



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

First Committee

11th meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chair: I want to apologize for the delay. I would like to give everyone some information. On Friday the First Committee completed its general debate. In total, 135 delegations participated in the debate, exactly the same number as last year.

The Committee will now resume its consideration of its organizational matters.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I take the floor to once again return to the issue that our delegation raised at the organizational meeting on 3 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.1). Two and a half weeks have passed since then. We have a right to expect that in that time substantive changes would have occurred in the situation for which the United States authorities are to blame, by which I mean the removal of the obstacles preventing the free access of representatives of Member States to United Nations Headquarters so that they can participate in the work of its bodies. However, no progress in improving or resolving the situation has been made since then. I therefore feel obliged to provide a new overview of the state of affairs with regard to the United States fulfilment of its obligations under the 1947 Headquarters Agreement and the negative consequences that could result from a continuation of the discriminatory United States policy towards a number of States Members of the United Nations. I will go through this point by point.

First, the work of the United Nations and its bodies is based on the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. No State has a right to violate them or interpret them at its own discretion. One of those principles is that all agreements and treaties must be unconditionally implemented. We see a gross violation of that principle in the United States approacher to the founding Agreement between the United Nations and the host country. We can hardly speak of any kind of trust in interactions with the United States if for the past 30 years the American authorities have been trampling on the rights of Member States to fully participate in the activities of the organs of the United Nations, in spite of the clear stipulations in the provisions of the 1947 Headquarters Agreement.

Another important principle is the equality of all Member States. In breaching its obligations under the 1947 Agreement, the United States is shamelessly undermining that principle. The arbitrary visa policy of the United States authorities puts other countries at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the United States when it prevents them from sending their experts to United Nations events. The result is that Washington can easily round up a powerful team of experts to address any issue on the agenda of the First Committee, while other countries may be denied that opportunity at any time. That exacerbates their unequal position vis-à-vis the United States, already often incomparably worse owing to economic, social or domestic political problems. We believe that a situation in which the United States constantly abuses its obligations as a United Nations host country is categorically unacceptable.

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I emphasize that this is about obligations, which Washington has treated capriciously for some time, for reasons that are unclear. I recall that those obligations are linked to the privilege bestowed on the United States of hosting the United Nations, our shared home, on its territory. That privilege gives the host country a special responsibility to ensure the normal functioning of the Organization, which means enabling all Member States without exception to participate fully in the work of all its organs and bodies. The host country must therefore ensure that they have that opportunity unconditionally, whether it wants it or not and whether it likes it or not.

As far as we are concerned, this so-called visa problem represents Washington's total contempt for that responsibility. In this particular case, we are talking about a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear Power with, among other things, a special responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The legitimate question that raises is that, if the United States is so contemptuous of its status as host country, will it not be equally irresponsible in its approach to issues of peace and security? Although considering the experience that the end of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first have seen, that is probably a rhetorical question.

Second, I will now move from the general to the specific. Over the past two and a half weeks, we have seen no practical steps of any kind on the part of the United States to improve the situation regarding the issuance of visas to members of foreign delegations, including Russia's, that were supposed to participate in the work of the First Committee. Moreover, the latest meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country showed that the United States authorities are not going to change their position or revise their discriminatory visa policy, despite the fact that the issue is specific, urgent and based on a solid legal foundation.

During the meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the United States representative made it unambiguously clear that visas would not be issued for reasons of national security, thereby essentially blocking the Russian delegation and a number of others from participating fully. We find that the pronouncements that the issuance of visas to foreign representatives visiting to participate in meetings under United Nations auspices are contingent on national security concerns to be entirely unjustified, indeed strange. If the United States views the work of the United Nations and foreign representatives'

participation in it as a threat to its national security, then it is time to raise the issue of moving the Headquarters of the Organization out of New York to some other city. Until now, all States Members of the United Nations have considered the Organization to be one of the most important multilateral mechanisms for formulating measures to maintain international peace and ensure global security. And for some incomprehensible reason, only the United States claims that it represents a danger to itself.

Third, over the past two and a half weeks, we have been actively supported by States whose representatives have also been victims of the discriminatory visa policy of the United States, and many delegations have expressed their sympathy with and understanding of our position. I also want to thank those who have supported the position of the Russian Federation in every way and those who have been genuinely sympathetic. However, we raised the issue of United States compliance with its obligations under the 1947 Agreement not to seek understanding or sympathy but so that, together with our colleagues in this most authoritative United Nations Committee, we could declare our categorical disagreement with a discriminatory policy of the United States.

We have called, and continue to call, on all of our colleagues in the Committee to send an unequivocal message to the United States about the unacceptability of its policy and our unwillingness to tolerate Washington's determination to ignore its obligations under the 1947 Agreement. If delegations do not respond to our appeal and refrain from expressing their disagreement with the United States destructive and discriminatory policy, that could have tragic consequences for our multilateral disarmament mechanism. If we fail to show firmness and determination on the issue, we will be consenting to the idea that the United States can continue to arbitrarily impose its views and put unprecedented pressure on any State that disagrees with it. We cannot permit such a scenario.

I want to emphasize once again that we have been forced to take the step of addressing the First Committee because the situation concerning the issuance of visas to foreign representatives has recently deteriorated dramatically. I can confirm that sad fact just through the example of my own delegation. Last year only one expert was denied an American visa, although he was a key member of the Russian delegation, Konstantin Vorontsov, a Counsellor from our Ministry for Foreign

Affairs directly involved in multilateral disarmament issues, including the First Committee. This year eight people were refused visas, that is, almost half our delegation, and not just Foreign Ministry staff but also representatives from the Ministry of Defence and Roskosmos, the State space activities corporation, who were supposed to participate in the thematic discussions, events on the margins of the First Committee and consultations on draft resolutions. With regard to the underrepresentation of the Russian delegation at the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session as a whole, 18 people were denied United States visas.

Against the backdrop of such a targeted attack on the Russian delegation, the proposals by our United States colleagues that we work together on joint draft resolutions on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space and international cybersecurity look like a cynical mockery. Their willingness to send their so-called teams of specialists to New York for that is particularly perplexing. In other words, they are forcing us to play a one-sided game in which the United States has overwhelming advantages both numerically and in terms of expertise. To quote a famous Russian sports commentator, "We can do without that kind of hockey."

By exerting this visa pressure on other States, thereby influencing the staffing of their delegations and their ability to engage in a constructive, in-depth, substantive dialogue on the most urgent issues on the First Committee's agenda, the United States of America is directly and purposefully undermining the work of this United Nations body. By ignoring our appeals and calls to resolve the situation as soon as possible, the United States is blocking the work of the First Committee, and that is a fact that it cannot dismiss, as it has been doing with regard to its obligations under the 1947 Agreement. We have appealed to the First Committee to send a strong message to the American authorities on behalf of the 193 delegations to the effect that we utterly and categorically reject the United States visa policy.

Fourth, behind the scenes here it has been suggested that the so-called visa issue is a purely bilateral one, an opinion that is politically and legally groundless. The United States, not Russia, is the host country of the United Nations. It was not Russia, but the United States, that voluntarily assumed the obligation under the 1947 Agreement to host Headquarters. No one forced it to do so. It is not Russia, but the United States,

that is obliged to ensure foreign representatives' free access to United Nations Headquarters. The Russian delegation did not come to New York for bilateral get-togethers with American colleagues, but to consider urgent and sensitive international security issues with other Member States in a multilateral format.

In this particular case, the Russian Federation is speaking on behalf and in support of a large group of States that have suffered from the arbitrariness of the United States authorities. I will not repeat the numbers and timelines that were announced during the meeting on 15 October of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. I will simply say that the indifference that the United States has shown for several decades in response to the legitimate requests of Member States is simply shocking. This state of affairs is intolerable and we do not intend to put up with it any longer. We will continue to make every effort to ensure that the United States changes its attitude to its own obligations under the 1947 Agreement, and for that we are counting on the collective support of the rest of the Member States. Only the United States can resolve the visa problem. The American authorities must fully understand all the consequences of the path they have chosen as a general policy towards other States Members of the United Nations that for whatever reasons Washington finds undesirable.

Fifth, over the past two and a half weeks we have heard from various quarters that the First Committee is not the appropriate platform for raising and discussing the visa problem. We have been told that by several members of other delegations and by representatives of the Secretariat and civil society. I agree that the mandate of the First Committee does not provide for discussion of issues that fall within the purview of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. However, we had not planned on discussing visa issues, let alone planning on or intending to deal with clarifying our relations with anyone here. We raised the question of the effective functioning of the First Committee, which is hindered by the discriminatory visa policy of the United States and, in a broader context, by the contempt shown by the United States authorities for their obligations under the 1947 Agreement. We talked about the normalization of the work of the First Committee two weeks ago, and we are talking about it now.

I would like to remind my colleagues that, in accordance with document A/C.1/74/1, and besides the substantive issues on its agenda, the Committee's

mandate includes the question of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. Ensuring the effective work of the First Committee and facilitating a thorough discussion of all the substantive issues on its agenda is fully consistent with that General Assembly agenda item. We consider it a fundamental issue that directly concerns the future of the First Committee and the future of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. It will be impossible to take any worthwhile decisions if the work of one of our Organization's key Committees is consistently being undermined by a single State — one to which we have granted authority with regard to the United Nations. I would like to point out that it is not the first time we have seen the United States attempt to destabilize the work of one of the elements in the international multilateral disarmament mechanism of the United Nations. Throughout the 2018 and 2019 sessions of the Conference on Disarmament the United States sabotaged that forum's work during its Syrian and Venezuelan presidencies.

Sixth, any attempt to accuse Russia of blocking the work of the First Committee is absurd. Like an overwhelming majority of delegations, we are vitally interested in a constructive, impartial, comprehensive and objective discussion of the Committee's agenda. As a permanent member of the Security Council, the Russian Federation is fully aware of its responsibility for arriving at solutions to the most pressing problems in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, which in turn should help to strengthen international peace and security. The seriousness of our interest in the normal work of the First Committee was affirmed by the original composition of our delegation, which in addition to representatives from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs included experts from other Russian ministries and agencies. We prepared for a substantive and professional dialogue with every other delegation, without exception, on the entire First Committee agenda. However, by not issuing visas to half of our delegation the United States authorities have severely restricted our ability to participate in such a dialogue.

Yet more proof of our desire to participate actively and productively in the work of the First Committee at the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly is our introduction of four draft resolutions and one draft decision, as well as our readiness to discuss drafts of similar documents submitted by other States. Besides that, we welcomed the efforts of delegations to overcome procedural difficulties and to engage in

discussions on the substantive agenda. We agreed to holding the general debate so that States could exercise their right to speak about the issues that are priorities for them and that they believe should be resolved as soon as possible in order to maintain international peace and regional and global security. Neither were any obstacles created to delegations formally submitting their draft resolutions and draft decisions for the First Committee's consideration.

All of that is serious proof of Russia's commitment to the effective functioning of the United Nations multilateral disarmament mechanism. There is therefore no reason to accuse us of blocking or undermining the work of the First Committee. We are ready to discuss with other delegations and determine the directions of the joint efforts of the international community in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, making full use of the potential of the First Committee to that end.

Seventh, the principle of consensus has traditionally been key to the First Committee's consideration of organizational and procedural matters. Any vote at the initial stages of the Committee's work has always been considered out of the normal way and not conducive to maintaining a favourable atmosphere for substantive discussion. We fully agree with that approach. The Committee's programme of work should be adopted by consensus, but that is possible only if no factors, including external factors, are hindering the start of its substantive work. But even in such extreme circumstances we should still strive for consensus, because its absence will become another sign of a deep crisis in such a crucial area to international security as arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

We have been seeing another sign of this crisis for several years now. I am referring to the annual decrease in the number of draft resolutions that the First Committee adopts by consensus. Last year that number was fewer than half of the total, and this year it could be even lower. The only people who can be interested in this kind of crisis are those who are taking destructive steps to undermine the entire international security architecture by any means possible. In order to prevent this crisis from worsening, the Russian delegation is ready to work closely with other delegations to seek a compromise for continuing our joint substantive work in the First Committee.

I have just a little more to say. If the United States does not take advantage of the breathing space that we can offer it, the Russian Federation will be obliged to firmly insist on moving the work of both the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission to Vienna or Geneva. Neither are we opposed to considering any other venues for these forums, as long as they have the necessary infrastructure for their work. In our view this is the only possible solution to the problem of access for foreign representatives to United Nations events if the United States continues to refuse to take any real measures to resolve the visa issue.

I would like to ask those who have any doubts about this initiative if they are prepared to guarantee that the United States will end its discriminatory policy in the very near future and issue visas to all the members of the delegations that are about to arrive in New York to participate in a series of very important international events, particularly the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, the next session of the Disarmament Commission and the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Is the Secretariat prepared to guarantee that the current situation regarding access to United Nations Headquarters will not be repeated during the next session of the First Committee, and that all experts sent from our countries' capitals will be able to attend all of those events?

I would like to recall our request that the First Committee be given an accounting of the efforts that the Secretariat has made to resolve the visa problem, as well as concrete proposals to rectify it. We also asked the Secretariat to give an unambiguous assessment of the discriminatory policy of the United States vis-à-vis the delegations of other States. So far we have seen no report with proposals and no assessment. We hope that this misunderstanding will be resolved during the meeting with Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. The Russian delegation insists on that, since we have seen no visible results from the Secretariat's efforts to resolve the visa problem. If the High Representative is unable to resolve our concerns, then let the Secretary-General himself address the Committee about all these problems.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Chair, and to my colleagues, and I would like to thank the interpreters for their excellent and professional work.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I will be brief. The issue of visas is being actively dealt with by the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. Let me simply say that this process has to play out.

The Chair: We all understand the current situation in the Committee. The Bureau has made efforts to reach out to other actors as well as to various delegations in order to solve the problem. In the past two weeks we have managed to have our general debate, but it is my belief, and that of the Bureau, that our work should continue as soon as possible. We have a proposal, which I will explain.

The Committee will now consider document A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.2 before taking action on it. I note that this revised text outlines the change of dates for the general debate, the thematic discussions and the joint panel discussion with the Fourth Committee, as well as the cancellation of meetings originally identified as "if needed and/or services are available". In view of our consultations and the statement just made by the representative of the Russian Federation, I propose to defer consideration of the agenda items entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly" and "Programme planning" until 7 or 8 November, when the Committee will have completed its consideration of all proposals under all the other agenda items, including of course, taking action on draft resolutions and draft decisions. That is my proposal.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to ask you, Mr. Chair, to repeat the proposal that you have just made. Have I properly understood that we are now agreeing on a document that is a new version of the provisional programme of work, including the adoption of draft resolutions, after which we will interrupt our substantive work and return to organizational and procedural matters before we consider agenda items 19 and 20 of document A/C.1/74/1?

The Chair: Let me clarify. The proposal is to adopt the entire provisional programme of work except for agenda items 121, entitled "Revitalization of the work of

the General Assembly”, and 136, entitled “Programme planning”. That is to say, we would adopt the whole provisional programme of work except for those two items. And, of course, once we have taken action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions, we will go back to organizational matters and discuss the adoption of the two remaining agenda items. That is the proposal.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Chair. I think that proposal is acceptable to the Russian Federation.

The Chair: May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the provisional programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.2, as orally revised, with the understanding that the Committee may adjust the programme of work and timetable as necessary?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I shall now proceed to consider the draft indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/74/CRP.2/Rev.2. Delegations will note that the document has been updated to reflect a new schedule of meetings for the thematic segment of the work of the Committee.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the draft indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/74/CRP.2/Rev.2 on the understanding that the Committee may adjust the timetable as necessary?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to explain the position of my delegation with regard to the adoption of the programme of work.

At the First Committee’s organizational meeting (see A/C.1/74/PV.1) and on several other occasions, I have made it known that, owing to the host country’s non-compliance with its obligations under the Headquarters Agreement and the Charter of the United Nations, my delegation has become a victim of the United States irresponsible behaviour, not just with regard to the issuance of visas for Iranian representatives but also because of the severe restrictions that have been imposed on our delegation. In order to address those

issues, we felt compelled to find a solution to these problems. The fact is that we have no desire to disturb the peaceful atmosphere of the Committee’s work or interfere with its progress. We have, rather, tried to draw your attention, Mr. Chair, and that of our other colleagues, to a serious matter that has endangered the rule of law. Because of that intrusion, my delegation is unable to exercise its duty of representing the Islamic Republic of Iran. What has happened is that the process of adopting the programme of work has been disturbed, despite the fact that we have no problem with the programme itself.

Because of the discriminatory policy of the United States, the members of the Iranian delegation sent to participate in United Nations meetings are faced with illegal and undiplomatic bans and behaviour. They have been subjected to intense intimidation and policies of harassment. Iranian diplomats will have access to only three buildings in New York City — the United Nations Headquarters, the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations and the residence of the Permanent Representative. There is no hotel in the designated area for the Iranian delegation, and even accommodations for visiting diplomats require that the host country grant a waiver. That is a flagrant violation of the Headquarters Agreement. If the Committee proceeded based on the programme of work and without taking my delegation’s urgent and special situation into account, it would be disregarding the Charter. This is the United Nations, not the United Nations of the powerful and privileged. The United Nations has been based on the sovereign equality of its Member States since its founding. I do not want to go into detail about precisely which obligations the United States has violated and where. All I want is for the Committee to look at the Preamble to the Charter, which says

“to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small”.

In the past two months the host country has sent two notes to our Mission imposing unprecedented and shocking restrictions on our Mission personnel. It has limited the movement of the members of our Permanent Mission to a small area in Manhattan and Queens, reducing the total travel distance permitted from the previously designated 20-to-25 miles to less than three miles, restricting the movement of Iranian diplomats

currently assigned to the Mission to a three-mile radius from their current residential addresses during a 12-month transitional period. As a result, their freedom of movement is extremely limited, and they have been denied access to the basic requirements necessary for a decent life and deprived of a normal life. It might seem unbelievable, but it is true. The host country has even rejected every waiver that we have requested for access to universities and doctors, hospitals and medical records, and it has endangered our fundamental human rights. The procedure for requesting waivers is insulting and severely infringes on the right to privacy, thereby violating United States law. For example, it is inappropriate that diplomats have to reveal the purpose of their doctor visits to the United States State Department. Nevertheless, when a request for a waiver was submitted, it was rejected.

Article 105 of the Charter of the United Nations specifies that the ability of Member States to independently exercise their United Nations-related functions is an indispensable condition for the work of the Organization. It stipulates that

“[r]epresentatives of the Members of the United Nations and officials of the Organization shall similarly enjoy such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions in connection with the Organization.”

Today the host country has seriously violated its various obligations, including under the Charter, and has seriously jeopardized our Mission’s independent exercise of its functions in connection with the Organization through its systematic attempts to silence our Mission by restricting our colleagues who come to New York and imposing crippling restrictions that affect the normal functioning of our Mission as well as our private lives. Everyone in this room is aware of those severe, inhuman, unprecedented, shocking and humiliating restrictions, which in reality are not restrictions but harassment. If anyone has not seen the list of restrictions, I have copies available. How can the Iranian delegation independently perform its functions under such intense pressure? The host country has not only denied access to universities, hospitals and family doctors, it also links the movement of Iranian diplomats to bilateral issues. All of these unlawful measures show that the city of the United Nations Headquarters has been used as political leverage against my country. According to Article 2 of the Charter,

“The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.”

Is the host country fulfilling its obligations to my delegation? By violating those obligations, it has deprived my delegation of the benefits that derive from membership. We call on the Secretary-General to bring this case to arbitration in accordance with section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement. We have sent him two official letters in that regard that are still awaiting a response.

The status of Permanent Missions does not permit measures of reprisal on the part of the host country. Since Permanent Missions belong to the United Nations, and not to the host country, they may not be made the subject of bilateral conflicts between the States sending Missions and the host country. That is affirmed by General Assembly resolutions and has been the consistent position of the United Nations Secretariat with regard to such restrictions. Today every single Member State has a moral imperative to stand up against such restrictions. That is the only way to defend the United Nations and preserve the rule of law. Hosting the United Nations is an enormous privilege with certain responsibilities. Granting the necessary diplomatic privileges and immunities, including the prompt issuance of visas, is not a favour but a responsibility of the host country. We are requesting nothing but the establishment of our rights under the Charter, the Host Country Agreement and all the relevant international instruments. My delegation appeals to all our colleagues to send a strong message to the host country through decisions that contribute to genuine and complete multilateralism without violating the legitimate and legal rights of any delegation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I apologize for taking the floor again. I would simply like to clarify the position of my country concerning your proposal, Mr. Chair.

We agreed to it first and foremost because, unlike the United States, we fully understand our responsibility for international peace and security as a nuclear-weapon State and a member of the Security Council. We agreed to support your proposal today, Sir, based exclusively on those considerations. I once again underscore that we

will continue to focus intense attention on the matter of the compliance of the United States with its obligations under the 1947 Headquarters Agreement.

The Chair: I would like to thank all delegations for their patience and flexibility.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your efforts to enable us to reach an agreement regarding the provisional programme of work, which you have orally revised. Thanks to the discriminatory policies of the host country of the United Nations Headquarters, the work of the First Committee has been disrupted this year, the first time that we have seen such behaviour aimed at disrupting the Committee's work. It is regrettable that the host country is violating the Headquarters Agreement and the Charter of the United Nations with regard to ensuring the ability of Member States' delegations to reach United Nations Headquarters. The Charter clearly states that all States have equal rights. The claims that the visa problem is a bilateral issue are unacceptable. Member States did not sign the Headquarters Agreement bilaterally with the United States. It was signed by the Secretary-General with the host country on behalf of the United Nations. The host country should therefore honour its responsibilities pursuant to the 1947 Headquarters Agreement.

Mrs. Llano (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would first like to convey Nicaragua's appreciation for all your efforts to resolve this situation, Sir, and we agree with the path that we are taking, as you have defined it.

However, we would like to note that we deplore this situation, given the failure that we have seen to comply with the United Nations Headquarters Agreement through a refusal to grant visas to First Committee delegations, thereby infringing on the right of the States Members of the United Nations to participate on an equal footing and without discrimination. We call on the host country to reflect on the situation with a view to reaching a solution.

We express our solidarity with the countries affected by these arbitrary measures. Nicaragua firmly believes in the principle of equal rights and the equal sovereign right of all Member States.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba would also like to express its support for all the Chair's efforts to reach a solution to the issue of adopting the programme of work and the indicative timetable for the work of the First Committee. We have firmly supported your proposal, Sir, as it presents us with no difficulties. However, we would also like to reiterate the position of our delegation.

Cuba reiterates its deep concern about the host country's repeated failure to comply with the Headquarters Agreement, particularly sections 11, 12, 13 and 27, regarding the granting of visas and facilities for access to the United Nations Headquarters in New York, as well as with the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. As a Member that has been repeatedly affected in that regard, we have expressed our concerns about the host country's delays and refusals in granting visas for the relevant forums, as well as the unilateral and politically motivated restrictions imposed on the freedom of movement in New York City, and so far with no solutions aimed at improving or resolving the situation. Deliberate efforts to affect the ability of Member States to represent themselves in United Nations meetings are an affront to multilateralism and to the full and effective functioning of the Organization and its Main Committees.

The United States is responsible for hindering the start of the substantive work of the First Committee. It is a sovereign decision and exclusive prerogative of every State to decide on the composition of its official delegation for the Organization's meetings. The United States must stop interfering with that and abusing its prerogatives. We cannot accept any violation of the legitimate right of any Member State to participate on an equal footing and without discrimination in the work of the General Assembly, including the First Committee and its subsidiary organs. Refusing and delaying visas is not a bilateral issue. Cuba rejects the United States selective and arbitrary implementation of the Headquarters Agreement in order to prevent or restrict the participation in the United Nations of certain delegations of Member States and to affect their freedom of movement in this city in a discriminatory and deliberate manner.

As evidence of its commitment, Cuba will participate actively and constructively in the work of the First Committee, and we urge delegations to do the same. All Member States at this Headquarters must

oppose the United States unilateral policies and send a clear message that they will not be accepted.

Ms. Rodríguez Martínez (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela appreciates the efforts that you and the rest of the Bureau are making, Mr. Chair, in order to advance the work of the First Committee, despite the great complexities we are dealing with. Many of those efforts are aimed at ensuring that we can conclude the general debate, make progress on the thematic discussions and preserve a consensus on the adoption of the programme of work, which is very important to our delegation. All of that is being done using dialogue to resolve the difficult situation that we are facing at this session owing to the unilateral actions of a single delegation, which is abusing its prerogatives under the Headquarters Agreement.

Venezuela deeply regrets that there has still been no response to some delegations' requests to participate equally in the Committee. We reiterate that, if we are to preserve the Organization, we must correct any malicious practices that undermine the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially regarding the principle of the sovereign equality of States. That is why Venezuela rejects the increasing tendency for the host country to make political use of its powers to hinder the issuance of visas to members of delegations coming from capitals to participate in the work of the Organization. We reiterate and underscore the right of all Member States to form their delegations in a sovereign manner, and the duty of the host country to provide the necessary facilities and access to United Nations Headquarters, regardless of the relations between the Governments of those countries and the Government of the United States, in accordance with the Headquarters Agreement.

In the past few days we have had an opportunity to hear many arguments justifying or criticizing the actions of the host country, as well as the failure of various countries to make serious accusations. That is why we believe that it is important to understand that the issuance of visas, far from being a merely procedural issue, is an essential element that defines and determines our delegations' participation in the negotiation processes in this Committee. Attempts have also been made to persuade the membership that this is about the alleged internationalization of a bilateral issue. Accepting that argument would mean that the implementation of the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement is contingent on countries' bilateral relations

with the United States, which runs entirely counter to what that instrument establishes.

In conclusion, Venezuela underscores the support for the decision that has been made in order to ensure that the work of the Committee can continue, thereby safeguarding consensus. We once again thank you for your efforts, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Tozik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We support your proposal, Mr. Chair, to continue with the work of the First Committee and to adopt a draft programme for our work. It is a rational decision that will enable the Committee's work to continue. We believe that this decision should not remove from the agenda the very important question of delegations' access to the First Committee's work, and we share the concerns that a number of delegations have expressed in that regard. We believe that the functioning of the Committee and every other body of the General Assembly should be based on the host country's strict and direct compliance with its obligations. We hope that all further procedural matters related to the continuing work of the First Committee will be adopted by consensus, as they should be.

The Chair: I would like to draw the Committee's attention to agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", and to rule 99 (a) of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

"All the Main Committees shall, at least three months before the opening of the session, elect a Chairman. Elections of the other officers provided for in rule 103 shall be held at the latest by the end of the first week of the session."

In that connection, and as noted in document A/C.1/74/INF/4, the General Assembly, in its resolution 72/313, adopted on 17 September 2018, established a pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees for the forthcoming 10 sessions of the General Assembly, namely, from the seventy-fourth to the eighty-third sessions. In accordance with the annex to that resolution, the Chair of the First Committee will be nominated by the Group of Western European and other States for the seventy-fifth session. In the light of that provision, I would like to propose that the First Committee consider that item sometime in May or June 2020, about three months before the opening of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)**Thematic discussions on specific subjects and introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items**

The Chair: The Committee will now begin the second phase of its work, namely, thematic discussions on specific subjects and introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee. In accordance with established practice, our discussions during this segment of our work will focus on specific issues grouped under the following seven agreed clusters: “Nuclear weapons”, “Other weapons of mass destruction”, “Outer space (disarmament aspects)”, “Conventional weapons”, “Other disarmament measures and international security”, “Regional disarmament and security” and “Disarmament machinery”.

In view of the Committee’s severe time crunch, for reasons that we are all aware of, and in order to finish its work within its allocated time period and services, the Bureau has agreed that the Committee will have to shorten the time available to each delegation for statements in the thematic discussions, as well as for statements delivered in exercise of the right of reply. It is proposed that, for thematic discussions, statements made in a national capacity will be limited to three minutes and statements on behalf of groups of States to five minutes. We also encourage States to limit their statements in exercise of the right of reply to five minutes and three minutes, respectively, for the two interventions. Those proposals are made bearing in mind the time needed to exhaust the list of speakers and the discontinuance of services provided to meetings past 6 p.m., due to the liquidity crisis facing the United Nations.

The Committee will now proceed to take decisions on the proposals, one by one.

I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for requesting the floor, but this issue relates to First Committee arrangements. We understand the situation that the First Committee is experiencing. However, what we are doing is changing the modalities of the Committee’s work, which is likely to affect it in future. We have been, and will continue to

be, among the States that support consensus adoption, even when it comes to the provisional programme of work.

I again apologize for requesting the floor on this issue. New time limits are now being imposed on us. The Secretariat has been distributing information papers to us indicating, for example, that the time allowed for delivering statements is eight minutes. I do not believe that we ever agreed that the time limit for statements should be five or eight minutes. However, what the papers should have said is that States are encouraged to keep to five or eight minutes. The papers that indicated eight minutes for the time limit should have explained that what we are doing is only a temporary arrangement for this session. If we see a repetition of this arrangement at the next session, then it would be as if the arrangement were a decision adopted by the Committee.

The Chair: This proposal does not set a precedent. If there are objections to these proposals, we will not move forward. But it is the duty of the Bureau to propose them because of the time constraints that we have. All services will end at 6 p.m. We have lost several meeting periods, and we may not have enough time as scheduled. But it is up to Member States to decide to accept those proposals or not. I will go through them one by one. If there are objections, we will not move forward. If there is consensus on a proposal, then we will adopt it, as I said, without setting a precedent and based only on the specific situation that we are dealing with today.

I will therefore now ask the Committee to take decisions on the proposals, one by one.

As an exceptional measure and without setting any precedent, may I take it that it is the wish of the Committee to restrict statements in the thematic discussions to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes for group statements?

It was so decided.

The Chair: As an exceptional measure and without setting any precedent, may I take it that it is the wish of the Committee that statements in the exercise of right of reply be limited to five minutes and three minutes, respectively, for the two interventions?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I thank all delegations for their goodwill and understanding in allowing those exceptional

measures in order to enable the Committee to complete its work within the time and resources allocated to it.

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

I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.31.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM reiterates its concern about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, as well as the lack of progress shown by nuclear-weapon States in eliminating their nuclear weapons. NAM is concerned about the plans by nuclear-weapon States to modernize their nuclear arsenals, including with new delivery vehicles, as provided for in the military doctrines of some nuclear-weapon States, including the latest United States Nuclear Posture Review, which set out rationales for the use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We are concerned about the fact that the strategic dialogue among nuclear-weapon States has remained limited and that there are no negotiations under way for further strategic nuclear-arms reductions beyond the expiration of the New START Treaty in 2021, and we call for the renewal of the commitments agreed to within the framework of the Treaty. We are also concerned about the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and its serious implications for international peace and security, as well as for efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

Reaffirming its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which remains the highest disarmament priority agreed on for the United Nations, NAM encourages the nuclear-weapon States to comply with their legal obligations and undertakings as a matter of urgency and to totally eliminate their nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. Any modernization or extensions of their nuclear-weapon-related facilities should also cease immediately. Until total elimination is achieved, the conclusion of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument for effectively assuring all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be a high priority. A United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, as

decided on in General Assembly resolutions, should be convened. NAM also notes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and hopes that when it enters into force it will help to further the global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. Both are mutually reinforcing and essential. NAM emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. NAM States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regret the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite efforts by NAM delegations. We call on the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate the political will needed to enable the 2020 Review Conference to produce concrete recommendations on achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT.

In welcoming the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which will convene its first session in November under the chairmanship of Jordan, NAM calls on all the States of the region to participate actively in the Conference, negotiate in good faith and conclude a legally binding treaty on establishing such a zone.

NAM reiterates its firm belief that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, have access to, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of every State to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. It is the sovereign right of every State to define its national energy policies. Any decisions on multilateral approaches to nuclear fuel cycles should be made by consensus.

NAM recognizes that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety and security rests with individual States. Any multilateral norms, guidelines or rules on nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. NAM continues to note with concern that undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes persist, and we

emphasize that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and security must not be used as a pretext or as leverage to violate, deny or restrict the inalienable right of developing countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

NAM also stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), especially by all nuclear-weapon States, which should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament, among other things. We are concerned about the decision of the United States not to seek ratification of the CTBT, as announced in its 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, taking into account the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States for realizing the CTBT's entry into force.

Mr. Horne (Australia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

In conclusion, NAM is submitting draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.31, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", to update the follow-up action pursuant to that meeting. We would appreciate the support of all Member States in that regard.

Lastly, while noting the statements by nuclear-weapon States regarding their intention to pursue actions aimed at achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, NAM reaffirms how important it is that they take concrete actions as soon as possible to achieve that goal, in accordance with their legal obligations and commitments related to nuclear disarmament. NAM remains committed to cooperating for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Acting Chair: I appreciate that a lot of delegations will be adjusting to the recently updated time frame. We will therefore cut everyone a little bit of slack to the extent that we can. Just do not tell the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.20.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Egypt.

As mentioned at the general debate, the New Agenda Coalition has once again submitted its draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.20, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of

nuclear disarmament commitments". The text of the draft resolution has been circulated to all delegations. I would like to take this opportunity to speak to its key elements.

The issue of nuclear disarmament has been high on the international agenda since the General Assembly's adoption in January 1946 of its very first resolution, resolution 1 (I). NAC firmly believes that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We are committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world and are actively contributing to achieving that goal. The New Agenda Coalition's draft resolution therefore addresses a number of nuclear-disarmament issues on which progress is essential if we are to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In introducing the NAC draft resolution, I want to highlight that, given the lack of progress on the implementation of long-standing nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments, much of the text is unchanged from previous NAC resolutions. Although NAC looks forward to a time when that will no longer be the case, for the time being we are obliged to continue our focus on the fulfilment of existing obligations.

The draft resolution reiterates that each article of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is binding on the States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and that all States parties should be held fully accountable for complying strictly with their obligations under the Treaty. It calls on all States parties to fully comply with all decisions, resolutions and commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We continue to work for the universalization of the NPT and the full implementation of its obligations, particularly nuclear disarmament and the subsequent commitments agreed to at its Review Conferences in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

The draft resolution reiterates deep concern about the potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, including their gendered impact, and calls on Member States to give due prominence to the humanitarian imperatives that underpin nuclear disarmament and to the urgency of achieving that goal. It recommends that measures be taken to increase awareness in civil society of the risks and catastrophic impact of any nuclear detonation, including through disarmament education.

The draft resolution calls on the nuclear-weapon States to take every step necessary to accelerate the fulfilment of their commitments, including their commitment to undertaking further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons. It urges nuclear-weapon States to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems as an interim measure and encourages them to make concrete reductions in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, pending their total elimination.

The draft resolution highlights concerns related to the rising tensions in international relations and the increased prominence that some States are giving to nuclear weapons in their security doctrines, including through modernization programmes. In that regard, the draft resolution also encourages all States that are part of regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their collective security doctrines, pending their total elimination. It also encourages further steps by all nuclear-weapon States to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material designated by each nuclear-weapon State as no longer required for military purposes, and calls on all States to support the development of appropriate nuclear-disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency, thereby ensuring that such material remains permanently outside military programmes in a verifiable manner.

With respect to the Middle East, the draft resolution urges the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to exert every possible effort with a view to ensuring the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as soon as possible, as provided for in the resolution, including through the Secretary-General's convening of a conference as soon as possible for the States of the Middle East to formulate a treaty establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the resolution, and acknowledges decision 73/546 of the General Assembly, which charges the Secretary-General with convening such a conference.

In line with the new time frame, I will stop here. The full text of my statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart.

Mrs. Mills (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and to offer our perspectives on the agenda item under consideration. Our full statement will be available on PaperSmart.

CARICOM is alarmed by the continued reliance on, and prevalence of, nuclear weapons as a feature of security and military doctrines. The situation is made even more disconcerting by the obvious trend towards abandoning long-standing principles that have guided the international community's approach to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For CARICOM, it is imperative that the international community accelerate its efforts towards nuclear-disarmament commitments and fully abide by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that reiterated the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

That overwhelming concern animated CARICOM's active engagement in the negotiations that culminated in the successful adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. A special Caribbean Regional Forum on the Treaty was convened in June Georgetown, Guyana, bringing representatives from all over the region to discuss ways of furthering support for it. It culminated in the adoption of the Georgetown Statement and a reaffirmation of CARICOM's commitment to the Treaty. In addition, we are pleased to announce that, during last month's Treaty ceremony here at the United Nations, Dominica, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis signed the Treaty, with Trinidad and Tobago acceding via ratification. Since that time, Dominica has become the thirty-third country to ratify the Treaty, bringing the total number of Caribbean member States to ratify the Treaty to five.

The year 2020 will be a seminal one for multilateral deliberations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, with the convening of the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We must ensure the enduring success of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and work steadily for its universalization.

One key area in which CARICOM would like to see more tangible results is the work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). It remains a source of grave concern that, despite substantive discussions at the 2019 session, the CD has not resumed negotiations. We are also concerned about the fact that the United

Nations Disarmament Commission was unable to convene its substantive session in 2019. We hope that the Commission will revert to its normal format in 2020.

CARICOM member States are proud to be parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which is in force for all 33 sovereign States of the region. We are especially proud that 2019 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty and the establishment of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and we look forward to future work in that regard.

As CARICOM member States neither possess nor support the use of nuclear weapons, given their grave humanitarian consequences, we want to see steady progress towards the conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We view such arrangements as critical, especially in the face of new technological developments, means of delivery and related infrastructure.

Mr. Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and my own country, Viet Nam.

I associate myself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

ASEAN reiterates its commitment to preserving the South-East Asian region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter. We stress the importance of ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, including its plan of action for the period 2018 to 2022. We affirm our commitment to continuing to engage the nuclear-weapon States and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all related outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty. ASEAN recognizes the importance of other nuclear-weapon-free zones and therefore welcomes and supports the holding next month of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

We reaffirm our strong support to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and urge all its States parties to renew their commitment to its full implementation. ASEAN commends the Netherlands, Poland and Malaysia for their work in guiding the three Preparatory Committees for the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in 2020. We also believe that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is another important building block that constitutes a vital step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and that it complements existing efforts under the nuclear-non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. We note the growing number of States that have signed or ratified the Treaty. ASEAN stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As of September 2018, all of ASEAN's members States had ratified the Treaty, and we call on the remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible so that it can enter into force.

ASEAN is concerned about the fact that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was terminated in August. We urge the countries concerned to find ways to negotiate and renew their commitments in this area with the aim of achieving a better and more peaceful world through mutual understanding and cooperation.

ASEAN welcomes the three inter-Korean summits and the two between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, hosted by two members of ASEAN, Singapore and Viet Nam. We urge all the parties concerned to continue working together towards lasting peace and stability on a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

Since the Committee's previous session, members of ASEAN have continued to make progress in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Cambodia signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in January, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic ratified it last month. ASEAN signed its Practical Arrangements Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency in September and adopted a five-year work plan for the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy for 2019 to 2023 in Thailand in July.

ASEAN reaffirms its strong support for global non-proliferation, disarmament and the total

elimination of nuclear weapons. ASEAN is ready to work with others towards realizing a world without nuclear weapons.

Ms. Wood (Australia): I will deliver a shortened statement on behalf of the member States of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) — Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and my own country, Australia.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the NPDI, the NPDI is fully committed to achieving a successful outcome for the Review Conference in order to mark those important occasions by advancing global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation goals. We reaffirm the critical importance of dialogue and concerted action in achieving our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are deeply committed to our core mandate of strengthening the implementation of the NPT based on the 2010 Action Plan. The current international security environment is fraught with uncertainty and tension and compels us to take bold, creative steps to uphold the NPT and strengthen the implementation of its provisions. The NPDI's engagement is further reflected in the fact that two of its members, Poland and the Netherlands, chaired the 2017 and 2018 Preparatory Committees and will chair Main Committees II and III, respectively, at the Review Conference. We urge all States parties to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under the NPT, particularly the full and prompt implementation of the 2010 Action Plan. The NPDI will continue to develop new ideas and initiatives to assist in finding common ground.

Sustained, high-level political leadership and diplomatic dialogue, as well as an unwavering commitment to the NPT, are needed if we are to make concrete progress towards achieving deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals worldwide and ultimately the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that context, the NPDI would like to reiterate the need for confidence-building measures to contribute to improving the deteriorating international security environment. One such confidence-building measure, and a signature NPDI initiative, is encouraging

better transparency through the submission of NPT national reports and interactive discussions on the implementation of NPT commitments. We welcome the national reports that have recently been submitted by NPT States parties, including the nuclear-weapon States China and the United Kingdom. The NPDI encourages all States parties to submit their national reports. We also highlight the importance of using a standard reporting form, as well as agreeing on a standard reporting interval.

Another NPDI flagship initiative is strengthening the NPT review process. Improving its effectiveness is an ongoing responsibility, and should not be dismissed as merely procedural. We must ask ourselves how the Treaty's long-standing working methods and practices could be updated and improved on in order to facilitate further substantive progress. The NPDI delivered a joint statement on behalf of 48 States at the 2019 Preparatory Committee, calling for a discussion of the issue at the Review Conference, and will engage in broad outreach on how to move the debate forward.

The NPDI has submitted 15 working papers during the current review process. We continue to press for the inclusion of disarmament verification measures in the NPT. Our commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is apparent in the fact that all the NPDI member States have signed and ratified the Treaty, and in Germany's co-chairing of the recent Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT. We reiterate the urgent call to all States that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty, particularly the eight remaining annex 2 States, to do so without further delay. The NPDI also calls on all States to reaffirm support for the immediate commencement of negotiations to conclude a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices, building on previous work. We invite the First Committee to give favourable consideration to the annual draft resolutions on those issues.

The NPDI is a long-standing champion of disarmament and non-proliferation education. We remain united and focused on the NPT's objectives of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and furthering the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm our commitment to the international community's goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of all of North Korea's programmes for weapons of mass

destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges. We call on all members of the international community to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. The NPDI will continue to play a constructive and proactive role in finding common ground.

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

The nuclear thematic discussions are an important opportunity for constructive dialogue ahead of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). But while dialogue can help us, it is not enough. We have to define areas of convergence. We will work to help shape a successful outcome for 2020 and beyond. Over its 50-year history, the NPT has made our world safer, and it continues to do so. It remains a singular accomplishment. Since 1970 it has been the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, an essential element of international peace and security that has benefited us all. Those accomplishments should not be taken for granted, and neither should we assume that the Treaty will maintain that role without our active support for its implementation and strengthening. That is why its Review Conferences are important.

In 2020 we should acknowledge the NPT's achievements and look back honestly in order to review its implementation. An honest assessment of the state of the NPT strikes us as a valuable component for the outcome of the Review Conference. We should also look forward in order to consider our shared interests in strengthening the Treaty, maintaining our commitments, narrowing our differences and finding space for compromise so as to advance our shared goals. Our approach takes into account the international security environment, without losing sight of the concerns about the risks posed by nuclear weapons. The NPT has always been an instrument for pursuing ambitious aims while taking into account geopolitical realities.

The goal of advancing and achieving a world without nuclear weapons has not changed. To that end, we are pursuing pragmatic, inclusive measures, including the universalization of the NPT, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices, cooperation on nuclear-disarmament verification, a reaffirmation or tightening of existing negative security assurances, greater transparency on nuclear arsenals, an inclusive dialogue on nuclear doctrines and measures aimed at nuclear risk reduction.

Several of the draft resolutions that have been presented aim to further that concrete agenda, including those on the CTBT, verification, youth engagement, joint action and future dialogue. The consensus report (see A/74/90) of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament shows that dialogue is possible. We welcome continued work on the issue, including within a scientific and technical framework. We welcome helpful initiatives that spur consideration on how to advance nuclear disarmament in practical terms. Various risk-reduction initiatives can invite creative engagement ahead of the 2020 NPT Review Conference and beyond.

While we are conscious of the international security environment and recognize the constraints that it might impose, inaction is not an answer. We must move forward collaboratively in ways that reduce risks, build trust and strengthen verification, with a view to providing a pathway to further reductions. We were encouraged by the Security Council's meeting devoted to the topic on 2 April (see S/PV.8500) and the joint press statement (SC/13762) endorsed by all of its members. We regard it as a sound basis for further discussion and concrete preparatory steps for the NPT Review Conference. We encourage the NPT nuclear-weapon States to work harder to deliver outcomes in 2020 on a number of work streams, including nuclear doctrines, risk reduction, a fissile material cut-off treaty, transparency, the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the nuclear glossary and building pathways to further reductions in nuclear arsenals.

All NPT States parties have committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world, and the nuclear-weapon States have a particular responsibility in that regard, as outlined in

article VI of the Treaty. Building trust and confidence plays an important role in that regard. Achieving that is possible only through the constructive and sustained engagement of all stakeholders across regions. The First Committee provides us with a chance to exchange views on the challenges and opportunities for progress, make a frank assessment of what we can do collectively to uphold, implement and strengthen NPT norms and lay some constructive groundwork ahead of next year's Review Conference.

Mr. Laouani (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to associate the Group of Arab States with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group once again welcomes the success of the negotiations to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we will continue to positively contribute to all efforts aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We are concerned about the continued failure to make concrete progress in achieving nuclear disarmament and to implement the relevant commitments under the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, the nuclear-weapon States are avoiding establishing any time frame for implementing the international commitments aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Arab Group rejects the nuclear-weapon States' continuing practice of adopting military doctrines that authorize the potential use of nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear States. In that context, the Group stresses that the total and final elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), subject to international verification, is the only guarantee against the use of those weapons, which violate international humanitarian law. The Arab Group also rejects the military doctrines of nuclear-weapon States that are based on the principle of nuclear deterrence, and therefore entail the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We stress that the total and final elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the NPT, is the only guarantee against their proliferation and use or threat of use on the part of States or non-State actors.

The Arab Group again welcomes the landmark development of 2017 represented by the adoption of a binding treaty establishing an international basis for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. That bridges a major gap by putting nuclear weapons on an equal footing with other weapons of mass destruction that are prohibited by binding conventions reached on a basis of the foundational provisions of international humanitarian law. The Arab Group emphasizes that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not run counter to the NPT, but rather complements it in a way that is conducive to the full implementation of its objectives.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference means that we have an even greater responsibility for preserving the credibility and continuity of the system established by the Treaty. We must ensure the success of the 2020 Review Conference by reaching clear outcomes on implementing all previous obligations and promoting the effectiveness of the Treaty.

We underscore the fact that ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons is a collective international responsibility. The Arab Group has demonstrated its commitment in that regard. The other relevant parties must now do the same, or the NPT's credibility will be in jeopardy, which could lead to instability in the non-proliferation system as a whole. The Group of Arab States stresses the need for taking the practical steps and immediate measures that are called for in the annual Arab draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" (A/C.1/74/L.2). We appreciate the outstanding efforts that Jordan has undertaken in chairing the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held by the United Nations in November in line with General Assembly decision 73/546. The Group urges all the invited parties to participate in the Conference in good faith, with the aim of negotiating a binding treaty that will promote peace and security regionally and internationally.

I will conclude here. My entire statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart.

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

Ms. Kempainen (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, North Macedonia,

Montenegro and Albania, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States believe firmly that a multilateral approach to security, including arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, is the best way to maintain international peace and security. As we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we expect all States to reaffirm their support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with its article VI, and an important element in the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We call on all States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, and we urge all States parties to implement their obligations and commitments under the Treaty, as agreed to during previous Review Conferences.

The NPT remains a key multilateral instrument reinforcing international peace, security and stability. It is a historic success, and its full implementation is now needed more than ever. We want to remind the First Committee that all States parties have committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and with the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. All States parties have also committed to applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their Treaty obligations.

The EU strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and will continue to promote the comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of its 2010 Action Plan. Its concrete, equally important and mutually reinforcing steps for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy remain valid and provide a mutually acceptable basis on which to advance towards the ultimate objective of a world without nuclear weapons. We remain resolved to seek a safer world for all, in accordance with the goals of the Treaty, in a way that promotes international stability based on the principle of undiminished security for all. The EU is contributing in a concrete way to the NPT review process by funding a series of thematic and regional seminars. We encourage the further involvement of academia and civil society and emphasize the active and equal partnership and leadership of women.

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

In the course of the past 30 years the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty made a significant contribution to European security and broader international security and stability, and we are deeply concerned about the fact that it could not be preserved. Under the INF Treaty, almost 3,000 missiles with nuclear or conventional warheads were removed from European soil and verifiably destroyed. We are deeply disappointed that the Russian Federation did not address the serious concerns repeatedly expressed about its 9M729 missile system and the further concerns that the missile system raised about non-compliance with the INF Treaty.

The EU affirms its long-standing commitment to verifiable and effective treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament. We must be careful not to set off on the path of a new arms race that would vitiate the significant reductions achieved after the end of the Cold War. Despite the deteriorating security environment, efforts must be pursued in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, and we believe that progress is possible. The EU will continue to encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions in their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic and deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. We consider the New START Treaty extremely important and would welcome early and active dialogue on its future after 2021 and on other arms-control arrangements. The EU encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting and to reduce the operational readiness of their nuclear-weapon systems to the minimum level necessary.

We welcome the current momentum on risk reduction, including strategic risk reduction measures. All States, particularly nuclear-weapon States and other States possessing nuclear weapons, should engage in such efforts. The EU notes the severe consequences associated with the use of nuclear weapons and

emphasizes that all States share a responsibility to prevent such things from happening.

The EU's full statement will be available on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): In 2020 we will commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It will also be 75 years since the beginning of the atomic age and the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 50 years since the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, 25 years since the indefinite extension of the NPT, 20 years since the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted its 13 steps and 10 years since the adoption of the current Action Plan for the implementation of the NPT. All of those milestones provide a perfect context for reflecting on the fact that we are facing a paradoxical and substantively different situation from the one that prevailed for decades. Within this framework, some States that possess nuclear weapons have announced that they will increase their arsenals, that they are improving these types of weapons and, above all, that they are willing to use them. Countries that do not possess nuclear weapons also speak of protecting those weapons, and some are advocating for the development of new weapons and delivery systems.

The only guarantee against the damage that nuclear weapons cause is their elimination. A recent major achievement by the international community has been the revitalization of the discussion on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the understanding of the risks and dangers those weapons would pose if used. The so-called doctrine of nuclear deterrence, or the claim that nuclear weapons support security, makes no sense when an intentional or accidental detonation can cause a catastrophe that we can barely conceive of. We must continue to discuss the disastrous consequences of nuclear weapons, since the existing arsenals, however small they might be, continue to pose a risk. That is why we will continue to proudly promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Mexico welcomes the 33 ratifications of the Treaty, some of which, such as that of Dominica, are very recent. We invite all States Members of the United Nations to accede to the Treaty without delay.

The international community hopes that the tenth NPT Review Conference, to be held next year, will demonstrate our commitment to fulfilling our previous agreements and taking concrete measures to ensure strict compliance with the NPT, which cannot be subject to any conditions or arrangements that suit the desires of a few. We must identify the steps and instruments that complement or reinforce the nuclear-non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. We reiterate the call to the eight States whose signature or ratification is necessary for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force to accede to the Treaty unconditionally. Any other multilateral measures for strengthening the moratorium on nuclear testing would be welcome, but they can never be a substitute for the multilateral treaty established to ban testing.

My full statement will be available on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Baumann (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Considering the potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, Switzerland is deeply concerned about the current challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation, arms-control and disarmament architecture. We have a duty to preserve the rules-based nuclear order and to uphold and implement existing norms and commitments.

The termination of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty is a major concern. After several years of concerns regarding the development of new cruise missiles and the issue of their conformity with the Treaty, we have lost an arms-control instrument crucial to European and global security. We appeal to Russia and the United States to refrain from developing or deploying any systems prohibited under the INF Treaty, to exercise the utmost restraint and to avoid any further actions detrimental to European security. Likewise, we call on those countries to extend the last remaining bilateral nuclear arms-control treaty, that is, the New START Treaty, as a matter of priority.

In addition, we once again voice our strong support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We consider it an important element of the international non-proliferation regime that must be preserved. We should point out that the JCPOA establishes the strictest verification regime that has ever been applied to a civil nuclear programme. Switzerland deplores the United States withdrawal from the agreement and its reimposition of sanctions. We are concerned about the

recent steps that Iran has taken to advance its civilian nuclear capabilities, as confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and stress the importance of full cooperation with the Agency. We call on all States to refrain from actions that would run counter to the objectives of the JCPOA. Switzerland welcomes dialogue and diplomatic initiatives aimed at preserving that important instrument.

We call on all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to support that landmark instrument, which has been central to the prevention of nuclear proliferation for half a century. Over the years NPT States parties have made important commitments that must translate into practical, step-by-step measures. Switzerland will oppose any attempt to undercut our common commitments under the NPT.

One area where progress is necessary and should be possible is nuclear risk reduction. A number of risks, old and new, have been identified and should be addressed. We encourage the nuclear-weapon States to continue and deepen their discussions on strategic stability and to identify measures that could reduce tensions and risks. The upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons represents an opportunity to define a programme of work or set of measures for risk reduction based on action 5 of the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan, under which the nuclear-weapon States have already committed to engaging promptly in respect of such issues. In addition, a strong commitment to reinforcing the taboo against nuclear weapons would send a powerful message and could help to reduce risks.

Regarding the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we hope that the commitments made so far can be translated into concrete progress towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We are ready to contribute to such a process.

It is precisely in the most challenging times that the need to control nuclear weapons is at its greatest, and it is incumbent upon us to stand together against a new and dangerous arms race.

The full version of Switzerland's statement will be available on PaperSmart.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.26.

Mr. Osmundsen (Norway): The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has served global security well for 50 years. We must make sure that it continues to do so. The commitments made under the NPT and at the previous Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remain as valid as ever. Even in challenging times, progress is possible, and can take place if we focus on mutually reinforcing building blocks. One of the key building blocks we have for making progress on the disarmament pillar of the NPT is nuclear-disarmament verification.

The report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament (see A/74/90) was adopted by consensus in April. One of the report's conclusions is that verification is essential to the process of nuclear disarmament and is key to achieving a world without nuclear weapons. The fact that the Group reached consensus shows that it is possible to find common ground in the disarmament pillar. Taking that report as a basis, Brazil, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have joined us in submitting a new draft resolution (A/C.1/74/L.26) on nuclear disarmament verification, and we encourage all Member States to join in supporting and sponsoring it.

It is important to take the multilateral work on nuclear disarmament verification forward. Norway has been working on nuclear disarmament verification since 2007. The United Kingdom-Norway initiative shows that collaboration on nuclear disarmament verification between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States is possible without either partner breaching its non-proliferation obligations under the NPT. This kind of technical work is continuing in both the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Disarmament Verification Partnership. In our view, it is crucial to integrate policy perspectives with technical expertise in order to drive progress. Norway is also working on establishing a funding mechanism that will enable developing countries to participate in nuclear-disarmament verification activities.

We consider the work on nuclear disarmament verification to be an area where progress can be made

at next year's NPT Review Conference and beyond, in accordance with step 13 of the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and action 2 of the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

A full version of this statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart.

Ms. Goh (Singapore): I would first like to congratulate the Chair and the rest of the Bureau of the First Committee at this session.

Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Viet Nam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The historic gains we have made in global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are at risk of unravelling. The future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is precarious, following the United States withdrawal and Iran's decision to scale back its commitments. We call on Iran to continue fulfilling its obligations under the JCPOA and the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol. The termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the uncertainty surrounding the extension of the New START Treaty are worrisome. Singapore urges all parties to continue pursuing meaningful dialogue, converge on practical solutions and fulfil their international obligations.

On the Korean peninsula, Singapore welcomes the high-level meetings between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the inter-Korean summits. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to avoid actions that might escalate tensions and to abide by its Security Council obligations.

Singapore reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We regret that the third Preparatory Committee was unable to adopt a set of recommendations for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We hope that all States parties will engage in constructive dialogue towards concrete, time-bound and verifiable action to ensure that the NPT remains relevant. We are committed to a successful 2020 Review Conference.

The continued qualitative improvements and testing of nuclear weapons being carried out by nuclear-weapon States are worrisome. Singapore reiterates its strong support for ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We urge all countries, particularly the remaining annex 2 countries, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Singapore believes that regional approaches constitute a practical step towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. They include the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones pursuant to article VII of the NPT. We look forward to seeing the nuclear-weapon States sign and ratify the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone without reservations.

The proliferation of materials and technology for weapons of mass destruction and of dual-use items for illicit purposes continues to be a serious threat. Singapore regularly updates its regime to ensure that it is aligned with the four main multilateral export-control regimes. We are also active in other multilateral initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meetings on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. In today's geopolitical climate, achieving the global elimination of nuclear weapons will be possible only if States prioritize the rebuilding of mutual trust and demonstrate collective political will. Let us all renew our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons.

My full statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add the following shortened national statement, the full version of which will be posted on the PaperSmart portal.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, with undiminished security for all, and to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held on the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force, provides an opportunity to celebrate its successes and to come together to strengthen its future. Our commitment to the step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament under the NPT is not just rhetorical; we have demonstrated it by our actions over the years. While the United Kingdom's independent

nuclear deterrent remains essential to our security today, and will be for as long as the global security situation demands, it is maintained at the minimum credible level.

The United Kingdom continues to support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, as well as the start and speedy conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty at the Conference on Disarmament. We have maintained a voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices since 1995. The United Kingdom contributes actively to work on nuclear disarmament verification, including through such international initiatives as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Disarmament Verification Partnership with Sweden, Norway and the United States, and we commend draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.26 to the Committee. The United Kingdom also welcomes other efforts to explore realistic paths to nuclear disarmament, including the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative of the United States and Sweden's Stepping Stones initiative. We are committed to increasing transparency to the extent possible, and to improving our reporting on our NPT obligations and undertakings. The United Kingdom does not, however, intend to support, sign or ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which risks undermining the NPT, ignores the security environment and does not address the technical and procedural challenges that must be overcome to achieve nuclear disarmament in a secure and responsible manner.

We must acknowledge the serious challenges that exist in the security environment, some of which we set out in our contribution to the general debate (see A/C.1/74/PV.5). It is against that backdrop that the NPT remains so important. It is a fundamental pillar of international security and the only framework we have for limiting nuclear proliferation and paving the way for a world without nuclear weapons. That is why the United Kingdom continues to campaign for the universalization of the NPT. As the 2020 Review Conference approaches, we remain determined to work with partners across the international community to strengthen the NPT, which benefits us all.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.1 and A/C.1/74/L.2.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): Egypt fully associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and my own country, Egypt, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition. We would like to add the following remarks.

Egypt reiterates its concern about the grave threat posed to humankind and international security by the continued possession of nuclear weapons by a few States, and reaffirms that the total, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their proliferation, use or threat of use. Arguments that set preconditions for the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations or create artificial impediments to it will lead only to the gradual demise of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The rising tensions at the global level, coupled with rapid technological developments, are bringing the risk of the intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons to one of the highest levels we have seen since the Cold War era.

The decades-long stalemate in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, as well as countless similar resolutions, is eroding the credibility and sustainability of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and multilateral norms, as well as the rule of law at the international level. This stalemate is one of the root causes of the instability and lack of security in a region that already suffers from chronic military conflicts and arms races, especially taking into consideration the unprecedented spread of armed conflicts and terrorism. In that regard, we believe that the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which will convene its first session in November, represents an important opportunity for the United Nations to take meaningful practical steps in this direction through an institutional and inclusive process. The Conference aims to reach arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region on a basis of consensus. It is a genuine attempt to achieve a long-standing agreed international commitment in a non-discriminatory manner that is not designed to single out any State in the region.

At the holistic level, this process can serve as a platform to address all regional disarmament and non-proliferation challenges with a view to establishing a robust regional security architecture conducive to sustainable peace and collective security through dialogue and diplomacy. We sincerely hope that all the invited States will participate in the Conference, which could lead to a major contribution to strengthening the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and a breakthrough in addressing the deteriorating security conditions in the region, not to mention its possible positive impact on the forthcoming 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which we all hope will be a success.

We also count on the continued support of all Member States to this initiative, as well as to the draft resolution (A/C.1/74/L.1) that Egypt introduces annually on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which until 2017 was adopted by consensus, and draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.2, which we are submitting on behalf of the League of Arab States, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”. We consider Member States’ support proof of their commitment to nuclear disarmament as well as to achieving collective security and sustainable peace in the Middle East and to achieving the agreed obligations in that regard.

Mrs. Nadeau (Canada): We need to come together to reinforce the global nuclear-disarmament architecture that for decades has been critical to our safety and security. It is at the forefront of many delegations’ minds that 2020 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will coincide with the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Canada will work with all States parties towards a pragmatic and balanced Review Conference outcome to move us closer to fulfilling the promise of the NPT.

Canada is pleased to be among 16 non-nuclear-weapon States whose Ministers declared in June the need to take concrete, achievable steps towards nuclear disarmament. Canada commends Sweden and Germany for creating a political forum to reinvigorate disarmament efforts in the lead-up to the Review Conference. We appeal to the permanent five members of the Security Council (P-5) to make unequivocal political declarations in advance of the Review

Conference that recognize the dangers of nuclear war and reinforce their commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

(spoke in French)

Given rising global tensions and mounting threats to international peace and security, we must demonstrate bold leadership on nuclear disarmament. Political will is needed to put North Korea firmly on the path to complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. We must also mobilize the political will needed to extend the New START Treaty, while political will on the part of nuclear-weapon States would provide the necessary push for the Conference on Disarmament to advance important nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives within its mandate, including the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

While we try to overcome the political stalemates that are hindering our progress on disarmament, the work of scientific and technical experts on nuclear disarmament verification remains a key confidence-builder. Canada praises the consensus-based work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. We wholeheartedly support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) and we are very pleased that we will be welcoming the IPNDV plenary to Ottawa in December.

(spoke in English)

Ongoing dialogue and cooperation are extremely valuable in advancing nuclear disarmament. Canada actively participates in the cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI). We are proud of NPDI’s work as a bridge-builder, meeting regularly with officials from the P-5 and from non-nuclear-weapon States to advocate for greater transparency, improving the NPT review process and other practical measures to strengthen the implementation of the NPT. Canada commends the United States for convening the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) plenary, which gathered senior officials from nearly all of the nuclear-weapon States and from more than 30 non-nuclear-weapon States, including Canada. We believe CEND offers a way to engage in meaningful dialogue in order to identify and overcome the political and security impediments to progress on nuclear disarmament.

The world is counting on us all to move beyond swapping accusations and inciting mistrust, and instead to be motivated by the need to build and maintain peace and security together.

A full version of this statement will be posted on PaperSmart.

The Acting Chair: I shall now call on those members who have requested to speak in the exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes, consistent with the action we took this morning.

I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Jang Il Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to respond to the statement made

by the representative of Australia, speaking on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, as well as those by the representatives of Switzerland and Canada. I would like to advise those countries to first study the essence of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula without merely blindly following their allies. Our possession of nuclear weapons was an inevitable choice for our self-defence. If nuclear deterrence, the main reason for our nukes, is eliminated, we will not need any nukes. That said, I want to reiterate that the appeal for the implementation of the Security Council's sanctions will not help to solve the problem, but rather will exacerbate the situation. We will brave all of the challenges created by the brutal and inhuman sanctions in single-hearted unity.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.