoption, on 7 July, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which we strongly oppose. We have expressed serious concerns that the Treaty will take us further away from a common approach to nuclear disarmament. A balanced and pragmatic approach that takes into account the prevailing international security

environment remains the only realistic way to make substantial progress on nuclear disarmament, while enhancing international peace and stability. We have made tremendous progress in reducing our nuclear arsenals. However, addressing further prospects for nuclear disarmament must also continue to require taking into account all factors, including those that could affect international peace and stability, which an approach merely focused on the humanitarian dimension fails to achieve.

Our Governments did not take part in the negotiation and adoption of the text of the Treaty that the draft resolution welcomes. We did not do so because the Treaty was premised on the false assumption that nuclear disarmament can be achieved without addressing the real security challenges that make nuclear deterrence necessary. The Treaty indeed fails to address the key issues that must be overcome to achieve and sustain global nuclear disarmament. The Treaty is at odds with the NPT and risks undermining it. It will not result in the elimination of a single weapon. It also fails to meet the highest standards of non-proliferation of the International Atomic Energy Agency's additional protocol. It is creating divisions across the international non-proliferation and disarmament machinery, which could make further progress on disarmament even more difficult.

Ms. Tichy-Fisslberger (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Norway, a member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

After careful consideration, EU member States decided to abstain in the voting on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, put forward by Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States. The draft decision was not agreed on by all States of the region, yet it seeks to bind all States of the region to its outcome. Furthermore, it seeks to use a General Assembly vote to convene a treaty-making conference for an instrument whose scope is not intended to be universal. We reiterate our strong support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), but we are concerned that the

process set up by the draft decision will not meet the criteria set out in the 1999 United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines.

The draft decision calls for a one-week conference every year until a Middle East WMD-free zone has been concluded. There is an obvious financial commitment to the proposal that has not been clearly addressed in the draft decision. The Secretariat has provided a breakdown of estimated costs, which are in excess of \$1 million per annum, to host such a conference. As the proposal is open-ended, we have concerns over its long-term financial implications and viability.

The most recent consensus-based text on the implementation of the 1995 resolution was agreed on at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. According to that text, the Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, are to convene a conference to be attended by all States of the Middle East on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States.

We believe that that path for action, as set out in the 2010 Action Plan, remains the most promising basis on which to proceed. We are disappointed that the conference has yet to be convened and recognize the need for progress. We strongly encourage all stakeholders, especially the States of the region, to engage in meaningful consultations in order to reach agreement as soon as possible on the necessary arrangements for the conference to take place. The process must be inclusive for it to be effective. A proposal that forces the issue risks failure.

The EU has continuously expressed its readiness to assist in the process leading to the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. After the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the EU organized two major seminars with the States of the region, as well as a capacity-building workshop, to help produce a conducive atmosphere and move the process forward. We are ready to support similar processes, including track 1.5 events, which could facilitate dialogue and assist in preparing a meaningful intergovernmental conference.

The 1995 resolution on the Middle East covers a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery

systems. The repeated use of chemical weapons in the region, as well as the development of ballistic-missile programmes, continues to be destabilizing for the region as a whole. Progress towards the implementation of the 1995 resolution is long overdue, and we invite all parties to engage constructively in further efforts and dialogue to seek mutually acceptable solutions that would allow for the convening of a meaningful conference on the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Joshi (India): I have asked for the floor to deliver India's explanation of vote on the following 11 draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 1 that were voted on yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26).

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", India believes that the focus of the draft resolution should be limited to the region that it intends to address. India's position on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is well known. The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which codified the prevailing customary international law, provides that States are bound by a treaty based on the principle of free consent. The call to those States remaining outside the NPT to accede to it and to accept International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all their nuclear facilities is at variance with that principle and does not reflect current realities. India is not a party to the NPT and is not bound by its outcome documents. That also applies to certain paragraphs contained in the draft resolution.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.19, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", as a country that maintains close friendly ties with Mongolia, India welcomes the adoption of the draft resolution on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status without a vote. We note the many steps that Mongolia has taken to reinforce that status. Mongolia has received support and security assurances for that status from Member States, particularly those that possess nuclear weapons. India fully respects the choice made by Mongolia and conveys its unambiguous assurance that it will respect Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

On draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled "Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction", India enjoys friendly

and mutually beneficial relations with countries in the Middle East region and respects their aspirations for enhancing the region's well-being and security. India respects the sovereign choice of States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among all the States of the region concerned. That principle is consistent with the provisions of the first special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) guidelines. The delegation of India was forced to abstain in the voting on the draft decision under consideration, as it does not enjoy the support of all States of the region.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.23, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons", India voted in favour of the draft resolution, consistent with its participation in the three meetings — held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna — on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Our participation in those meetings was premised on the shared concerns about the serious threat to the survival of humankind that could be posed by the use of nuclear weapons, in the hope of gaining international support for increased restraints on the use of such weapons.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons", India did not participate in the negotiations on the Treaty, which were concluded in New York in 2017. India therefore cannot be a party to the Treaty and shall not be bound by the obligations that may arise from it. India believes that the Treaty in no way constitutes or contributes to the development of any customary international law. India reiterates its commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world and believes that that goal can be achieved through a step-by-step process, underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework, as outlined in our working paper (CD/1816) entitled "Nuclear Disarmament", submitted to the General Assembly in 2006. In that regard, India supports the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons conventions in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which is the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, working on the basis of consensus.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", India attaches high priority to nuclear disarmament. We share the main objective of the draft resolution, which is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework

of time. However, we nevertheless had to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution because of certain references to the NPT and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on both of which India's position is well known. However, we support other provisions of the draft resolution, which we believe are consistent with the national position of India and that of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We compliment Myanmar for retaining vital principled paragraphs in the draft resolution that are supported by the vast majority of Member States.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.33, entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty", India respects the sovereign choice of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. That principle is consistent with the provisions of SSOD-I and UNDC guidelines. India enjoys friendly and mutually beneficial relations with countries of the African continent. India shares and supports African aspirations to enhance the region's well-being and security. We respect the sovereign choice of States parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba and welcome its successful entry into force. As a nuclear-weapon State, India conveys its unambiguous assurance that it will respect the status of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", we acknowledge that Japan, the lead sponsor, is the only country to have suffered a nuclear-weapon attack. We share the draft resolution's aspirations on nuclear disarmament, but, in substantive terms, the text has again fallen short on its objective. India voted against operative paragraph 5, as it cannot accept the call to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. India's position on the NPT is well known. There is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. India also abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 21. As it supports the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the CD on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, the question of a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons did not arise.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.57, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear

weapons”, India has been the only State that possesses nuclear weapons to traditionally co-sponsor the draft resolution. We are disappointed that substantive changes were made to the traditional text of the draft resolution last year. In particular, we are disappointed that references to the early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention, based on modern nuclear weapons conventions, that were submitted by the lead sponsors have been dropped. Furthermore, the objective of the draft resolution, as reflected in paragraph 2, is ambiguous. My delegation was therefore forced to withdraw its co-sponsorship and abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.62, entitled “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world”, India agrees with several provisions of the draft resolution, in particular its acknowledgement that nuclear disarmament is a global public good of the highest order. We support the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (A/51/218, annex) that there exists a legal obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion the negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In that regard, India has supported the NAM proposal for the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention in the CD.

The global elimination of nuclear weapons will require progressive steps towards reducing their military utility and role in security policies, as well as a universal commitment to the global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework for nuclear disarmament. Until that goal is accomplished and reflected in specific international legal instruments, questions relating to the immorality of nuclear weapons have to be balanced by the sovereign responsibility of States to protect their people in a nuclearized global order assembled on the pillars of nuclear deterrence. India’s nuclear doctrine of credible minimum deterrence, with a no-first-use posture, seeks to strike that very balance.

Lastly, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.64, entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”, we voted against the draft resolution, as well as its operative paragraph 15, since India cannot accept the call to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. In urging India to accede to the NPT “promptly and without conditions”, the draft resolution negates

the rules of customary international law as enshrined in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which provides that a State’s acceptance, ratification or accession to a treaty is based on the principle of free consent. India’s position on the NPT is well known. India is a responsible nuclear-weapon State, and there is therefore no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Mr. Medeiros Leopoldino (Brazil): My delegation asked for the floor to explain its vote after the voting on three draft resolutions submitted under cluster 1, namely, draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”; draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.25, entitled “The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”; and draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26, entitled “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty”.

Beginning with draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, Brazil recognizes the importance of convening a conference to address the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East with a view to effectively complying with the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Ever since the idea of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East was introduced, it has been an integral part of the agenda of NPT Review Conferences. Brazil has been actively supporting efforts towards addressing that issue, which is of great importance and sensitivity for the region. Brazil agrees with the perception that the Secretary-General and other United Nations bodies can play an important role as facilitators of negotiations among the parties involved towards that goal. However, it is of note that the draft resolution aims to create a process that is parallel to the NPT framework and that its parameters are not based on consensus at all stages of the process.

Turning to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.25, although Brazil has not adhered to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, my delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution. We did so because we acknowledge and respect the fact that 139 States have already subscribed to the Code of Conduct as a practical step for countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Brazil also shares the view as to the importance of regional and international efforts to comprehensively prevent and curb the proliferation of ballistic-missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, as a contribution to international peace and security. We note with satisfaction that the revision of the language of paragraph 3 at the seventy-first session has been retained, thereby ensuring that the draft resolution refers to the right to use outer space for peaceful purposes.

Brazil also believes that the construction of an effective and equitable international order depends essentially upon the construction of a solid international legal framework based on binding commitments. We therefore expect that initiatives such as The Hague Code of Conduct could evolve and converge towards the negotiation of a legal instrument of universal reach establishing clear obligations and rights for all States.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26, Brazil voted in favour of the draft resolution in the light of our continuing support for the integrity and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an important nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measure. However, we regret the continued reference made in the draft resolution to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), which is counterproductive to the Treaty's entry into force and unduly encroaches upon the responsibilities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. For that reason, we abstained in the voting on the fourth preambular. We hope that that serious issue can be resolved in future iterations of the draft resolution, in accordance with the widespread commitment to enhance and renew efforts for the entry into force of the CTBT and its consolidation as a stepping stone for a world free of nuclear weapons.

We also note with concern that the eighth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution refers to the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT, issued last September. Our delegation did not associate itself with the Joint Ministerial Statement, due to concerns about the lack of transparency and inclusiveness during its negotiation in Vienna. From a substantive point of view, we are disappointed that the text further distances itself from the content of the article XIV conferences, which are consensual and subject to extensive, open and inclusive negotiations. We note in particular the lack of reference to the condemnation of the development

of new nuclear weapons technologies and the fact that the statement fails to refer to the CTBT as a de facto international norm against nuclear testing.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): I take the floor to deliver Pakistan's explanation of vote after the voting on draft resolutions that the First Committee acted on yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26).

First, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", my delegation supports several elements of the draft resolution, including the call for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear disarmament, the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances and the importance of taking into account the security interests of all States while negotiating disarmament treaties. However, as a non-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we cannot subscribe to the implementation of the action plans and decisions of its Review Conferences. We therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Paragraph 16 of the draft resolution calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) on the basis of the mandate contained in document CD/1299. It is indeed ironic that a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament continues to promote only a treaty centred on the non-proliferation of fissile material. We therefore decided to vote against that paragraph.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.44, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", Pakistan consistently votes in favour of the draft resolution and did so again this year. As emphasized by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in the adoption of disarmament measures, the right of each State to security should be kept in mind at each stage of the disarmament process. The objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", we regret the unrealistic call on Pakistan to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Pakistan is not a party to the NPT and is therefore not bound by its provisions. Moreover, we do not subscribe to the conclusions and recommendations emanating from its various Review

Conferences. In addition, the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards agreement applies only to those States that have consented to assume that legal obligation under the NPT. We are also concerned that a draft resolution that seeks united action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons seeks to address only the non-proliferation aspects of fissile materials. In view of those key considerations, my delegation was compelled to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole, as well as on the nineteenth and twentieth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 7, 13 and 31, and we voted against operative paragraphs 5, 20 and 21.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.58, entitled “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”, the consistent and principled position of my delegation on the issue is well known. A treaty banning the future production of fissile material as endorsed by the draft decision would simply freeze the status quo, to the strategic advantage of a select few. It would neither effectively serve the objective of disarmament nor that of non-proliferation. By perpetuating the asymmetries in the existing stocks of fissile material, it would be detrimental to global and regional strategic stability. In South Asia, such a cut-off treaty would only worsen the strategic imbalance that is already being exacerbated by the continued exercise of double standards.

Similar to Pakistan’s stance towards the ill-advised Group of Governmental Experts established in 2014, Pakistan again chose not to participate in the so-called High-level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group. The limited and incomplete composition of the Expert Preparatory Group, as well as its divisive genesis, restrictive mandate and partial basis of work, does not qualify it to undertake the task that was mandated to it. We will not be in a position to accept any conclusion or recommendation produced by that group. Progress on fissile material-related issues can be achieved neither by changing the format or forum, nor by imposing solutions that exclude the views of major stakeholders. Major differences continue to exist on the very objective and scope of the treaty, which need to be tackled upfront and are ignored by the draft resolution. Those considerations left us with no option but to vote against the draft resolution.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.64 entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”,

Pakistan acknowledges the value of several of its aspects. However, we are dismayed by the ritualistic and unrealistic call upon Pakistan in paragraph 15 to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Moreover, as a non-party to the NPT, we cannot subscribe to the conclusions and decisions of its Review Conferences.

Regarding the references in draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24 welcoming the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we would like to recall that Pakistan did not take part in the negotiations on that Treaty. The various glaring procedural and substantive shortcomings of the Treaty have been elaborated upon by us on various occasions. In the light of those considerations, my delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution, as a whole, and on the twelfth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 24, while voting against operative paragraph 15.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): My delegation wishes to explain its vote after the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”.

Egypt once again had to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution, as a whole, as well as on many of its paragraphs. The draft resolution continues to imply that nuclear disarmament is a responsibility that is equally shared by non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon States and argues that there have been major reductions in the nuclear arsenals of nuclear-weapon States, thereby justifying non-compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations.

The draft resolution also implicitly links the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations to preconditions related to developments in global security, while calling on non-nuclear-weapon States to undertake further obligations and commitments regardless of those same global security conditions, including the continued possession and renewal of nuclear arsenals by the nuclear-weapon States.

Moreover, some paragraphs continue to weaken the language of previously agreed unequivocal undertakings under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its Review Conferences, in a manner that reinforces an alarming trend in that regard, especially taking into consideration that we are approaching an already fragile NPT Review Conference in 2020.

The reference to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in paragraph 18 does not observe the widely shared belief regarding the special responsibility of the States that are not yet party to the NPT and the remaining nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Paragraph 20 does not meet the minimum criteria of what we envisage in a future treaty on fissile material, namely, that negotiations take place in the context of the Conference on Disarmament and that the treaty must be non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable, banning the production and stockpiling of fissile material for weaponization purposes.

Paragraph 31 strongly encourages States that have not yet done so to bring into force an additional protocol to their comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, while at the same time the draft resolution as a whole links nuclear disarmament to preconditions. Egypt reiterates that achieving the universality of comprehensive safeguards agreements and their implementation by all States is a priority that must precede the universality of the additional protocols. They should remain voluntary instruments that fall beyond the agreed NPT obligations.

Finally, the draft resolution contains several paragraphs that may be interpreted in a way that grants States that are not yet party to the NPT a de facto nuclear-weapon status. We sincerely hope that Japan and the co-sponsors of the draft resolution will take those concerns into consideration in the future, in order to strike a reasonable balance and strive for consensus on this very important subject, so that we can be truly united on the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, put forward by the delegation of Japan, as well as some of its paragraphs.

We believe that the text dilutes the commitments made by the nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons concerning their obligation to pursue the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, with a view to achieving a world free of such military systems.

Despite some improvements, we believe that there are still some inconsistencies in the draft resolution, which have led my country to refrain from lending its support to the initiative for the second consecutive year. In that regard, we condemn the various preconditions of the text, including the adoption of measures to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons and the state of the regional and global security situation. The draft resolution also ignores the political importance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by not including any mention of that instrument in its paragraphs.

In our view, the focus of the draft resolution validates the undefined position of those weapons for nuclear-weapon States, which we believe is due to the threat that such mechanisms still pose to the survival of the human race. As other delegations have already said, we hope that in the future the delegation of Japan will be able to meet the concerns that have been expressed by various delegations, including that of Venezuela, so that we can seek a much more balanced text that is in line with the realities and needs of eliminating nuclear weapons.

Mr. Ji Haojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China voted against draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”, as a whole. We also voted against the twelfth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.14, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”; the thirty-second preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28, entitled “Nuclear disarmament”; the seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.46, entitled “Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World”; the seventeenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.57, entitled “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons”; the twelfth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 24 of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.64, entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”; and the eleventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.62, entitled “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world”. I would like to take this opportunity to explain China’s position on the draft resolutions.

China did not participate in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and currently has no intention of signing the Treaty. China is of the view that the Treaty has eroded the authority of the existing multilateral disarmament negotiations mechanism. The Treaty's compliance criteria are flawed and might disrupt existing legal instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), thereby undermining the legal basis of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not reflect or constitute new international customary law, nor does it have any legally binding force on non-State parties. Nevertheless, China continues to support nuclear disarmament and will continue to uphold its relevant policies and commitments, while contributing to the ultimate objective of building a nuclear-weapon-free world.

China voted against draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", as a whole, and its operative paragraphs 13 and 21. In addition, China abstained in the voting on the nineteenth and twentieth preambular paragraphs and on operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution. China believes that correctly and comprehensively interpreting history has an important bearing on the overall interests of maintaining the post-war international order and on the future of international peace. That issue deserves the utmost attention by the international community. China has always sympathized with the suffering people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, China has also always opposed singling out a particular episode of the war to highlight.

With regard to the issue of proposed visits to nuclear-explosion sites, China does not oppose the visits per se — it has nothing against the local population. Rather, China believes that we must draw lessons from history and reflect on how to prevent tragedies from happening again, which would be more meaningful than rhetoric or invitations to visit. Reinforcing the memory of the first-ever use of nuclear weapons in history should not be used to weaken the memory of Japan's war of aggression.

China has always maintained that it is necessary to reach a complete and balanced programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament, so as to launch negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) on the basis of the Shannon mandate. That would be an

effective way to fully solve the issue of the prohibition of the production of fissile materials. The moratorium on production is not clearly defined, has no clear scope and is very difficult to verify. It therefore has no real significance. Rather, it would undermine the political will of the international community to reach and conclude an FMCT based on negotiation.

In addition, China supports active efforts to eliminate nuclear risks. However, China does not endorse any ideas that undermine the cornerstone role of the NPT and contravene the relevant Security Council resolutions.

China abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.23, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons", and on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.62, as a whole, entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world". I would like to take this opportunity to explain China's position on those draft resolutions.

China attaches great importance to the humanitarian impact that the use of nuclear weapons can cause and understands the legitimate concerns of the international community. From the day it came to possess them, China has stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China has stayed true to its no-first-use commitment and its commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear-weapon State or a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Those policies and commitments embody our practice of humanitarian philosophies.

On the other hand, China believes that the goals of nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved overnight. Over-emphasizing humanitarian issues while ignoring other important factors associated with nuclear disarmament will not help to produce any tangible results in the nuclear disarmament process; rather, it will serve only to jeopardize the outcome and consensus that have already been achieved.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to explain the Mexican delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Mexico and Japan work consistently on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament issues within the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and other forums, and we will continue to do

so. Mexico understands the motivation of the authors of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54. We are convinced of the need to seek unity and consensus to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and sustain peace. States therefore also have an obligation to comply with international commitments without preconditions. Mexico abstained in the voting on the draft resolution because it includes a significant number of substantive changes with regard to those previously presented, which affect its balance and meaning. Moreover, several paragraphs reinterpret the language agreed upon by the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It would have been preferable to hold further consultations and take into account the various positions of members. We hope that the authors of the draft resolution continue dialogue with all parties on those issues.

Finally, we reiterate that, as far as Mexico is concerned, the adoption of the draft resolution does not set a precedent or imply any change in multilateral obligations and commitments concerning nuclear disarmament. Moreover, the language of the draft resolution cannot be considered to replace that agreed upon by the parties to the NPT.

Ms. Mac Loughlin (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina abstained in the voting on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”. Argentina firmly believes that establishing zones free of weapons of mass destruction that are freely negotiated among the countries of each region significantly contributes to international peace and security, with a view to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Argentina is part of a region that has historically been at the vanguard of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty of Tlatelolco has been a political, judicial and institutional reference point for creating other zones free of nuclear weapons, established through consensus-building among all the States involved. We therefore hope that the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East can happen as soon as possible. In that regard, our country reiterates its commitment to the resolution on the Middle East adopted in the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the recommendations agreed at the Disarmament Commission in 1990. We hope that

the negotiation process can begin and that all States of the international community, particularly those that possess nuclear weapons, contribute to that aim. Argentina is convinced that the participation of all the States involved is a fundamental condition to achieving the broad consultation and consensus necessary to gain ground in the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Argentina abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”. The Republic of Argentina has a clear, permanent and unwavering commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. That is attested to by our membership of, and active and permanent support for, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and our regional instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

In that regard, we participated in the negotiations that led to the adoption of the text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on 7 July 2017, within the scope of the United Nations. Argentina has begun an analysis and assessment process of the text of the agreement, which we have not yet concluded. That analysis includes an assessment of the impact that the Treaty has on the non-proliferation regime, which is ultimately enshrined in the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, in a broader sense, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we have not yet signed the Treaty, we of course abstained in the voting on a draft resolution that makes a firm call for the signing and ratification of the Treaty.

Under those circumstances, the Republic of Argentina believes that it is fundamental to sustain and strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, the cornerstone of which is the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That is why Argentina has presented its candidacy, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, to preside over the 2020 NPT Review Conference, which will coincidentally take place 50 years after the entry into force of the NPT. In that context, the universalization and prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains a task that is worthy of being accorded the highest priority by the international community.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled “United action with renewed determination

towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". Despite real efforts made by the authors of the draft resolution to try and strike a balance among its various sensitive aspects, my country was unfortunately unable to support the text this year.

Given the continued inclusion of elements that pose several problems for us, we were compelled to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution and voted against the nineteenth and twentieth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 7 and 13, to which we cannot subscribe. France remains concerned about the language of those paragraphs, some of which establishes a link between the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament, which France rejects. We have all known about those consequences for a long time. There is no new information in that regard. Moreover, there is no consensus that such an approach promotes nuclear-disarmament efforts. The draft resolution also highlights a number of other concepts, such as unintended nuclear detonations, which do not enjoy consensus.

It is extremely important to ensure that the international community work together to create the conditions necessary for attaining the collective goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, when the strategic context permits. I wish to recall that, in France's view, nuclear weapons are a means of deterrence for the sole purpose of protecting our vital interests. The French nuclear-deterrence doctrine is strictly defensive and sharply limits the cases in which nuclear weapons can be used to extreme circumstances and for legitimate defence purposes, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. In any event, the only way to advance nuclear disarmament is through concrete and gradual measures that are fully anchored in the context of security.

France is concerned about the development of an emotional and divisive approach. Dividing the international community will not help to create the conditions we need to bring about nuclear disarmament. Moreover, developing an approach that is disconnected from the strategic context and that seeks to weaken nuclear deterrence will only undermine support for the NPT, which remains the key foundation of international security, non-proliferation and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with its article VI. In that connection, I wish to recall that my country continues to work on the implementation of the NPT Action Plan adopted by consensus in 2010, which remains the most recent valid reference document on the matter.

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, presented this year, includes positive elements that France supports. To a great extent, the text, which calls for efforts towards disarmament from the entire international community without exception, places nuclear disarmament in the framework created by the NPT. The draft resolution also recalls that nuclear disarmament efforts can be conducted only on a basis of undiminished security for all, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1887 (2009). It is essential to emphasize that commitments and decisions regarding nuclear disarmament must be anchored in an understanding of the security threats and challenges we face. In that regard, France welcomes the contribution that the draft resolution makes to the efforts to foster dialogue between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States and, more generally, among countries that depend on deterrence for security and those that do not.

The draft resolution is also part of a realistic, pragmatic and gradual general approach to nuclear disarmament that we support. In particular, the text lists as the next two logical priority steps for nuclear disarmament the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the launching of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, based on document CD/1299 and the mandate therein. France welcomes with satisfaction the references to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group and the subsidiary body set up at the Conference on Disarmament during its 2018 annual session. We also welcome positive reference in the text to discussions on the verification of nuclear disarmament in the framework of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Group of Governmental Experts, which began its work this year. Finally, the text contains elements regarding non-proliferation crises, to which France subscribes and therefore welcomes.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein): I take the floor to explain my delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", as adopted.

Liechtenstein appreciates the efforts of the main co-sponsor, Japan, in presenting the draft resolution to the First Committee. Liechtenstein has traditionally considered the draft resolution to be an important and much-needed bridge-building effort. However, given a

number of substantive changes to the text since 2016, Liechtenstein abstained in the voting on the draft resolution for the second consecutive year.

An element that has become increasingly clear in this year's discussions is that polarization in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation discussions is not the cause for differing views on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Rather, the strong trend towards a legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons is a consequence of a long-term negative development that is also manifested in the draft resolution before us.

Of course, as a supporter of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we believe that the draft resolution should include at least a factual reference to it. However, our main concerns do not pertain to what is missing in the text, but rather to the existing provisions that represent attempts at a significant backtracking from established commitments and obligations in the framework of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The current geopolitical situation and sustained efforts to weaken the international rules-based order call for our unequivocal support for the common nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instruments we have achieved. While slightly improved, we consider the formulation of paragraph 2 to still fall short of previous provisions that reaffirm the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all NPT States parties are committed under its article VI. In view of the upcoming discussions on the NPT Review Conference, Liechtenstein will continue to consider the stronger provisions as a basis of discussion.

Of significant additional concern are the new references throughout the draft resolution, including in paragraph 3, that appear to put existing disarmament commitments and obligations in the context of developments in the international security environment, thereby creating undue conditionalities on those commitments and obligations. Liechtenstein opposes attempts to weaken the existing legal and political framework for nuclear disarmament and does not accept those provisions as setting a precedent for any future negotiation process.

In keeping with last year, we regret that the draft resolution's paragraph 18 fails to issue an urgent and direct call to all States, particularly the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay or waiting for any other State to do so. By abstaining on that paragraph, Liechtenstein distanced itself from any message that the international community is reducing efforts to achieve the early entry into force of the CTBT.

Finally, let me express my delegation's hope that this important draft resolution will once again be able to serve as a bridge-builder and a uniting text, in accordance with its title, in the near future. I would like to once again assure the delegation of Japan of our appreciation and readiness to engage on this text in future.

The Acting Chair: May I remind delegations, without prejudice to their rights, that explanations of vote after the voting are limited to 10 minutes and to kindly keep their statements as brief as possible so that we have at least one hour to proceed and complete action on all draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 2. I thank delegations for their understanding and cooperation.

Mr. Khoo (Singapore): I take the floor to explain my delegation's abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons".

Singapore remains fully committed to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. That has been our long-standing and unwavering position. The only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is the complete elimination of such weapons of mass destruction. Singapore will continue to support draft resolutions and initiatives that contribute to concrete and meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament.

Singapore's position on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been clearly expressed. Our position remains unchanged. Our abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24 and support for other draft resolutions and paragraphs in the First Committee that make reference to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should be viewed in that context.

Singapore actively participated in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in good faith and with a constructive spirit. We regret that our concerns were not fully taken on board when

the Treaty was adopted. Singapore reiterates that the Treaty should not in any way affect the rights and obligations of States parties to other agreements, including the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We recognize that there are multiple pathways towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. In our view, meaningful progress in nuclear disarmament will be possible only when all relevant parties join the global effort. It is therefore important for the international community to collectively find a realistic and complementary role for the Treaty within the existing global disarmament architecture that is anchored on the NPT. Inclusive dialogue, renewed international cooperation and practical measures for irreversible, verifiable and universal nuclear disarmament are essential. Singapore will continue to work constructively towards our common goal of nuclear disarmament.

Mrs. Dallafior (Switzerland): I take the floor to explain the votes by Sweden and my own country, Switzerland, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”.

Our countries continue to share the objective of the draft resolution to unite as broad a membership as possible to make inclusive progress on nuclear disarmament. We voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole and welcome some of the changes made to the version submitted last year. However, our delegations feel compelled to place on record significant concerns that we have about several of its provisions, in particular a number of paragraphs that could be seen as weakening provisions adopted in the context of the Review Conferences of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That applies to the nineteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 7. We abstained in the voting on those paragraphs because the language deviates from that agreed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which expressed deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. That applies to all NPT States parties.

While we take note that the language in operative paragraph 2 was amended to introduce a reference to NPT article VI, the paragraph still deviates from

important NPT Review Conference outcomes. Similar concerns also apply to operative paragraph 1, which does not seem to correspond to the provisions of the NPT preamble, and to operative paragraph 3, which contains a new addition that could be interpreted as conditioning the implementation of past NPT Review Conference outcomes.

Furthermore, on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and paragraph 18, it would have been important for the draft resolution to clearly urge the eight annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay, as the Uniting for Action draft resolutions used to do prior to 2017, rather than merely acknowledging such a course. We are convinced that it is essential to halt the course of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to stand by agreed road maps and principles now more than ever. We stand ready to continue to work closely with all co-sponsors of the draft resolution, in view of uniting the United Nations membership, notably to achieve concrete outcomes at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

I would also like to explain the votes by Sweden and Switzerland regarding operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.57, entitled “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons”. Our delegations abstained in the separate voting on that paragraph. The explanation of vote made last year on that same paragraph remains valid (see A/C.1/72/PV.27).

While I have the floor, I will now turn to a number of explanations of vote in my national capacity.

Switzerland voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”, and abstained in the voting on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”.

Switzerland shares the disappointment that the process towards the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery has not advanced further. The establishment of a WMD-free zone in the region is the goal jointly adopted by NPT States parties, and my country continues to fully support the implementation of that objective. Such a zone is even more important and urgent given the

fact that the region has seen various types of threats related to WMDs, including the repeated use of chemical weapons.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2, we once again note that the draft resolution refers to only one dimension of the nuclear proliferation risk in the region and continues to single out one State. Our vote in favour of the draft resolution reflects the continued importance we attach to the full implementation of the relevant NPT obligations by its members.

With regard to draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, we share the desire of its sponsors to take forward the important process towards the establishment of a WMD-free zone and to achieve meaningful progress ahead of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. One of the conditions that needs to be met for such progress to materialize is that the process be inclusive and enable the participation of all States of the region. We have questions about whether the approach chosen in the draft resolution is able to establish the type of process that could provide for such inclusiveness. Convening such a conference is a highly sensitive matter politically and requires open channels of communication, mutual confidence and the willingness to take into account the interests of all stakeholders. We encourage all the relevant States to spare no effort in working towards constructive discussions and building on the efforts undertaken in 2013 and 2014 in Glion and Geneva, where all the relevant States came to the table.

Last but not least, we note that the implementation of the draft resolution would channel significant financial resources to a process with a highly uncertain outcome, could cause a programme budget implication for the current budget cycle and would continue to require significant resources in future, due to the open-ended nature of its process.

Switzerland abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons". That position is informed by the Swiss Government's decision adopted earlier this year not to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at this juncture. While we support the overall goal of the Treaty, we continue to have a number of questions regarding some of its provisions, including their impact on the existing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes articulated around the NPT. Those considerations were spelled out in our statement delivered under the disarmament

cluster of the First Committee. We will take part in future meetings of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons of States as observers and will closely follow further developments.

Finally, let me explain Switzerland's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.14, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". My country voted in favour of the draft resolution and delivered an explanation of vote on it when it was last submitted in 2017, which remains valid today (see A/C.1/72/PV.27). In the interest of time, I will refrain from reading it out again.

Mr. Horne (Australia): At the outset, I join others in expressing our condolences to Ambassador Jinga and his family, who are in our thoughts.

Australia takes the floor to deliver an explanation of vote after the voting on three draft resolutions and decisions voted on yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26).

First, Australia has maintained its position on the two long-standing Middle East draft resolutions, namely, draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.1, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", and draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". That includes voting in favour of the Middle East draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which was previously been adopted by consensus, as the text has not significantly changed.

Finally, Australia abstained in the voting on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled "Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction". Australia continues to support the establishment of an effective and verifiable Middle East weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone freely arrived at by all States in the region. We abstained in the voting on the draft decision, as it does not enjoy consensus support from all States of the region. However, we reiterate our support for the relevant decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and for the holding of a conference as agreed in the 2010 NPT Action Plan. We encourage relevant States to work together to find a constructive and inclusive way forward.

Mr. Jo Myong Ung (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I take the floor to explain the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's position on draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East"; draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28, entitled "Nuclear disarmament"; and draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.64, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments".

My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.64. Paragraph 16 contains some elements that are unacceptable to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, such as adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains firm and unchanged in its position on achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, as stipulated in the Panmunjom Declaration on Peace, Prosperity and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula and the Singapore joint statement. The draft resolution mentions only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's commitment. All the parties concerned should take corresponding measures and fulfil their own commitments, in order to build a regime of lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.28, as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains firm in its support for the principled position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority in the area of disarmament, and it should come first, as the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only truly complete solution to the issue of nuclear proliferation. My delegation expresses reservations about the calls for adherence to the NPT, and we do not subscribe to the decisions of NPT Review Conferences. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not a party to the NPT. However, as we share and support the main objective of the draft resolution, which calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we voted in its favour.

Finally, my delegation voted in favour of A/C.1/73/L.2. We express strong support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. While we support the main objective of the draft resolution, my delegation disassociates itself from references to the general call for universal adherence to the NPT, as that does not conform to our position.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation wishes to deliver an explanation of vote on the Australian-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty". As the First Committee is aware, Russia was one of the first countries to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and is, of course, one of the most consistent advocates of its earliest possible entry into force. That is why, as in previous years, we voted in favour of the Australian-sponsored draft resolution, in spite of all the obvious and inherent disadvantages to the text.

There were a number of very important events over the past year that fundamentally altered the situation concerning the CTBT, namely, the fact that the United States Administration decided not to ratify the Treaty. Moreover, it has decided to start preparing its nuclear testing infrastructure for the possible accelerated renewal of nuclear weapons tests. I therefore ask an essentially rhetorical question: What is the current value of this once very important document following that irresponsible decision taken by the United States. So that everyone might understand, I would like to point out that we have already told our American colleagues that we believe they are acting irresponsibly, undermining not only the Treaty itself but also the status quo provided for under the Treaty in the sphere of strategic stability and the consequences that flow from that.

We draw attention to the fact that the Australian document disregards all of those realities and does not reflect the actions of the United States, which make the Treaty's entry into force virtually impossible. We believe that this is a cowardly position that obscures something very obvious that has already taken place. Those who do not know much about this matter might get the false impression that nothing negative happened over the past year, which is a distortion of fact and would, in fact, lower the value of the consensus draft resolution even further. Moreover, we believe that the reference to the September Joint Ministerial Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the so-called Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in the draft resolution is inappropriate. Neither Russia nor China supported that controversial document.

There is yet another matter of principle that we wish to broach. As the Committee is aware, over the past year there were indeed some positive events. We

are all aware that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea took a number of serious steps to resolve the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula. Inter-Korean and American-North Korean summits were held to address those problems. It is surprising that such positive shifts were therefore not duly reflected in the Australian document. However, the draft resolution contains excessively negative statements regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, implying that Pyongyang is primarily responsible for the lack of progress around the Treaty. One gets the impression that the authors are trying to conceal the irresponsible and undermining activities of the United States with regard to the Treaty.

I must now address the working methods behind the draft resolution. This time, the authors refused to hold consultations on this document. We got the impression that, in drafting the document, the authors were either trying to act in secrecy or taking direction from outside forces on how to act and what to include in the document. Of course, in such circumstances, and unlike previous years, Russia was unable to co-sponsor the draft resolution. We call upon the authors to revert to their previous constructive working methods in future when drafting this important document in support of the CTBT. We cannot allow for mistakes, which have already been committed concerning another important consensus draft resolution supporting the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In that instance, foul methods used by Western countries to undermine the countries they disliked were promoted at the United Nations.

Another very important point concerns draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22, on which many States have commented, trying to explain their reasons for abstaining in the voting. Quite frankly, such behaviour is rather pathetic; everyone was saying how important the 1995 resolution was and how they supported it. Certain members must ask themselves what they have done for the resolution to be implemented. We all know who is responsible for its implementation: Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Secretary-General, as well as, of course, all of us equal participants in the process. Russia did its utmost to try to ensure that the conference would be convened, and the United States, France, the United Kingdom and many other countries are essentially undermining that process.

We recall the shameful actions of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada at the latest

NPT Review Conference, when, at the last moment, they undermined the consensus decision that had been based on a positive path forward. Now they are disregarding the proposal of the Arab States to convene a conference, saying that not everybody is prepared for such a conference. Well, we must work to be prepared. Let us try to convene a conference and talk. If there is no dialogue then there will of course be no progress. If we are to disregard the positive appeals of the Arab States, then this issue will never even come close to being resolved, which would undermine the entire NPT review process. Moreover, we will have major difficulties at the next preparatory session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held here in New York at the end of April next year.

I would therefore like to propose to all reasonably minded and practical individuals present that they support the proposal of the Arab States to convene a conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone at the relevant plenary meeting of the General Assembly. Dialogue forces obligations on no one and does not harm anyone's interests. We have seen how our American colleagues, on deciding not to support the document, forced their allies to vote against, or at least abstain, in the voting on the draft decision. This position on behalf of a State that is supposed to work in favour of convening a conference is unacceptable.

Mr. Mohd Nasir (Malaysia): At the outset, we convey our thoughts and prayers to the Chair of the First Committee, Ambassador Jinga, and his family members during this difficult time.

Malaysia commends Japan for having presented its traditional draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", and for its efforts in consulting with Member States. The draft resolution reflects Japan's continued commitment to forging common ground among Member States on critical topics concerning disarmament and non-proliferation. As in previous years, Malaysia voted in favour of the draft resolution, as a whole. Nonetheless, we wish to express our concern on several paragraphs therein.

On operative paragraph 2, in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States specifically relates to the achievement of the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty. That commitment is also

reflected in operative paragraph 2 of resolution 71/49, of 2016. Although operative paragraph 2 of the present text makes reference to article VI of the NPT, it does not accurately represent the fragmented nature of the nuclear-weapon States' unequivocal undertaking and risks undermining their prior commitment to nuclear disarmament. Malaysia accordingly abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 2.

On operative paragraph 3, Malaysia regrets the inclusion of new language that risks rendering the fulfilment of obligations by NPT States parties conditional on "developments in global security" — an ambiguous phrase. To guard against the weakening of States parties' responsibilities as set out in the NPT and related documents, Malaysia abstained in the voting on that paragraph.

On operative paragraph 7, in line with the position taken by Malaysia last year, we also felt compelled to abstain in the voting, due to the attenuation of its language as compared with that of the same operative paragraph of resolution 71/49. The humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons must be regarded as the primary basis of global disarmament efforts, rather than merely a key factor thereof.

With regard to operative paragraph 18, Malaysia maintains the position it expressed in 2017. We abstained in the voting on that paragraph, as it recalls only that the remaining annex 2 States have been urged to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), instead of directly urging them to do so. In our view, the paragraph fails to place appropriate emphasis on the imperative of bringing the CTBT into force.

In conclusion, Malaysia appreciates Japan's continued efforts to try to bridge the gap on this difficult topic. At the same time, Malaysia strongly emphasizes that prior commitments agreed upon by consensus should not be overridden by efforts lesser than those already in existence, for that would severely undermine the trust and credibility of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is our hope that Japan will continue to facilitate the work of all States on this matter by taking into consideration the concerns raised with respect to the draft resolution.

Ms. Claringbould (Netherlands): Let me start by asking you, Sir, to convey our best wishes to Ambassador Jingga during this difficult time for his family.

I would like to make this explanation of vote on behalf of the following countries — Albania, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and my own country, the Netherlands — in connection with our vote against draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.14, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament".

All of us share the draft resolution's long-term goal of achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons. We all supported the holding of a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament in 2013 and participated constructively in it, discussing how best to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. At the 2013 meeting, we made various proposals on how to reach that shared goal. We therefore regret that they have not featured in the resolutions on the high-level meeting in the years since. Unfortunately, the draft text submitted this year does not address our concerns either. That leaves us with no choice but to voice our continuing concerns about the draft resolution once again.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the foundation of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is the international legal instrument that sets the framework for achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world. However, draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.14 fails to acknowledge the central role of the NPT and its review cycle.

NPT States parties have affirmed by consensus that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. That is why we welcome the call in the draft resolution to negotiate effective disarmament measures. However, since the proposals that we made at the 2013 high-level meeting and the concerns that we have subsequently raised have not been acknowledged in the draft resolution, we do not believe that a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, to be convened at a later date, sets the right mandate for such negotiations.

Mr. Makarowski (Sweden): I would like to deliver an explanation of vote after the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons". Sweden abstained

in the voting on the draft resolution, therefore let me briefly contextualize that decision.

Following the negotiations last year that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Swedish Government appointed an independent inquiry tasked with analysing the consequences of a possible Swedish accession. That enquiry, which through necessity has a broad scope, is ongoing. The report it was requested to submit will constitute a key basis for the Government's further consideration on this matter. Those circumstances also motivated Sweden's abstention in the voting on separate paragraphs in other draft resolutions, which conveys our assessment of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): I would like to deliver an explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.1, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their delivery systems in the Middle East that is freely arrived at by all States of the region. We believe that all States of the region should engage in a structured dialogue that is inclusive, balanced, consensus-based and results-oriented, with a view to overcoming the current differences on the way towards the establishment of such a zone.

It is clear that the draft resolution no longer has the support of all States of the region. We therefore abstained in the voting. However, we remain prepared to actively support and facilitate renewed regional dialogue with and among all States of the region on how to move forward on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the European Union's explanation of vote, delivered earlier by the representative of Austria, on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled "Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction". As co-convenor of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, I would now like to deliver an explanation of vote on behalf of the United Kingdom on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1.

The United Kingdom again remains fully committed to the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We are prepared to consider all suggestions for a meaningful way forward. However, it is our long-standing view that, as stated in the 2010 Action Plan, such a conference can succeed only if it is based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. The draft decision does not meet that criterion. It clearly does not have the agreement of all States of the region. It is designed to single out and isolate one particular State. That ignores the reality that the principal current threats to the region are the repeated use of chemical weapons and abhorrent use of a weapons of mass destruction and the proliferation of ballistic missiles — a key means of delivering WMDs. It attempts to use a vote by the General Assembly, a universal body, to mandate the United Nations to convene a treaty-making conference for a treaty to which the majority of States voting today will never be party, nor are they expected to be. Attempts to force progress will amount only to failure. As a result, the United Kingdom chose to abstain in the voting.

Furthermore, the draft decision makes no attempt to address the long-term financial implications and viability of this open-ended proposal. It calls for a one-week conference every year until a Middle East WMD-free zone has been concluded. The Secretariat has provided a breakdown of estimated costs that is in excess of \$1 million per annum. We believe that that is a poor use of United Nations resources and of Member State contributions, given that the conferences will not have the support of all the States of the region, and therefore will not achieve their intended results. The United Kingdom, as a co-convenor, fully recognizes its responsibilities under the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. We tried to explore options with the penholders for a text that would be more widely acceptable, notably to all States of the region, and would be based on consensus. Those discussions were unfortunately not successful. We remain prepared to actively support and facilitate renewed regional dialogue with and among all States of the region on how to move forward to engage in a structured dialogue that is inclusive, balanced, consensus-based and results-orientated.

Ms. Higgin (New Zealand): I wish to supplement my comments with two further explanations of vote following those I delivered yesterday before the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54 (see A/C.1/73/PV.26).

First, with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.46, entitled “Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World”, as was the case during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, the occasion for the first adoption of the resolution (resolution 70/57) and of its annexed declaration (see A/70/PV.67), and as noted in the explanation of vote that we gave at that time, New Zealand remains unable to vote in favour of the text. We have no doubt whatsoever regarding the very strong support of the State that is the lead sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.46 for a nuclear-weapon-free world, but it remains unclear to us how it is that the text of the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World and its follow-up resolution will assist in getting us there. Accordingly, New Zealand abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Turning now to draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, we abstained in the voting. New Zealand understands the frustration of States in the Middle East regarding the failure to make decisive progress on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), which was such a key part of the agreement in 1995 to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) beyond its expiry date. We strongly welcomed the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, with its promise of forward movement through the convening of a conference in 2012, and we continue to deeply regret that, notwithstanding intensive efforts, that has not yet taken place. We strongly urge all the relevant parties to work together to arrive at a feasible and durable approach that offers the real prospect of a WMD-free Middle East zone applicable to all States in the region.

Mr. Trejo Blanco (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, because my country supports all actions and initiatives that are aimed at the total, complete and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. However, for the first time, El Salvador did not sponsor the text. My country acknowledges that in the area of nuclear disarmament, as in any other area of the First Committee’s work, differing perspectives may exist on how to address its related issues. However, we believe that the Committee has always prioritized nuclear

disarmament in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons without delay or conditions. Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54 contains language that, although updated this year, we believe could be more realistic and open to further discussion.

El Salvador strongly believes that conditions should not be instigated to address prior commitments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Seeking to alter language agreed by consensus in disarmament forums goes against nuclear disarmament and jeopardizes the integrity of fundamental instruments in the field. Moreover, stating that nuclear disarmament is dependent on the creation of certain international security conditions is an attempt to change the paradigm. The language that we must maintain in the Committee and all nuclear disarmament forums must concern the total elimination of nuclear weapons. El Salvador hopes that next year the text will reflect our call on the sponsor of the draft resolution to take those aspects into account and that they be included as soon as possible in future sessions. Otherwise, the draft resolution risks becoming outdated, out of touch with the realities of the issue’s legal framework and biased in its approach.

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I express the condolences of the Algerian delegation to Ambassador Jinga, Chair of the First Committee.

My delegation would like to explain its vote on two draft resolutions that were adopted yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26). First, I reiterate the full commitment of Algeria to the Charter of the United Nations and the collective work of multilateralism within the United Nations framework in order to implement commitments related to nuclear disarmament, which is an urgent priority for entrenching and establishing world peace and stability.

My country abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.25, entitled “The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”, in line with our previous convictions and positions concerning The Hague Code of Conduct, which was concluded outside of the United Nations framework. That does not serve the goals of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We believe that the Code of Conduct is unbalanced and selective, as it does not cover all forms of missiles. Some of its provisions could also be construed as restricting the legitimate right of

all States to the use of outer space, which is not in line with the position of my country on that matter.

Secondly, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, we thank the Japanese delegation and other sponsors for their efforts in preparing the draft resolution. We had hoped that our many and substantive concerns, relating to issues of great importance to our delegation and to principled positions that we have always defended, would be taken into account.

In our view, the draft resolution in its current version does not reflect the many principles and commitments undertaken by the international community in the past, as evidenced by the watering down of the language approved in the paragraphs on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That backtracks on the commitments made in previous Review Conferences. We believe that the text does not live up to our national aspirations, as Algeria is a party to those key nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

The paragraph regarding the CTBT does not clearly refer to a call on all countries without exception, including the annex 2 States, to join that pivotal Treaty, thereby undermining the traditional call that we have made on those countries in the past to endorse the Treaty so as to promote its entry into force. Moreover, the draft resolution does not decisively take into account our concerns relating to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and totally ignores the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was concluded last year and adds value to nuclear disarmament efforts. For all of the aforementioned reasons, my delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

Ms. Vasharakorn (Thailand): The delegation of Thailand is taking the floor to explain its position on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.44, “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”. We abstained in the voting on the draft resolution for three main reasons.

First, Thailand believes that the only true guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. The prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons is insufficient for that goal, as it does not ultimately safeguard the global community

from the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. The risk of inadvertent, unauthorized or accidental detonation remains when the possession, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons are still on the table.

Secondly, Thailand supports all efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons by all stakeholders at all levels. We believe that States, regional and international organizations, civil society and youth, as well as other parties, can contribute and drive forward nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament must therefore be more inclusive and democratic to be able to discuss such issues.

Thirdly, and lastly, it is unfortunate that a historic development in nuclear disarmament was not reflected in the document. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represents a key step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which Thailand believes could be an effective approach to ensure disarmament and save humankind.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation too would be grateful if you, Sir, would convey our friendship and solidarity to the Chair of the First Committee.

Spain wishes to explain its position on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.33, entitled “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty”. The entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa in 2009 represented an important contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security, which is of special significance for all African countries.

Spain has therefore always shown its unwavering support for the objectives of the Treaty of Pelindaba and welcomes its entry into force. Spain maintains close relations with African countries and has made considerable efforts through its Ministry for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation to promote sustainable development in all African countries. Spain is also willing to take the action needed to ensure that the States parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba have the capacities necessary to successfully implement it in their respective territories.

After carefully considering the invitation extended to Spain to join Protocol III to the Treaty of Pelindaba, my Government, in consultation with Parliament and taking into account the guidelines approved by consensus at the United Nations Disarmament

Commission during its substantive session in 1999, on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones pursuant to freely agreed rules among the countries of the region concerned, decided not to adhere to it, which was duly made known to the Treaty depositary. In that regard, I would like to highlight just two issues.

First, the Treaty of Pelindaba does not include any provision, obligation, guarantee or safeguard in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that Spain has not already adopted for its entire national territory. Pursuant to its membership of various international bodies, Spain has devised a series of measures and safeguards within the framework of the European Atomic Energy Community and the Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol it has signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which go beyond the content of the Treaty of Pelindaba, while also complementing it.

Secondly, Spain's entire territory has been free of nuclear weapons for military use since 1976. That prohibition of the introduction, installation or stockpiling of nuclear weapons throughout Spanish territory was reaffirmed by Parliament when Spain joined NATO, in 1981, and was also approved in a consultative referendum held in March 1986. Spain has therefore taken all the measures necessary to ensure that the content of the Treaty of Pelindaba is applied throughout its entire national territory.

Spain has joined the consensus on this First Committee draft resolution since its first submission, in 1997. However, the Spanish delegation does not consider itself party to the consensus referred to in paragraph 5. For that reason, we are working with other delegations to arrive at a more balanced wording that is acceptable to all parties. We trust that the conversations on the draft resolution will yield satisfactory outcomes with a view to future sessions.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to make several points regarding the Japanese explanation of vote.

First, Japan abstained in the voting on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1. We share the aspiration for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction based on the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which was adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That initiative would

contribute to progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the strengthening of regional and global peace and security.

On the other hand, we believe that it is important for the entire NPT community to encourage the establishment of such a zone on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned. If any conference on that matter is to be held, it is vital to ensure that all States of the Middle East and the three co-conveners under the 1995 resolution participate. Where appropriate, Japan is prepared to support and facilitate efforts by all States of the Middle East and the three co-sponsors to convene an international conference based upon an agreement by those States. Our voting position was decided based on those reasons.

As a matter of budgetary discipline, we would like to note our concern about the implication of the draft decision, in particular the cost of convening a one-week conference at the Headquarters until the completion of an international agreement. We should reduce the cost by effectively utilizing the existing human and documentation resources.

Secondly, I would like to explain our vote against draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons". As the only country to have suffered war-time atomic bombings, Japan wholly shares the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is essential that all States work together and take united action based on a clear understanding of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, as well as on an objective assessment of the reality of our severe security environment. We bear in mind all of the various approaches, including a legal framework, for achieving our common goal. Japan is strongly of the view that, since less than two years remain until the 2020 NPT Review Conference, all States should work together and focus on concrete and practical measures for advancing nuclear disarmament, regardless of their differences in approach towards our common goal.

Lastly, motivated by the same logic as in 2017, we voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.23, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons", and abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.57, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons", and draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.62, entitled "Ethical

imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world". I will end there to save time.

Mr. Tituaña Matango (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation delivers this explanation of vote on draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.26, A/C.1/73/L.44 and A/C.1/73/L.54.

On several occasions, Ecuador has proclaimed the need for the urgent entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Ecuador has not just called for the ratification of the Treaty; it ratified it on 12 November 2001 and completed the establishment of a radionuclide station and an infrasound station in the Galapagos Islands, in accordance with its obligations under the Treaty. Ecuador's vote to retain the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty demonstrates our firm support for the universal call for its entry into force.

Likewise, my delegation regrets the fact that that paragraph continues to refer to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). For Ecuador, resolution 2310 (2016) was an attempt by the Council to meddle in the functioning of the Treaty, which was opened for signature by the General Assembly, in line with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, and for whose universalization a Preparatory Commission and a temporary Technical Secretariat were created, which is also mandated to develop a verification regime for the Treaty's entry into force.

The adoption of resolution 2310 (2016) was an attempt by the Security Council to establish the right to interfere in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is not provided for in the Treaty. None of the provisions of the Charter grants the Security Council powers to interfere in the work of international instruments. Article 13 of the Charter, however, does grant the General Assembly that power. The adoption of resolution 2310 (2016) will therefore in no way accelerate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or facilitate the work of its verification regime. The Treaty will enter into force when all annex 2 States that have not yet done so sign or ratify it, including those members of the Security Council that promoted and supported resolution 2310 (2016). Let us reject distractions attempting to hide those facts. The eight annex 2 States that have not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should sign or ratify it so as to enable its entry into

force. We reiterate our call that references to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) be omitted the next time the draft text is presented, as it will not contribute to, facilitate or accelerate the Treaty's entry into force in any way.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.44, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", Ecuador voted in favour because we support efforts aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons. However, I would like to note that, for my country, the way to achieve that aim is through the universalization of the existing Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is a universal legally binding instrument that is open for signature by all States and already expressly bans the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Lastly, I turn to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54. Ecuador carried out a detailed analysis of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", as we fully share the sentiment of its title. My delegation appreciates the fact that, in some paragraphs, important concepts have been reintroduced relating to nuclear disarmament and negative security guarantees, such as the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to fully eliminate their nuclear arsenals in order to achieve nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

However, my delegation is concerned that the altered paragraphs of last year were retained, which weakens the text and diminishes its ambition to seek the goal set out in its title. Moreover, the motivation behind the draft resolution is still to create conditions for nuclear disarmament, to which my country does not subscribe. We understand that the intention of the draft resolution's main co-sponsor is to bridge the gaps among the differing positions on this sensitive issue, and we admire their efforts. However, such bridges must be built upon a firm and solid basis — that of the priority of nuclear disarmament — and the urgent need to achieve a world free of such weapons without creating any preconditions. My delegation hopes that next year the draft resolution will encompass all aspects and progress made in the area of nuclear disarmament, including one of the most significant achievements of our time, that is, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which could allow us to support it.

Mr. Menashe Moreno (Israel): On behalf of the Israeli delegation, I would like to express our condolences to Ambassador Jinga and his family.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.1, entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, it took a long time and considerable international efforts to reach consensus on the text. Even though Israel had its own deep reservations concerning the draft resolution, which have been voiced every year in our explanations of vote, Israel voted in favour of the draft resolution for the sake of consensus, as Israel’s consistent approach was always constructive.

It is very unfortunate that that long-standing practice was broken by the Group of Arab States through the imposition of the new unilateral and destructive draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”. The Arab Group has altered the status quo. Furthermore, as was stated in the general debate and the discussions on the cluster “Nuclear weapons”, from now on Israel will not cooperate with regional arms-control initiatives. We regret that we do not see from the advocates of the draft resolution the same enthusiasm to solve the real threats and challenges facing the Middle East.

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”, which Israel voted against, has once again been submitted by the Arab Group. That is an unfortunate attempt to divert the First Committee’s attention away from the real proliferation challenges facing the Middle East. The approach serves neither the interests of the States of the region nor those of the international community. Not only does the draft resolution distort the truth, but it also fails to genuinely confront the real weapons-of-mass-destruction (WMDs) risks in the region. That should worry us all, as the draft resolution undermines any attempt to address regional threats effectively and curtails chances for a real and constructive dialogue among the States of the region. We reject the draft resolution in its entirety. Attempts to side-track, veto or shortcut efforts by submitting one-sided and biased draft resolutions in multilateral forums will not succeed.

With regard to draft decision A/C.1/73/L.10, entitled “Missiles”, year on year we are confronted with the same baffling situation, whereby a Member State

named the Islamic Republic of Iran sponsors a draft decision pertaining to missiles, and does so, to add insult to injury, under the cluster “Nuclear weapons”. Iran is a violator of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has not answered questions about its clandestine nuclear programme to this day, while continuing to hide relevant information and sites from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Furthermore, Iran is also violating several Security Council resolutions and arms-control instruments on missile proliferation, due to its heavy involvement in the proliferation of missiles and rockets to numerous terrorist organizations in the Middle East and its active research and development programme, including to carry WMD warheads. From our perspective, it is inconceivable that Iran sponsor the draft decision on missiles when it does not properly respond to such issues. Israel therefore voted against the draft decision.

With regard to draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, it is very unfortunate that the Arab Group brought that hindering initiative to this arms-control forum, rather than confronting the real and deadly security challenges in the Middle East. As mentioned in our previous interventions, over the past few decades Israel’s consistent approach has always — and I repeat always — been constructive. However, it seems that once again the Arab Group is interested in creating another platform to single out Israel, “imposing on” rather than “discussing with”, involving third parties rather than direct parties and using an open-ended approach rather than an inclusive approach open to all members of the region. It has no respect for national security considerations and is using a one-sided and destructive approach. Obviously, the Israeli position is well known. The Arab Group chose such a path intentionally, knowing that Israel cannot and will not take it. The draft resolution pushes Israel into a position that will no longer permit it to cooperate with future regional arms-control initiatives. In that regard, we will vote against any such initiative in relevant multilateral forums.

Israel once again voted against draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.24, entitled “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”. Israel’s deep reservations regarding that initiative were based on substantive and procedural considerations. It should be emphasized that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not

create, contribute to the development of or indicate the existence of customary international law related to the subject or content of the Treaty. Moreover, the Treaty does not reflect legal norms that apply to non-party States to the Treaty and does not in any way alter the existing rights or obligations of those States.

Israel voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26, entitled “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty”, in the light of its long-standing support for the Treaty, which we signed in 1996. Notwithstanding Israel’s favourable attitude to the Treaty, as outlined earlier, we were unable to support the language in draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26 in its entirety, in particular the seventh preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 1 and 6. The full version of our explanation of vote on the draft resolution will be made available on PaperSmart.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.58, “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”, the ability of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) to address proliferation challenges, including non-compliance by States with their international obligations in the nuclear domain, is questionable. That is especially true for the Middle East. It has been Israel’s long-standing position that the notion of a FMCT should be part of a new regional security architecture agreed by consensus, the essential prerequisites for which are far from being fulfilled.

Mr. Yong Jin Baek (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons” (see A/C.1/73/PV.26). My Government takes particular note of the need to remember those who have suffered from the use of nuclear weapons. However, we abstained in the voting because we strongly believe that terms in the draft resolution relating to atomic bomb survivors should have been phrased in a more appropriate manner so that the text would fully take into account all survivors, regardless of nationality. Having said that, the Republic of Korea respects the spirit of the draft resolution and the issues it intends to promote on the whole.

Ms. Çalıřkan (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with the explanation of vote on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1 made by the observer of the European Union (see

A/C.1/73/PV.26). The following remarks are made in our national capacity.

As a country neighbouring the region, ensuring peace, security and stability in the Middle East is of crucial importance for Turkey. In that regard, Turkey has always supported the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. In that understanding, we are fully committed to the 1995 resolution and the outcome of the 2010 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is regrettable that the conference foreseen to be convened to that end in 2012 could not be realized. Progress is definitely needed in this area.

After careful consideration, Turkey decided to abstain in the voting on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1. The draft decision seeks for the General Assembly to vote to convene a treaty-making conference that would not be a universal instrument. While we regret that the convening of a conference on the establishment of such a zone, as set out in the 2010 Review Conference action plan, did not take place, we are concerned that the process foreseen in the draft decision will not yield an effective outcome.

Turkey will continue to make efforts in multilateral forums and, where appropriate, through bilateral contacts to progress on the issue. In addition, we invite all relevant parties to intensify dialogue in order to contribute to the process.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to the Chair of the First Committee, the permanent representative of Romania, and we wish him and his family endurance during this difficult time.

My delegation voted in favour of draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.1, “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East” and A/C.1/73/L.2, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”, as well as draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”. We believe that those issues are of paramount importance to security and peace in our region and the world. Moreover, we strongly believe in the necessity of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

The Syrian Arab Republic was one of the first countries to call for freeing the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), particularly nuclear weapons, since its accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1969. In late 2003, my country took the initiative to achieve this noble objective by submitting a draft resolution to the Security Council in order to free the region of all WMDs, in particular nuclear weapons. That would be done under international supervision and the auspices of the United Nations, which would have strengthened the role of multilateral international conventions on disarmament. However, at the time, the delegation of the United States of America threatened to veto the draft resolution. In fact, the text remains in blue, and we call on Council members to adopt it.

There is an international consensus that the only true threat in the Middle East is Israel, which possesses nuclear weapons and long-range delivery systems, as well as an arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. Nevertheless, some obfuscate that reality and prefer to enter into imaginary arguments and nonsensical, repetitive discussions that are based on non-objective motives.

The United States is the one country that is protecting and covering Israel's nuclear, chemical and biological arsenal and fabricating pretexts to preserve it. It is the country that destroyed Iraq based on lies concerning WMDs. It is the only country to have withdrawn from the international agreement with Iran, stopped funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, withdrew from UNESCO and the Human Rights Council and obstructed the convening of the 2012 conference, while threatening to withdraw from the World Trade Organization. No country that does all that has any right to level false accusations concerning the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, especially as that country has a historical record of verified and non-fabricated incidents of the use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons against civilians in many parts of the world.

My country voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.46, "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World". We appreciate the efforts made by His Excellency Nursultan A. Nazarbayev, President of the friendly Republic of Kazakhstan, as we believe that it is important to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

However, my delegation abstained in the voting on the ninth preambular paragraph, referring to the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, which contains baseless allegations directed at my country. We have scientifically and legally refuted those claims, of which Council members and the General Assembly are aware. Moreover, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* is marred by a significant flaw. It refers to the terrorist organization Da'esh as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant without using inverted commas or brackets. That gives the impression that the Secretariat is now adopting that nomenclature for the terrorist organization Da'esh and is labelling the organization an Islamic State. Such action runs counter to Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism.

For all of those principled reasons, we could not accept the inclusion of that paragraph in the draft resolution. However, we voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. We have no problem with the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, but, for the aforementioned reasons, we do have a problem with the paragraph referring to the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda.

My country's delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26, "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty". We have always stressed that a treaty regarding such a sensitive and important subject cannot disregard the legitimate concerns of non-nuclear States, which constitute the vast majority of the world. Those States have not received any guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The text of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) does not explicitly refer to the illegitimacy of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In addition, the text does not include any commitment from the nuclear-weapon States to eliminating their nuclear arsenals within a reasonable time frame. The Treaty also refrains from explicitly calling for the universality of the NPT to end the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects.

My country, Syria, believes that those core gaps are a cause for deep concern, as Israel is in possession of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs. It has been working to develop those weapons both quantitatively and qualitatively and refuses to accede to the NPT or to subject its nuclear facilities to the verification regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Such action obstructs efforts to establish a WMD-free zone

in the Middle East and subjects the region to the threat of Israeli nuclear weapons without any international reaction. For those reasons, my country abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. We would also like to express our reservations concerning all paragraphs and draft resolutions and decisions — adopted or yet to be adopted — that refer to the CTBT.

My delegation once again abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.58, “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”, because those who submitted the draft resolution did not take into account the remarks made by us and other delegations concerning the fact that the draft resolution should refer to fissile material stockpiles. We still believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the only correct forum to negotiate a treaty on fissile materials, pursuant to a comprehensive and balanced programme of work agreed by the Conference. The meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts gave rise to no obligation and produced no reliable outcome documents, as the Group only reflects the opinions of participating countries.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.25, “The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”, we once again abstained in the voting because the conclusion of texts by States outside of the United Nations is a harmful approach to the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and leads to counterproductive outcomes. The Code of Conduct is selective and discriminatory and looks at the issue of proliferation from only one specific angle, without considering its root causes.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islam Republic of Iran): My delegation is taking the floor to explain its votes on draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.1, A/C.1/73/L.2 and A/C.1/73/L.25, as well as draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1 (see A/C.1/73/PV.26).

Iran voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.1, “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was proposed by Iran in 1974. Since then, no Member State has ever voted against the related annual resolution, and since the 1980s it has been adopted without a vote. The adoption by consensus of the resolution for 34 years is a clear expression of strong global support for the establishment of such a zone. The draft resolution recognizes the essential role of the United Nations, calls

on the regional party concerned to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and urges the nuclear-weapon States to cooperate in establishing a zone and, at the same time, to refrain from any action that runs counter to both the letter and the spirit of the draft resolution.

The breaking of the three-decade long consensus on the resolution by the United States exemplifies the unilateralism, reckless behaviour and decisions of a nuclear-weapon State that has assumed international commitments and responsibility to undertake all necessary measures for a prompt implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. It once again proves that the United States was not and is not a reliable party.

Iran also voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”. The draft resolution reflects the concern of the solid majority of States that the Israeli regime, as the only non-party to the NPT in the Middle East, represents the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region. Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.2 recognizes the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as an important measure to enhance peace and security in the region. We fully support paragraphs 5 and 6, which call on Israel to accede to the NPT without further delay, renounce its possession of nuclear weapons and place all its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Iran also voted in favour of draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”. That vote was based on our principled and consistent position, as well as on the following reasons.

First, the draft resolution is consistent with Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations, which allows regional arrangements to be concluded for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Secondly, it is consistent with article VII of the NPT, which recognizes the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories.

Thirdly, it is consistent with the resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 NPT Review Conference, which calls on all States of the region to

“take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards [...] the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.” (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex, para. 5)

Fourthly, it is consistent with the practical steps of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to pursue the prompt implementation of the 1995 resolution.

Fifthly, it recognizes the essential role of the United Nations to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

Sixthly, it calls for a consensus-based process aimed at elaborating a legally binding treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs.

Lastly, but not least, it reaffirms the special responsibility of the three sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

By voting against draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, the United States and Israel have exposed their hypocritical position on establishing a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. Despite their claims of committing to peace and security in the Middle East, in practice they reject any concrete international effort under the auspices of the United Nations for the establishment of that zone. They also brazenly refuse to participate in any process — even those based on consensus.

The adoption of the draft decision reaffirms that, in the view of the international community, nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime, which has committed acts of occupation, aggression and all four core international crimes, poses the most serious threat to the security of the Middle East, as well as to the non-proliferation regime. It also reaffirms that, in the view of the majority of States, the legal norms on nuclear disarmament and the prohibition and proliferation of nuclear weapons would be bolstered and world peace and security would be strengthened as a result of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

On draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.25, “The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”, since 2004, when the draft resolution was introduced for the first time, Iran has maintained a consistent position regarding The Hague Code of Conduct. In line with

that consistent position, my delegation once again voted against the draft resolution for the following reasons.

The Hague Code of Conduct is an offshoot of an exclusive and discriminatory export control regime, known as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), that imposes restrictions on many goods, equipment, technologies and know-how with peaceful applications. The Hague Code of Conduct is not and cannot be considered to be an internationally negotiated text. It was drafted and adopted outside of the United Nations by several MTCR participants in a selective, non-transparent and unbalanced manner. Even when other countries were invited to participate at the final stage of the process, almost none of their views was taken into account. The result of that flawed procedure is therefore crystal clear — a totally flawed Code of Conduct with serious substantive shortcomings.

While the existence and development of nuclear armed ballistic missiles are the main threat to regional and global security, The Hague Code of Conduct is totally silent regarding that threat and has failed to call for an end to the development of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles by possessor States. Accordingly, while The Hague Code of Conduct practically acknowledges the possession of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles by a few MTCR participants, it is aimed at discouraging others from possessing conventionally-armed ballistic missiles in exercise of their inherent right to security and self-defence.

The message that The Hague Code of Conduct sends is clear — certain States have the right to develop, possess and use ballistic missiles of any type, whereas other States, including those targeted by such missiles, must be prevented by all possible means from developing any type of conventionally armed ballistic missile, although there is no internationally accepted legal norm against the development and acquisition of ballistic missiles.

Another major shortcoming of The Hague Code of Conduct is that it deliberately fails to distinguish the difference between space launch vehicle programmes and ballistic missile programmes. As a result, the rights of emerging spacefaring nations in accessing the peaceful application of outer space, including access to the technology necessary for space launch vehicles, has been ignored in the text through the inclusion of restrictions and arbitrary conditions for assistance and cooperation in the area of space launch vehicles

for non-MTCR participants. Again, the message is clear — certain States may possess such technologies and other States, at best, have the right not to be excluded from the peaceful uses of outer space. In order to exercise that right, those States have no choice but to be dependent on those who possess such technologies.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation also joins all other delegations that have conveyed solidarity and condolences to the Chair of the First Committee.

I will be very brief. The Cuban delegation would like to have included in the record of the Committee's proceedings its intention to vote on the draft resolutions and their separate paragraphs, as well as the decisions, adopted at yesterday's meeting of the Committee, in accordance with the rules of procedure, and for that to be reflected in the reports of the Committee. We will also make our draft statements and explanations of vote before and after the voting available so that those can also be reflected in the proceedings of the Committee.

Ms. García Gutiérrez (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would ask you, Sir, to convey our best wishes to Ambassador Jinga and his family at this difficult time.

I am taking the floor in explanation of vote after the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.54, "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". Costa Rica has supported the draft resolution in the past. We believe that its spirit is positive and in line with our aspiration of a world free of nuclear weapons. However, on this occasion, as we did last year, we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. Despite the efforts made by the sponsor of the draft resolution, we believe that the text has been considerably weakened and reinterprets obligations made under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Moreover, we are concerned about long-term obligations and commitments on disarmament being seen as dependent on global security conditions. In that same vein, my country believes that the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons cannot be ignored and must be recognized as a fundamental instrument and a complementary part of the disarmament machinery. We hope that we will once again be able to support the text in the future. In the meantime, we remain open to constructive dialogue

and cooperation with Japan, the sponsor of the draft resolution, and all other Member States, with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament.

The Acting Chair: We have heard from the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting on cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons".

Before calling on those who have requested the right of reply, I would like to remind delegations that the interpreters will be released at 6.10 p.m. I would therefore invite representatives to use a language commonly understood by Committee members.

I would also like to remind all delegations that the first intervention for the right of reply is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the United States falsified information in his statement yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26), as always, while levelling accusations against others. The representative of the United States is the last person who should be levelling accusations against other countries. His country is undermining all international and multilateral efforts, not only in the areas of disarmament and international security, but also at all other levels, of which we are all aware. Is it not the United States that is withdrawing from international treaties and conventions? Is it not the United States that announced that it will withdraw from a treaty of great importance not only to nuclear States, but also to all the States of the world? That treaty — the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987 — is one of the most important in the area of nuclear disarmament.

The United States regime is doing everything it can to undermine international stability. It is officially proliferating nuclear weapons in five States, in breach of its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and unofficially in many other States, the names of which I shall not mention here. It would take a full month to list without details the violations committed by successive United States administrations against the Charter of the United Nations and international conventions.

The United States is helping Israel to develop its military, nuclear, chemical and biological programmes, in breach of all its commitments under the relevant treaties. The United States is also providing and supervising the transfer of toxic chemicals from outside

to inside Syria and territories controlled by the two terrorist groups Jabhat Al-Nusra and Da'esh, as well as other territories in Syria where United States troops are illegally stationed and occupying Syrian territories. We have already told those troops that they must leave as soon as possible.

For the information of Committee members, the United States has never attacked Da'esh. It has transferred its leaders from one place to another and is cooperating with its elements, some of whom are still with Da'esh. We can provide their names to the Committee. Some other elements have left Da'esh to work with United States troops there. It is scandalous and proven by audio and video that United States troops share sites with the terrorist group Da'esh and transport its leaders from one place to another via United States helicopters.

Two days ago, mass graves were found under rubble in Raqqa containing nearly 4,000 Syrian bodies, the majority of them women and children. Those graves account for only 2 per cent of the casualties. They are the result of the Washington-led illegitimate global coalition that has totally destroyed the Syrian city of Raqqa and killed thousands. We now have numbers. They are using all kinds of internationally prohibited weapons, most recently white phosphorus, exclusively against civilians. They lie when they say that they are fighting Da'esh. They have never fought Da'esh. If Committee members wish to learn the truth, they can search the Internet for the dates when aircraft of the so-called global coalition — the illegal coalition — and the United States dropped food, munition and weapons to Da'esh in both Iraq and Syria.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): I am taking the floor to exercise our right to reply with respect to explanations of vote that were delivered yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.26) and today on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.58, "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

This year's draft resolution reiterates the international community's repeated calls for the negotiation of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. It is Canada's strong view that CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein presents the necessary ambiguity with respect to the scope of a future treaty and does not prejudice the national positions of any particular State on that question.

From Canada's perspective, the scope of a future treaty, including the essential question of whether a future treaty's scope should include existing stockpiles of fissile material, can be addressed only through actual negotiations. We firmly believe that a decision on the scope of a future treaty should not be viewed as a precondition to the commencement of those negotiations. In line with that approach, Canada was extremely pleased that the consensus report (A/73/159) of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group outlined the range of potential options for a future treaty's scope, including numerous options for how a future treaty could address existing fissile material stockpiles. That reaffirms the importance of the preparatory group's consensus report, which we believe serves as an extremely useful foundation for future negotiations.

As we look to build upon the momentum of the preparatory group's work, I therefore urge all States, as outlined in the draft resolution which was supported by 180 nations in the First Committee yesterday, to support the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. That is the essential next step to realizing the long-standing objective of a treaty that would have concrete benefits for both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of the Israeli regime levelled several unfounded allegations against Iran, including allegations regarding Iran's methods of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

All IAEA reports confirm that Iran fully cooperates with the Agency, and the IAEA has access to any place and information that it requests to access. Iran is a responsible member of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, within the framework of its Safeguard Agreements and Additional Protocol with the IAEA, fully cooperates and is in full compliance with its obligations.

The Israeli regime cannot create a smokescreen to conceal the fact that Israel is the only non-party to the NPT and the source of proliferation for nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region. The allegations made by the Israeli regime have no credibility. Unfortunately, the officials of the regime are used to not only committing all international crimes that exist under international law, but also lying over and over again and crying wolf in international forums. The regime has not stopped turning over any stone and

telling any lie to prepare the ground for collapsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Iran is committed to its obligations and will continue to comply with its obligations under the NPT.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply in response to a number of statements that have been made.

I will try to be as brief as I can. I would first like to focus on the remarks made by the Russian representative. Russia's propaganda was clearly on full display not just today, but also yesterday. I must say that our friend who just arrived back from Moscow was quite entertaining, as he always is. Let me just state a couple of facts.

Russia's violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has been of great concern to my Government for the last five and a half years, since we first raised the issue with the Russian Federation. We have provided Russia with information and material that clearly prove its violation of the Treaty. Russia continues to deny its violation and falsely claim that the United States is the one in violation of the Treaty. After five and a half years of trying to encourage Russia to come back into compliance with the Treaty, my Government sees no other alternative than to begin the process of leaving the Treaty. It does not work if one party adheres to a treaty while the other party, in this case Russia, blatantly and openly violates it. That is not how security treaties are supposed to function. My country continues to call on Russia to return to compliance. However, based on Russia's unwillingness to seriously address United States concerns, the prospect of that appears very unlikely.

My colleague referred to strategic stability. Let us be clear. Russia's violations of not only the INF Treaty, but other treaties, have a real impact on strategic stability. He referred to the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Russia, along with certain other countries, tried to impose a one-sided, non-consensus outcome. We have said and will continue to say that we cannot support such an approach.

Regarding his comments about the United States supposedly forcing allies to adopt its positions, I would just note — and I am referring to United States allies in Europe — that those countries are democracies that make their own sovereign decisions and are responsible to their peoples. After losing a vote, I can simply say that my Government does not bang its fist on the table,

call countries cowards for not supporting its position and adopt a very threatening posture. I would ask my Russian colleague: Which delegation's representative did that last week? He knows which one. I would therefore submit to him that, before characterizing other countries as intimidating others, his country must look very closely in the mirror.

Regarding the remarks made by the Syrian representative, what more can one say? He comes to this room and continues to spout out lies and disinformation from Al-Assad's propaganda machine. Few in this room take what he says seriously. Syria has violated the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the NPT. It has repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people, for which the regime will be held accountable by the international community. He accused the United States of supporting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and says that he has a list of names. Really? Who believes this guy? That is all I can say.

Regarding the comments made by the representative of Iran, we are talking about the world's leading State sponsor of terrorism. That regime is in absolutely no position to criticize anyone about anything. It has no credibility. My Government will shortly be making it extremely difficult to finance terrorism; by reimposing sanctions on Iran, many countries will be safer than they have been from Iran's addictive reign of terror.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I welcome the fact that our American colleague has once again raised the problem of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. It gives me another opportunity to tell all members of the First Committee how things really stand.

The bilateral United States-Soviet Union INF Treaty established the Special Verification Commission, which met regularly. In 2003, we presented all our long-standing concerns to our American colleagues. Our American colleagues very well remember and understand those concerns. Our concerns then increased in number and, in principle, the demands that we were making were not undermining the Treaty that much. I will not repeat them here.

Everything changed dramatically when the United States deployed MK-41 multipurpose launch systems on European territory, which can be used to launch cruise intermediate-range missiles with nuclear capacities, in flagrant violation of the INF Treaty. Once we voiced

our concerns to the United States, it started sounding an alarm bell for real because it had no counter-argument to make. And then the United States started fabricating some kind of accusations against the Russian Federation with one claim after another. We have given exhaustive replies to all the accusations, and the United States is well aware that all its fabrications are baseless.

This is probably why we are seeing Washington's irresponsible decisions, which undermine the entire disarmament process and monitoring of armaments, on which our colleagues worked so carefully for decades as far back as in the time of Soviet-American confrontation, and then after the fall of the Soviet Union. It is all very sad, because such action is undermining international security and leading to a lack of strategic stability, and nothing is being offered in return.

Let us now look into the truth. Which country left the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty? Members know the answer. Which country refuses to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty? Members know the answer. Which country has continued to violate articles I and II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), regularly practicing so-called nuclear sharing in Europe — in other words, making it possible for non-nuclear States to practice nuclear strikes and equip themselves with the skills necessary for nuclear strikes against the territory of the Russian Federation? Members all know the answer to that. Which country has refused to abide by the Security Council resolution adopted on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action? Everyone here is well aware of the answer, so I do not need to name the country.

Those are bare facts — not fabrications marked as “highly likely”, as some of our Anglo-Saxon colleagues these days like to say. Those are confirmed facts, reaffirmed by the very activities of the United States. That is how our American partners act. We can only express one wish here — that the United States should acknowledge how harmful those activities are, so that our American partners can at least contribute something positive to the agenda, however little. It is possible to offer something positive to the agenda, is it not?

On the question of the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East, we must hold substantive dialogue instead of talking about how important such action is and then trying to undermine and uproot all the agreements made in that regard. The 2015 Review Conference clearly demonstrated that

the United States is not prepared to comply with the obligations it undertook in 1995, which is one of the factors undermining the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Of course, if a decision is taken by the United States to withdraw from the INF Treaty, that would open the way to unlimited power in the nuclear arms race desired by the United States and would constitute a direct violation of article VI of the NPT. As a result, the 2020 NPT Review Conference would have to address a great deal of baggage. Regrettably, our American partners will not acknowledge the significant harm that they are inflicting on themselves.

The discussions on this matter will not end here. There are likely to be very substantial discussions on this in a bilateral format, among the five nuclear Powers and, of course, here in the First Committee. I very much hope that reasoning and diplomatic skill, which our United States partners do indeed possess, will prevail. A great deal of headway was made over 10 years between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the related problems are well known. We hope that further progress will be made in the future. As an optimist, I believe that, on reflection, our American partners will find it in themselves to follow the path of normal dialogue and enjoy security that is available to all States on our planet.

The Acting Chair: I have been informed that we now have to release the interpreters. I therefore invite delegations to use a language that is understood by all to deliver all remaining statements.

I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic on a point of order.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic): Yesterday we continued until 6.30 p.m. and the interpreters stayed. Why have they been released today? Why has that decision been taken, and by whom? Why do we have to conduct our meetings in such a way that one day we sit here until 6.30 p.m. with full interpretation and the next day, when we are address certain issues, the interpreters are released? I will continue once those questions have been answered.

The Acting Chair: I was informed that the interpreters would have to leave today at 6.10 p.m., which has now come and gone. As an exception, yesterday we asked the interpreters to stay longer, to which they agreed, because we did not want to interrupt the voting procedure. I would ask the representative of

the Syrian Arab Republic to kindly proceed with his second intervention.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic): I am still speaking on a point of order. I asked several questions and did not receive an answer. Who made that decision yesterday? It is not the first time that the First Committee has continued its voting for a second consecutive day. Yet, somebody somehow decided that yesterday we would continue until 6.30 p.m. with interpretation and that today, instead, the interpreters, to whom we are thankful and grateful for all the work that they do, would have to leave. This is not the first time that the Committee has continued its voting procedure for a second day when a cluster is not yet finished. The records are there to demonstrate that. This is not our first year of membership in the Committee.

The Acting Chair: I believe that I already answered the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I was very clear.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his second intervention.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic): Is there interpretation, Mr. Chair?

The Acting Chair: I remind the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic that the interpreters have already been released. I ask him to kindly proceed with his second intervention.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic): With all respect to other delegations, from today onward, when the clock strikes 6 p.m. and the interpreters, to whom we are grateful and thankful for all their hard work, as I just said, have left, we should conclude our work. When I spoke to some Committee members who are sitting next to you, Sir, they said that they would not honour what I expressed in my intervention yesterday. I officially requested on the record (see A/C.1/73/PV.26) to take the floor to deliver our right of reply the following day, when interpretation would be available. Such behaviour is poor. We are setting precedents here. The First Committee is a very stable Committee and my delegation does not accept such action, as it sets bad precedents in the Committee.

Once again, the United States representative used terminology that is not acceptable or adequate. He used the phrase “Who believes this guy?” in his last intervention. I will just say to him that, when an individual communicates outside of diplomatic norms

and without diplomatic respect, that behaviour reflects on that same individual. If he is lost for words when trying to convey an argument to the Committee, I ask that we instead hear silence.

Everybody here is aware that the United States is fully involved with Da’esh. I ask my colleagues to simply search on the Internet for an interview with former Secretary of State Ms. Clinton, who said that her country, the United States, created the terror organizations Da’esh and the Al-Nusra Front. Nobody is therefore going to believe the representative of the United States when he comes here and claims the opposite of what was said by a United States official. I wanted to quote Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, who worked with former United States Secretary of State Colin Powell, but since I am now restricted to speaking in English, I am unable to.

In an interview with *The Real News Network*, a United States media outlet, on 11 September 2018 he said — and I will paraphrase as I cannot quote his exact words — that, even with all its intelligence on the ground, the United States has absolutely no proof that the Syrian Government has used chemical weapons. On the contrary, he said that they are aware of terrorist organizations having used them but are misusing the information to protect their proxies on the ground.

I would say to the representative of the United States that the current and previous United States Administrations are and were involved in supplying chemical materials and training to terrorist organizations in both Syria and one of its neighbouring countries. Moreover, they are demonstrating their belief in gender equality, because, if I am not mistaken, last year they sent two female experts in chemical warfare to Syria. We have footage of those experts and their names, but I will leave it up to my Government to decide when to release that kind of information. The United States therefore has no ground to stand on when it says that nobody believes us; we have full proof of the involvement of the United States Administration in training and supplying terrorist groups in Syria with chemical weapons and chemical materials.

Mr. Robotjazi (Iran): I will respond to what the United States representative said about Iran. It appears that what we said in our explanation of vote — namely, that the United States broke its three-decade long consensus on the draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the

Middle East (A/C.1/73/L.1) and that it is and was not a reliable party — has irritated the United States. Those facts are based on evidence.

I ask members to look at the actions of the United States Administration, which, among other things, has initiated its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Universal Postal Union and the 1955 Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations and Consular Rights between Iran and the United States. Moreover, it has withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Human Rights Council and UNESCO and has spurned and acted with arrogance towards its NATO allies, the Group of 20 and even the United Nations. It has started a global war, withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, undermined different bodies within the World Trade Organization, halted the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations and has declared war on the International Criminal Court. Those are the facts on which we made our assessment that the United States is not a reliable party. We hope that it can cure its addiction to breaking international law.

With regard to the representative's allegations of Iran's support for terrorism, we totally reject those claims. He wants to create a smokescreen around the death and destruction that the United States has brought to the region of the Middle East through its poor choices and policies over the past decades. I ask members to look to the United States support for war crimes and criminals in Israel and for those who are bombing Yemeni civilians with United States-supplied bombs and airplanes. The United States not only supplies bombs, but also provides the direct in-flight refuelling of aircraft and the intelligence used to conduct precision strikes targeting schools, hospitals and even school buses full of children.

Do those actions give the United States the moral high ground or credibility to chastise others in the United Nations? The United States representative has the arrogance and delusional belief that he has the moral high ground to do so. The United States has no credibility in doing that as long as it is complicit in death and destruction in the Middle East, for which the nations and people of the region will hold the United States accountable.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I hate to prolong the agony in this conference room, but with

regard to the comments made by the representative of the Al-Assad regime, I actually thought I was being diplomatic. I did not say what I really wanted to say. Let me be clear on that point.

With regard to the comments made by our colleague from the Russian Federation, he continually throws up the issue of the MK-41 launching systems. Russia is fully aware that we are not in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with regard to the MK-41 systems, as launches can be used only for defensive purposes. Russia knows that, but it is trying to create an issue where there is none. As I said earlier, we are not going to allow Russia to violate that Treaty without responding in some way.

I believe that he indirectly accused the United States of violating the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are not a party to that Treaty. I am not sure if he was referring to the CTBT or accusing us of conducting nuclear testing, which we have not done for quite some time.

As we have all heard before, he referred to the tired charge of NATO nuclear sharing and to the fact that the United States is committing violations of articles I and II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That has been put to bed. I submit to my Russian colleague that he needs to read the record of the negotiation of the NPT and he will find that his charges are baseless. Frankly, the United States position reflects the negotiating record of the Treaty.

Lastly, to my Russian colleague, he claims to want — I believe that is what he said — a better future. If my good friend wants a better future, then his country needs to stop violating treaties, redrawing borders in Europe by force and threatening its neighbours and other countries.

With regard to the comments made by the representative of Iran, he referred to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.1. I explained in my statement why the United States voted against the draft resolution, so I will not repeat that here. Iran talks about the United States withdrawing from this and that. Iran needs to do one fundamental thing — to withdraw from terror. The leading State sponsor of terror, as I said earlier, is in absolutely no position to criticize anyone for anything.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.