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Official Records

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

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: Before proceeding further, I would like to update members on the exchanges with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament scheduled to take place tomorrow, 24 October. Members will recall that last week I circulated a letter to regional Chairs asking for nominations to participate in the panel and requesting that the nominations be submitted by yesterday, 22 October, at 1 p.m. So far, I have received only one nominee, from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, nominating Ambassador García Moritán, Permanent Representative of Argentina, to participate in the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Group of Western European and Other States has communicated that it will not nominate an official for that exchange. Speaking on behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ambassador García Moritán will therefore join the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for the exchange with representatives of States tomorrow.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee will now hear from the remaining speakers on the rolling list for cluster 2, “Other weapons of mass destruction”, and from delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply under that cluster. Time permitting, the Committee will then begin its consideration of cluster 4, “Conventional weapons”.

Mr. Bhandari (Nepal): Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

The timeless and fundamental values of peace and non-violence continue to guide Nepal’s disarmament policy. We have always maintained that the world deserves to remain peaceful, without any threat of weapons of mass destruction. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and host of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal is a staunch supporter of the general and complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction of all kinds. Nepal is free from every kind of weapon of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We do not produce, possess, import or export any weapons of mass destruction or intend to do so. We denounce the production, stockpiling and proliferation of such weapons. We believe that the use of weapons of mass destruction against innocent people by whomever, regardless of the circumstances, is a crime against humanity, and its perpetrators should therefore be held accountable.

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Needless to say, we have come a long way since the entry into force of conventions such as the NPT, CWC and BWC. However, the project to free the world from the use of weapons of mass destruction is still unfinished. Nepal firmly believes that international peace and security depend on faithful adherence to those international disarmament instruments. We are pleased with the effective operation and verification mechanism of the CWC, as well as the promotion of the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. We appreciate the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in that regard.

The effective implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention cannot be overemphasized if we are to prevent the possibility of biological weapons being easily developed and misused by the wrong hands and for ulterior motives. Despite their unwavering commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, some least-developed and developing countries still lack adequate technical and financial resources and the enhanced enforcement capability needed to comply with the provisions of various disarmament-related treaties and resolutions. International support, including for promoting and capacity-building in the peaceful uses of chemical and biological technologies, is critical in that regard.

In conclusion, my delegation underscores the importance of enhancing international cooperation and support in disarmament-related activities. Nepal therefore calls for promoting international cooperation by strengthening the institutional capacity of countries in need. International cooperation is also required, for example, in order to promote the peaceful exploitation of dual-use materials for the benefit of humankind, in accordance with the provisions of the CWC and the BWC. The full text of my statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

The use of weapons of mass destruction is inhumane, morally reprehensible and legally unacceptable, and prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Both Conventions are essential to the international

disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. With regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention, I would like to underline several points. First, Indonesia, as a party to the Convention, is committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of its obligations. Indonesia urges all States not yet party to the Convention to join without delay or preconditions, because its universalization will ensure that its goals and objectives can be fully attained. Secondly, Indonesia underscores the importance of ensuring that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons can perform its duty free from politicization, as well as maintain its impartiality and professionalism in fulfilling its mandate. Thirdly, international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention should be promoted without discrimination or restrictions.

Turning now to the Biological Weapons Convention, my delegation would first like to highlight the fact that creating a legally binding protocol concerning all of the Convention's articles, including its verification regime, is the most credible and sustainable method of strengthening the Convention. Secondly, we should strengthen international cooperation, assistance and exchanges in toxins, biological-agent equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. The provisions of article 10 of the Convention must be duly implemented. Thirdly, all initiatives aimed at strengthening the Convention should be pursued under its agreed modalities. Establishing any linkage with external instruments would create unnecessary divisions among the membership and eventually hamper the Convention's effectiveness.

In conclusion, Indonesia stands ready to work with all other countries at the forthcoming Meeting of States Parties to the BWC, both in its national capacity and as a member of the Bureau. All States parties should focus on the substantive issues and refrain from politicizing the meeting. We hope it will produce a positive outcome, leading to a successful Review Conference in 2021. The text of Indonesia's full statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Richardson (Saint Lucia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the cluster "Other weapons of mass destruction". CARICOM aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

We cannot turn a blind eye to the reality that international peace and security are under threat. CARICOM continues to denounce the use of weapons that in a single instance of use are capable of causing widespread loss of life and severe environmental damage. Such conditions threaten sustainable development and can also have a severe humanitarian impact. Against that backdrop, CARICOM reiterates its full support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We applaud the progress made in eliminating chemical-weapon stockpiles since the Convention's entry into force 22 years ago. We are convinced that it has made an important contribution to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

As we have stated before in other forums, the use of chemical weapons is unjustifiable in any circumstances. The use of such weapons has dire human and environmental consequences, and we must ensure that any such use is fully and impartially investigated and that the perpetrators are held accountable. We are of the view that those investigations can help to further strengthen the norms against the use of chemical weapons and are an important step that can contribute to bringing redress to the victims of such heinous acts. We view the Chemical Weapons Convention as an important instrument for peace and security and encourage the remaining States that have neither signed nor ratified it to join other States parties in the effort to obtain universal adherence. The Committee can be assured of our support for full compliance with the provisions of the Convention. We welcome the ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation among key stakeholders in compliance with the objectives set forth by the Convention.

A variety of other weapons of mass destruction continue to be used in conflicts. CARICOM also affirms its support for the Biological Weapons Convention. We consider that constructive and consistent engagement on issues related to the Biological Weapons Convention is very important right now, given that current developments in science and technology are increasing the possibilities for acquiring, accessing and using biological weapons, including by non-State actors. We welcome the advances made in implementing the Convention. However, if it is to be fully and effectively implemented, it is crucial to ensure that national measures complement those taken at the regional and international levels. As we have said in the past, we

share the view that it is important to investigate any alleged use of biological weapons and to quickly detect any illegal acts, which can serve as a deterrent to harmful use.

Our uniqueness and vulnerabilities have characterized most of the challenges to the countries of CARICOM. We are also mindful of our porous maritime and land borders, which create added challenges to our peace and security. In that sense, we are concerned about the increasing challenges posed to international peace and security by terrorists and other non-State actors, particularly when their possession of weapons of mass destruction of any kind is involved. To that end, CARICOM has worked to formulate a CARICOM counter-terrorism strategy in collaboration with the United Nations. We welcome such joint efforts aimed at helping to maintain peace and security. Despite any challenges we may encounter, we are committed to fulfilling our obligations in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate CARICOM's commitment to the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and to our common goal of maintaining international peace and security.

Ms. Moottatarn (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

The re-emergence of incidents involving weapons of mass destruction is jeopardizing international peace and security, with devastating humanitarian consequences. As a committed State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Thailand opposes any use of chemical weapons in any circumstances and condemns those who violate that norm. We fully support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in vigorously monitoring and verifying the alleged use of chemical weapons, as well as providing capacity-building. However, while perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions, the implementation of the attributive mechanism must derive from inclusive and consensus-based dialogue. The OPCW must remain impartial, independent and equipped with the proper resources. We also call on all States parties to honour their commitments in implementing the Convention's

obligations, particularly the destruction of remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons.

Thailand reaffirms its commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention and looks forward to the further strengthening of the Convention, which could be bolstered with a legally binding verification protocol. As part of our continued efforts to strengthen national measures, we are drafting a framework for Thailand's national response plan to a biological-weapon emergency. At the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in June, Thailand and the Implementation Support Unit also co-hosted a regional workshop for South-East Asian nations on preparedness to respond to the use of biological weapons, with the aim of exchanging best practices in capacity-building.

The world is in danger of backsliding on the steady progress it has made towards eradicating chemical and biological weapons. The international community must therefore overcome its political rifts and join hands in reinforcing norms against the use of such weapons and preserving the integrity of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Ngundze (South Africa): The total elimination of weapons of mass destruction remains one of South Africa's key foreign-policy priorities. In the area of chemical weapons, we welcome the progress that has been made in destroying chemical-weapon stockpiles. However, we call for the speedy destruction of the remaining declared stockpiles in order to fully rid the world of those deadly weapons, in line with the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

I would like to reiterate my delegation's support for the work of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We hope that the OPCW's Africa Programme will be further enhanced through measurable capacity-building programmes, goals and outputs. We therefore urge it to expedite its assistance to laboratories in developing countries to enable them to become OPCW-designated laboratories that the OPCW could consider in the event of chemical weapons being used in their geographic regions, which would go a long way to empowering and enabling first responders to identify quick, appropriate and scientifically informed strategic interventions. South Africa also underlines the importance of promoting capacity-building and international cooperation for the benefit of States

parties through the transfer of technology, knowledge, material and equipment for peaceful purposes. In that regard, I am pleased to report on our capacity-building contribution through the hosting of an analytical chemistry course, held under the Africa Programme at Protechnik Laboratories in Pretoria in May.

With regard to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), South Africa welcomed the holding of the BWC Meetings of Experts as part of the 2018-2020 intersessional programme and build-up to the ninth Review Conference of the Convention, in 2021. On behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, South Africa contributed to the work of the Meetings of Experts through its chairmanship of the Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation. We will continue to work constructively for an outcome that can strengthen the Convention and its balanced implementation, including through an enhanced intersessional process that benefits from the appropriate resources.

Finally, my delegation would like to underscore that the universalization of the BWC and CWC is crucial to the effective eradication of all biological and chemical weapons. We call on countries that are not yet party to them to join without further delay. The full text of my statement has been posted on PaperSmart.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): Austria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.13), and in my national capacity I would like to add some remarks on issues of particular importance to my country.

Austria fully supports a world free of all weapons of mass destruction. We call on all States to join and strictly implement all the relevant treaties. Austria therefore strongly condemns any use of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological or chemical. The Chemical Weapons Convention is an important component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and the appalling use of chemical weapons in recent years is unacceptable. It contravenes international standards and norms and is an affront to the international rules-based system that we all depend on for our security. Austria therefore affirms its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of any use of chemical weapons by anyone, at any time, and under any circumstances. There can be no impunity for the use of such abhorrent weapons. We therefore commend all efforts to hold those responsible

to account. Austria is a member of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and fully supports its efforts and mechanisms, which complement international mechanisms to combat the proliferation of chemical weapons. We would like to put on record our full trust in the professional, impartial and objective work of the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its Declaration Assessment Team and Investigation and Identification Team.

We live in a world of rapid scientific progress. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was the first to ban an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. It is in the interests of the security of all of us to make sure that our international treaty regime remains up to speed. In that context, we welcome the BWC Meetings of Experts, which enable in-depth exchanges on matters that are especially relevant to the implementation of the Convention. Allowing space to discuss and exchange views and best practices is an important confidence-building measure, and we look forward to continuing those expert-level discussions.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

Chemical weapons had almost disappeared and nearly every State had ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention. After that, however, they were again used in Syria in 2013, and the Syrian regime has continued to use them ever since. We watched in horror as such weapons re-emerged in other contexts, first in the hands of Da'esh, which has used mustard gas in Syria and Iraq, and then in Malaysia in February 2017, where a citizen of North Korea was killed using the VX nerve agent. In 2018 several people in Britain were exposed to a military-grade chemical agent of a kind developed by Russia. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism confirmed the responsibility of the Syrian regime as well as Da'esh for the incidents in Syria. The Rapid Response and Assistance Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) also confirmed the nature of the chemical agent found in the United Kingdom. Strengthening the OPCW through the creation of a new investigation and attribution mechanism was therefore vital. The use of those weapons broke the taboo against them, and appropriate sanctions must therefore be imposed. That is why the International Partnership against Impunity

for the Use of Chemical Weapons was launched in Paris in 2018, and 40 States have joined it to date.

The issue of the delivery systems of weapons of mass destruction is also central. North Korea's development of intercontinental missiles should give us pause. Until now only a few States possessed those powerful weapons, giving them a special responsibility. In future, if we do not all work to ensure sufficient control and North Korea continues its proliferation, how many countries will possess them? Iran's ballistic-missile launches are a destabilizing factor and are not in compliance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). It is urgent that we intensify our efforts to strengthen multilateral arrangements, including The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, as well as by universalizing the Missile Technology Control Regime.

France will chair the next Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) this year. We welcome the excellent work under way and hope that momentum will continue. France will continue working to ensure the Convention's effective implementation and will commit to seeking innovative solutions to improve transparency and confidence-building. Domestically, we will continue to promote a voluntary peer-review mechanism aimed at enabling the collective and participatory evaluation of the BWC's implementation, as well as enhancing cooperation and assistance through the sharing of experiences.

The full text of my statement will be made available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Baek Yong Jin (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea would like to reiterate the significance of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) as core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. My delegation notes with serious concern that the Declaration Assessment Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is still unable to verify the accuracy and completeness of Syria's initial declaration. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with it as fully as possible in order to address all of its outstanding declaration issues. We would also like to reiterate our continued support for the work of the OPCW's Fact-finding Mission and look forward to its ongoing work, including with regard to an incident in Kabanah in May.

We reaffirm our support for the June 2018 decision of the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention based on which the Investigation and Identification Team was established. However, my delegation is deeply concerned about the fact that the Team's members have been denied access to the area in Syria and to the necessary documents. We urge all interested States parties to give all possible support to the Investigation and Identification Team's work. The universal application of the CWC will continue to be one of our top priorities. My delegation urges the four States that are not party to the Convention to join it as soon as possible, without further delay or preconditions.

Advances in science and technology have increased the risks of the proliferation of biological weapons, and I believe that the Biological Weapons Convention should remain the primary international framework for responding to those challenges. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the in-depth discussions on the establishment of the Scientific and Technological Experts Advisory Forum. We also support establishing guidelines to assist States that may request assistance within the framework of article VII of the Convention. My Government is actively implementing its obligations under the BWC by submitting reports on confidence-building measures, enacting domestic legislation, managing the export-control regime and building operational capabilities. We are also committed to international capacity-building efforts at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, for example by offering assistance programmes to developing countries in cooperation with the Korea International Cooperation Agency, and by participating in capacity-building programmes, especially through the Global Health Security Agenda and the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

Mr. Nakai (Japan): The use of weapons of mass destruction should not be allowed under any circumstances, and the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and other international instruments must be reinforced. However, chemical weapons have been used, and that constitutes a serious and urgent threat to us all. If that happens again, the international community must work together to condemn it, and the perpetrators must be identified and held accountable. In that regard, Japan welcomes the establishment of the Identification and

Investigation Team and the start of its work in Syria. To help it identify perpetrators, Japan has assisted in upgrading the laboratories of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and will continue to support and enhance its work. Japan has meticulously fulfilled its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned in China. Approximately 57,000 of the 75,000 abandoned chemical weapons that were recovered have already been destroyed. We enjoy China's full cooperation and coordination in that unprecedented and difficult process, which could not be carried out without it, and Japan would like to affirm its commitment to continuing all possible efforts to advance that challenging project.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has played a vital role in maintaining international peace and security. Japan believes that during the BWC's intersessional programmes, States parties should develop the discussion on how to strengthen it, for example through article VII-related assistance and the science and technology review process, with a view to achieving tangible and concrete outcomes at the ninth Review Conference of States Parties, to be held in 2021. Japan has undertaken a number of BWC-related capacity-building projects in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the BWC Implementation Support Unit. We hope that will help participating States parties to enhance their capacity to fulfil their obligations under the BWC.

Japan also emphasizes the importance of implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We have consistently contributed approximately \$1 million annually to UNODA to support implementation obligations and will continue to do so during the next comprehensive review, to be conducted in 2021.

In conclusion, Japan emphasizes the importance of strengthening the relevant international authorities and regimes in order to achieve the goal of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, and we stress the need for joint efforts and cooperation among stakeholders. The full text of my statement has been uploaded to the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement by the representative of Indonesia on

behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

We join others in stressing the need for further strengthening multilateral efforts to prevent the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction. We are deeply concerned about the growing possibility of terrorists or other unauthorized non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

Bangladesh has never faltered in fulfilling its commitments under the various provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Immediately after ratifying the CWC, in 1997, Bangladesh submitted the necessary declaration regarding chemical weapons and their production facilities. We enacted a law prohibiting chemical weapons in 2006 and formulated relevant national rules in 2010. Following that, we established Bangladesh's national authority for the CWC. We reiterate our call for the universalization of the Convention. It is critical that States that still possess chemical weapons destroy their remaining stockpiles. In addition, we must ensure sustained vigilance in order to prevent their re-emergence and further proliferation.

Bangladesh condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. In that regard, we stress the paramount importance of upholding the credibility and integrity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and enabling its Technical Secretariat to deliver on its mandate and responsibilities. As an elected member of the OPCW's Executive Council, we continue to play our part in global efforts towards chemical disarmament. We recently contributed \$15,000 in support of a project to upgrade the OPCW's current laboratories and equipment. We also partnered with it last year in implementing its project in Dhaka's two largest hospitals aimed at improving their emergency-management capacity in the event of a chemical incident.

Along with the CWC, we also remain committed to fulfilling the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We share the concerns about the advances in biological science that have the potential to contribute to the further proliferation of biological weapons. There is a significant need for limiting existing international instruments in order to remain vigilant with regard to the fast-moving technology in the biological field. We therefore stress the importance of redoubling our efforts to enhance the operational

capacity of the United Nations in that regard. We also underscore the importance of the full implementation of article X of the Biological Weapons Convention for peaceful purposes. In that context, we reiterate the need for further strengthening the Implementation Support Unit to effectively respond to the various capacity-building needs of States parties. Promoting the peaceful use of biology is a critical element in the Convention's implementation.

The full version of our statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Chaibi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The various crises around the world compel us to intensify our efforts and unite our visions and perceptions in order to achieve the goal of the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and entrench peace, security and stability in the world. My delegation would therefore like to stress the following points.

We are very pleased with the outcomes achieved in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the only international instrument that bans one entire type of weapons of mass destruction while seeking to uphold and promote the peaceful uses of chemical materials. Algeria calls on the countries that still possess such weapons to accelerate the destruction of their stockpiles according to the established time frames. We reiterate our firm position whereby we completely and categorically reject any pretexts offered by certain parties to justify their use of such weapons, regardless of the circumstances. We emphasize the importance of international cooperation in the area of chemical activities for peaceful purposes and call on the international community to lift any restrictions and facilitate the transfer of technologies and chemical materials, especially where it benefits developing countries.

Algeria would like to once again express its belief that the full implementation of all the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention will ensure that its objectives can be achieved. We also believe it is time to promote the Convention by adopting a binding international instrument establishing an effective verification mechanism that can enable us to monitor the implementation of the Convention's provisions.

Algeria underscores the importance of activating the role of the Conference on Disarmament in making recommendations pertaining to the possibility of holding negotiations on new types of WMDs,

particularly those that are well known, such as radioactive and phosphorus weapons, and that would also help to prevent the development of new types of weapons that could threaten global peace and security.

We all agree on the importance of establishing zones free of WMDs throughout the world, which could play a pivotal role in enhancing efforts to ensure international and regional peace and security, as well as reducing tensions among States. Algeria welcomed the General Assembly's adoption in 2018 of decision 73/546, requesting the Secretary-General to convene a conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, in line with the outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. My country therefore calls on all parties, without exception, invited to the Conference, to be held in November, to participate in good faith.

In conclusion, my delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on this topic by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

Mr. Verdier (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina is a member of all the non-proliferation regimes for weapons of mass destruction, subscribes to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative.

My country reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and encourages all the ongoing efforts to achieve its universalization. Argentina reiterates that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances is unacceptable and constitutes a blatant violation of international obligations under the Convention and international law, and that those responsible for their use must be held accountable. We also call on all States to strictly comply with their obligations under the Convention and the decisions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which are designed to enable the fundamental goals of the Convention and of international law to be realized. We believe that we must therefore maintain our unity of purpose and refrain from creating political divisions within the OPCW that could ultimately undermine it. The mechanisms

recently created to ensure the implementation of the Convention's objectives have already begun their work. The OPCW's credibility and international recognition depend on the excellence of its human resources, its respect for rigorous procedures and the quality of its technical work.

Argentina plays an active role in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. Argentina's national authority is working diligently to share the provisions of the Convention with industry and academia. Together with the OPCW we regularly organize regional courses on assistance and protection in chemical emergency responses and on chemical safety and security management in laboratories. We recently hosted a subregional meeting on the implementation of the Convention and cooperation in Latin America. Argentina is also seeking to play a constructive role by submitting proposals to ensure that the implementation mechanisms of the Convention function more effectively and efficiently.

Argentina reaffirms the critical importance of the Biological Weapons Convention. We underscore the role of confidence-building measures as a mechanism that fosters greater transparency and trust among States with regard to implementing and complying with the Convention. We urge all who have not yet submitted such measures to do so.

Due to its scope and legal nature, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is the clearest response that the United Nations has made to the threat represented by the possibility of non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials. My country has presented its national reports in a timely manner. In that regard, we urge all those that have not yet done so to submit them so that we can determine how prepared we are to address this threat.

Mr. Vogelaar (Netherlands): The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.13) and would like to add the following abbreviated remarks in its national capacity.

The recent and repeated instances of the use of chemical weapons show that their prohibition and the global norm against their use are under threat. Meanwhile, we are witnessing the further politicization of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), along with attempts to question its

integrity, thereby undermining its work and functioning. The Netherlands has full confidence in the impartiality and professionalism of the OPCW's Director-General and Technical Secretariat. This year we hope to be able to agree on proposals that will further strengthen it and enable us to act more effectively.

The Netherlands is concerned about the lack of progress on the verification and dismantling of Syria's chemical-weapon programme. Six years after Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), it has still not given full disclosure. The recent report by the Declaration Assessment Team is illustrative and worrying in that regard. We urge Syria to fully cooperate with the OPCW's Technical Secretariat.

The Netherlands fully supports the decision of the fourth special session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in June last year to expand the mandate of the Director-General of the OPCW to include the identification of perpetrators. The Investigation and Identification Team has our full confidence and we look forward to its first report. Earlier this year, the OPCW Executive Council endorsed by consensus a proposal to include on the CWC Schedule 1 list the type of chemical warfare agent used in Salisbury last year. We hope and trust that member States will adopt a joint proposal at the upcoming Conference of States Parties.

In August last year, the member States of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) discussed ways to further strengthen the Convention while taking into account today's rapid advances in biotechnology. We are pleased to see the increasing international awareness of the need for the Biological Weapons Convention to respond to those developments in order to remain effective and relevant. In that context, the Netherlands, together with Sweden, sponsored a working paper drafted by Germany on the Scientific and Technological Experts Advisory Forum. The CWC and the BWC are two indispensable instruments in our collective pursuit of a safer world. We call on the States that remain outside those Conventions to accede to them without delay.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

Iran attaches great importance to the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). As the victim of the largest number of systematic chemical attacks in contemporary history, Iran believes that the universality of the CWC and the destruction of all chemical-weapon stockpiles, along with ensuring that the Convention's verification regime remains effective and robust, will save nations from the scourge of the use of chemical weapons.

Iran is an active member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are implementing the Convention's provisions by submitting declarations and receiving inspections. We are also sharing our experiences in implementing the CWC with other States parties. As long as the United States' chemical arsenals are not destroyed, achieving the destruction of stockpiles should continue to be the OPCW's top priority. As the main competent international authority, it should not be polarized. Ensuring the universality of the Convention in the Middle East is essential. Israel is still not party to the CWC. The threat posed by the Israeli regime's chemical weapons is serious, especially given the fact that Israel has never respected ethical and international norms and rules. Unfortunately, terrorist groups in the Middle East are using chemical weapons irresponsibly. Iran condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and we believe that its perpetrators must be held accountable.

Iran attaches great importance to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and supports it. We firmly believe that the most effective approach to strengthening it is by resuming negotiations on a legally binding protocol to the Convention, and we call on a certain member State to withdraw its objection to their resumption. A selective approach to strengthening the Convention will not achieve consensus but should cover all of its major provisions in a non-discriminatory manner. The Israeli regime's continued non-adherence to the BWC is a major obstacle to its universality and endangers the security of States parties to the Convention in the Middle East.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): I am taking the floor in today's debate to once again underline that New Zealand remains firmly committed to the achievement of a world without chemical weapons.

We align ourselves fully with the statement delivered by the representative of France on behalf

of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons (see A/C.1/74/PV.13), and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

It remains abhorrent to New Zealand that in the twenty-first century, we as a community of nations have had to face the ongoing use of chemical weapons. Yet the atrocities witnessed in recent years — in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom — underline the need for renewed focus and determination in the pursuit of chemical disarmament. Any use of chemical weapons is highly repugnant and in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and other relevant international law. New Zealand condemns all uses of chemical weapons, anytime, anywhere and for any reason as we seek to uphold that important international prohibition.

Like so many countries represented in the room today, we have been deeply concerned about the impunity with which perpetrators have carried out chemical-weapon attacks in recent years. There must never be impunity for the use of chemical weapons. New Zealand will continue to be vocal in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and other relevant forums in support of effective methods to identify those who use chemical weapons and hold them to account. We strongly support the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team, established in June 2018, which has the crucial task of identifying the perpetrators behind such attacks. We look forward to its first report, which will represent further progress in that regard. We once again urge the small number of States that have not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so as a priority. The universalization of this important treaty, the destruction of all chemical weapons, and the establishment of effective means for identifying, attributing and punishing chemical attacks are the best ways to ensure that chemical weapons truly become history.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The full text of my statement will be made available on the PaperSmart portal.

We have always supported rapid, full and unconditional compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and we are pleased that 193 States have already become signatories. We are making our own practical contribution to strengthening it. In 2017 we completed the destruction of our chemical arsenal of approximately 40,000 tons.

We call on the United States to follow suit and destroy its remaining stockpiles of toxic materials as soon as possible.

The integrity of the CWC regime is supposed to be fostered through the effective work of a specialized international organization. Unfortunately, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is currently divided thanks to the excessive politicization of the Syrian chemical-weapon issue, the staged Skripal affair and the illegitimate attributive function that has been imposed on the OPCW by a group of Western States. Granting the OPCW's Technical Secretariat the function of attributing responsibility for the use of chemical weapons goes beyond the provisions of the CWC and encroaches on the exclusive authority of the Security Council. The notions that it implies represent a threat not just to the Convention itself but to the entire disarmament and non-proliferation system for weapons of mass destruction.

We are quite certain that the mechanism will not be conducting objective investigations. Experience has shown that rather than the procedures established by the Convention for the collection of evidence and the maintenance of the chain of custody, the ruling concept right now is that of "highly likely". Russia has consistently supported the creation under the auspices of the Security Council of an impartial and highly professional international mechanism to investigate cases of chemical terrorism in the Middle East, in strict compliance with the CWC's high standards. However, all of our proposals have come up against sharp opposition from Western States, which prefer to exploit the continuing provocations related to the use of toxins, such as the incident in Douma on 7 April 2018, in order to discredit Syria's legitimate authorities.

We support efforts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and welcome Tanzania's ratification of the Convention, which we consider a genuine step forward on the road to strengthening biological security both on the African continent and in the world as a whole. The BWC Meeting of Experts in Geneva in August reached a successful conclusion. It considered specific proposals to improve the implementation of the Convention, including Russian initiatives on establishing mobile medical biological units in the Convention's format and creating a scientific advisory committee. Their implementation will genuinely help to strengthen the Convention's regime. We believe it is essential to strengthen the intersessional

work of the BWC in every possible way. It is supposed to bring States' positions closer together in order to expedite the adoption and implementation of measures that can reduce the threat of biological weapons.

Ms. Bassols Delgado (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (A/C.1/74/PV.13). The full text of our statement will be made available on PaperSmart.

We all share the concerns about the future of the non-proliferation regime. In recent years, no encouraging progress has been made and in fact we have seen very worrying retrogression. We firmly believe that we must continue to uphold the agreements we have made, adapting them where necessary to address new realities.

We welcome the recent successes related to the Chemical Weapons Convention, thanks to international chemical-disarmament efforts and the valuable work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). However, the chemical-weapon attacks we have seen in the past few years and months have created the risk of a re-emergence of chemical weapons that we must respond to. The international community cannot remain passive in the face of these indiscriminating types of weapons. We must work to prevent their use and to determine and prosecute those responsible. That is why we should support the OPCW's excellent work, not only in the area of disarmament, such as the processing and destruction of substances and equipment from the Libyan chemical programme, but also in investigating and attributing responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict. We should also extend that support to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. We must send a clear and unequivocal message that the use of chemical weapons cannot go unpunished.

The development and proliferation of biological weapons of mass destruction constitute one of the main threats to the security of the international community. It is a genuine threat that we have seen emerge in the various attacks carried out with toxic biological weapons. The key pillars of the international legal architecture to combat that threat remain the Biological Weapons Convention and its Review Conferences, along

with Security Council 1540 (2004). In its belief that all of these instruments and measures are essential, Spain has adopted through its National Security Council a national bio-custody plan that provides structure and organization to all of its national institutions with responsibility in the area of biological security.

Mr. Yakut (Turkey): The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to endanger international security. The risk of the acquisition of such weapons by non-State actors is a matter of deep concern. Turkey attaches great importance to collective efforts aimed at reversing that alarming trend. We fully support arms-control and non-proliferation treaties, as well as export-control regimes, as a means to prevent that proliferation.

We reiterate our firm belief that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances is a crime against humanity, a violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Turkey strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons, which has re-emerged decades after the entry into force of those important international documents, with no accountability. The case of Syria is a matter of particular concern in that regard. Following the non-renewal of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, the decision taken at the fourth special session of the Conference of State Parties to the CWC to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria was a critical step in filling a gap. The implementation of that decision remains an urgent priority. In that context, we welcome the establishment this year of the Investigation and Identification Team and support its efforts to identify the perpetrators of chemical-weapon attacks in Syria.

The cooperation between the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 is also significant to the efforts to combat impunity for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We commend the ongoing work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, which has continued to make a substantial contribution to investigating the use of

chemical weapons in that country. We reiterate our strong support for the important work of the Fact-finding Mission and the Declaration Assessment Team. We again stress our full trust in the professionalism, impartiality and objectivity of the findings of the reports of the Fact-finding Mission, including regarding the incident involving the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon in Douma last year. On the other hand, we are also concerned about the remaining gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian regime's declaration regarding its chemical-weapon programme and stockpiles, and we urge the regime to fully cooperate with the OPCW in accordance with its obligations under the CWC. Today we want to reiterate our strong support to the CWC as an essential pillar of the international disarmament and counter-proliferation architecture. We would like to join others in their call for the universalization of the Convention and in inviting the remaining four States that have not yet done so to become party to it.

Turkey reiterates its support to the Biological Weapons Convention as the main framework dealing with the use of such substances and to the efforts to achieve its universalization.

Mr. Thein (Myanmar): Myanmar aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

The existence and proliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons and their means of delivery pose a serious threat to international peace and security and definitely to the future of humankind. The number of armed conflicts has increased, while tensions are rising among States. Myanmar is deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the damage they would do to humankind's survival. Nuclear-weapon accidents and the possibility that terrorists might use nuclear weapons are also growing concerns in the world today. It will be crucial to redouble our efforts to make tangible progress in disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. We believe that heightened tensions and dangers can be resolved through constructive political dialogue, negotiations and engagement.

Chemical weapons should no longer exist in today's world, as they have an indiscriminate effect on human

beings and the natural environment. We have witnessed the significant achievements made in universalizing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and destroying declared chemical weapons under the able guidance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It is estimated that approximately 97 per cent of all declared chemical weapons have been successfully destroyed and that destruction verified by the OPCW. We hope that progress continues to be made on the destruction of remaining stockpiles. Myanmar encourages States to adhere to the provisions of the CWC and establish national measures in compliance with the Convention. That could also prevent the possibility of lethal chemicals getting into the hands of terrorists, who could use them to make chemical weapons to be employed against civilians.

Myanmar believes in the important role of the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), its Meetings of Experts and Meetings of States Parties, as well as their efforts to encourage all States to effectively implement the provisions of the Convention and strengthen the relevant preventive measures, which include information-sharing and cooperation in the areas of response and preparedness. We were encouraged by the fact that during the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the BWC, delegations reached an agreement on measures to address the Convention's structural and financial issues. The only way to ensure the continued existence of humankind in a safer world free from the danger of weapons of mass destruction is to fully implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In conclusion, we call on all States to adhere to the relevant disarmament treaties and to continue to work to realize the global disarmament agenda by making effective use of multilateralism in good faith.

Ms. Kamal (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to once again express its appreciation for your efforts, Mr. Chair, and those of the participating delegations. We align ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

The proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), as well as their horrific impact on humankind, demand that members of the international community work together to ban the possession and

use of such weapons under any pretext, and that they strictly abide by their legal commitments under the relevant international conventions. The State of Qatar believes that the peaceful resolution of armed conflicts is the best and most effective option for maintaining international peace and security and saving the world from the conflicts that terrorist groups exploit in efforts to acquire WMDs. To prevent such groups from achieving their goals, we need intense international efforts in line with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which stresses that nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are a threat to international peace and security.

The use of chemical weapons is a threat to the non-proliferation regime, as it exposes millions of people to death and suffering and undermines international peace and security. The international community has therefore rejected and condemned the use of chemical weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention bans their use and possession because they blatantly violate international law and international humanitarian law. This international binding instrument therefore constitutes the legal basis for condemning and repudiating the use of chemical weapons by any party, while holding the perpetrators of such use accountable and ensuring that they do not go unpunished. The international community's repudiation of such horrendous crimes was demonstrated in the General Assembly's creation of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. In that context, the international community has asserted its rejection and condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in Syria in various United Nations reports. Ensuring accountability for the perpetrators of such atrocities would help to prevent such crimes from recurring, bring justice for the victims and send a strong message to the perpetrators that there will be no impunity for their deeds.

Qatar has continued to update its national legislation on WMDs to ensure that it is in line with our commitments under the conventions to which we are party. We also support all efforts to strengthen the implementation of the relevant international conventions. On 16 October, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Qatar hosted the sixth Annual Meeting of

Representatives of the Chemical Industry and National Authorities of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, in which 25 States parties to the Convention participated, along with international experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations.

In conclusion, the major threat posed by WMDs and their use demands that we all intensify our efforts to eliminate such weapons and ensure that either they are no longer developed or that the threat of their use is ended, so that we can maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Ahmad Tajuddin (Malaysia): Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

The existence of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, remains a significant threat to international peace and security. Since its inception nearly 75 years ago, the United Nations has continued to pursue the elimination of all categories of weapons of mass destruction. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), adopted 27 years ago, was a major breakthrough, as it was the first comprehensive multilateral treaty to outlaw an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Malaysia commends the tireless efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in realizing the objectives and purpose of the CWC. We are pleased that 97 per cent of the world's chemical-weapon stockpiles have been eliminated.

Despite that remarkable progress, we deplore and condemn the recent re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, which is morally unacceptable and a flagrant breach of international law, especially the CWC. It is imperative that we hold those responsible for such heinous acts accountable. We also call on developed countries to promote international cooperation through the transfer of technology, material and equipment in this area for peaceful purposes and remove any discriminatory restrictions that are contrary to the spirit of the CWC.

As a State party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Malaysia remains committed to full adherence to the Convention. We fully support efforts to further strengthen the BWC and promote its universalization, as well as the sustained determination

of the international community in complying with the Convention's provisions. Malaysia stands ready to facilitate and will participate in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information related to the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, as enshrined in article X of the Convention. Pursuant to article IV of the Convention, we will continue to work on the requisite domestic processes aimed at adopting a national bill on biological weapons, which would further strengthen and ensure the effective implementation of the BWC in Malaysia.

In upholding the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Malaysia reiterates its firm commitment to ensuring that South-East Asia remains a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Malaysia will make every effort to continue promoting peace and stability in the region, in accordance with international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as exercising the sovereignty of our region in securing our future in a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Horne (Australia): There are no circumstances that justify the use of chemical or biological weapons, and the international community must remain steadfast in that regard. Maintaining that prohibition and preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons demands the resolve of all States that are party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). That resolve has been tested by the use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom by State and non-State actors. However, States parties have shown that they can and will respond promptly and effectively to those who challenge the CWC and its implementation.

We have demonstrated our collective resolve to hold those who use chemical weapons to account. We have ensured that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) can take on an attribution capability, including with a global reach. It is absolutely appropriate for the OPCW to undertake thorough, independent, impartial investigations so that those who violate this prohibition are identified and held to account. Identifying perpetrators is crucial if we are to deter others who believe they can use such weapons with impunity. Australia welcomes the fact that the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team is now operational and commends the thorough,

impartial and independent work of the OPCW's Fact-finding Mission and Declaration Assessment Team on Syria. We appreciate the OPCW Technical Secretariat's work in helping to build and develop the capacity of States parties to meet their obligations under the CWC.

No one is immune to the devastating, broad-ranging effects of chemical weapons, and steadfast support to the norms against their use serves all of our collective security interests. Australia is committed to the principles and objectives of the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, led by France, as set out in the joint statement of participating States at this session of the General Assembly. We are also working with Switzerland and the United States towards an understanding that the aerosolized use in law enforcement of chemicals that act on the central nervous system is inconsistent with the CWC. We strongly encourage participation in the November Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, where we will again consider important matters, which will further strengthen the CWC's effectiveness to the benefit of all.

We must continue to work collaboratively to adjust policies and regulations to reflect the new and constantly evolving threats and technologies in the area of weapons of mass destruction, including through robust export controls. Internationally, our role as permanent Chair of the Australia Group export-control regime and our active participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative make tangible contributions to international cooperation, including the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Australia is also committed to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which underpins international norms against biological weapons. We encourage all States parties to participate constructively and pragmatically at the Meeting of States Parties to the BWC in December and to look for practical ways to strengthen the Convention in the lead-up to the 2020 Review Conference and beyond.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I would like to begin by aligning myself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.13), and to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The proliferation of the use of chemical weapons in recent years is a matter of great concern for Slovenia. That is why we joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons

and appreciate the professional, independent and impartial work of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and of the OPCW's Fact-finding Mission and Declaration Assessment Team. Slovenia strongly supports the implementation of the decision taken at the special session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in June last year, which led to the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team, to which Slovenia has provided a voluntary contribution. We believe that the Team's professional and impartial work will greatly contribute to identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. In order to enable the OPCW to fully perform the tasks related to its mandate in the future, Slovenia has also made a voluntary contribution to the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology.

Lastly, I would again like to call on all States that are not yet party to the CWC to join the Convention and contribute to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.44.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Hungary fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.13).

I have asked for the floor only to briefly introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.44, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), a key pillar of the international community's efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Following the practice of previous years, after extensive open-ended informal consultations Hungary has submitted this draft resolution on the BWC. In addition to technical updates, this year's draft resolution contains a new preambular paragraph on the equitable participation of women and men in the framework of the Convention. The changes to the operative part of the draft resolution reflect the decisions taken at the most recent Meeting of States Parties to the BWC, concerning financial matters and the need to continue considering ways to address these serious issues as a matter of urgency. In the light of the ongoing major renovations at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, another change in the text urges that the next Meeting of States Parties, to be held in

December, agree on practical arrangements for the ninth Review Conference.

Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the BWC. I would like to take this opportunity to thank member States for the flexibility they have shown in the three rounds of informal consultations here in New York, and to express our hope that the draft resolution will again be adopted by consensus, as has been the case every year so far. In that context, I would like to emphasize that by adopting the draft resolution by consensus, the international community expresses its firm belief that the Convention is essential to maintaining international peace and security and reaffirms its unequivocal support for the prohibition of biological weapons.

Mr. Chen Wei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China firmly supports the purposes and objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as well as the continuing enhancement of their universality, effectiveness and authority. We urge all States to comply strictly with the provisions of the CWC in order to seek consensus-based solutions to major issues in an objective, partial and professional manner rather than wilfully resorting to votes or targeting certain countries for political purposes.

Any efforts to resolve the chemical-weapon issue in Syria must be conducive to promoting the Syrian political settlement process and to maintaining peace and stability in Syria and the Middle East. China is opposed to the decision taken last year regarding attribution of the use of chemical weapons and believes that the priority now should be regulating the work of the Investigation and Identification Team and ensuring that the decision is implemented within the framework of the CWC. It is essential to take a serious approach to the comprehensive balance and effective implementation of the CWC. Particular attention should be given to intensifying the process of destroying chemical-weapon stockpiles and abandoned chemical weapons. In September China and Japan jointly invited a delegation from the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for a successful visit to the abandoned Japanese-built chemical-weapon facility in Harbaling that is now used for the destruction of those weapons. China calls on Japan to continue to make concrete efforts to fulfil its obligations, scale up its efforts to thoroughly destroy

its abandoned chemical weapons according to schedule and properly tackle such issues as contaminated soil.

The core objective and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention is chemical-weapon disarmament. China welcomes the successive completion by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Russian Federation, Libya and Iraq of the destruction of their chemical weapons. We are seriously concerned about the fact that a certain State party that is a possessor of chemical weapons did not meet the final extended deadline for the destruction of its chemical weapons. China urges the United States, as the only remaining State party that possesses chemical weapons, to make concrete efforts to fulfil its obligations and complete the destruction of its chemical weapons by the specified deadline.

China has consistently and strictly implemented the BWC. We support the negotiation of a legally binding protocol that includes a verification mechanism. China has actively promoted the development of a voluntary model code of conduct for bioscientists and has also proposed the establishment of a regime for biological non-proliferation export controls and international cooperation within the framework of the BWC. China is steadily advancing its legislative process on biosecurity. On Monday we submitted our draft biosecurity law to the National People's Congress standing committee for deliberation.

Only a couple of days ago, China and the United Nations co-hosted a third training course for points of contact in the Asia-Pacific region of the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), in which representatives from countries of the Asia-Pacific region, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the OPCW, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and other international organizations and regimes participated. China solemnly emphasized that the international non-proliferation regime should be improved by establishing an open and inclusive global non-proliferation export-control mechanism, among other things, so as to ensure that all countries can enjoy the benefits of the peaceful uses of science and technology while promoting the goal of non-proliferation. The full version of my statement will be uploaded on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Fiallo Karolys (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to reiterate my country's commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological

Weapons Convention. We are a party to both and support their implementation and universalization. Ecuador condemns the use of such weapons by any actor, State or non-State, as it is contrary to international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We reiterate that there should be no impunity for crimes in this regard anywhere in the world.

Article 15 of my country's Constitution prohibits the development, production, possession, marketing, import, transport, storage and use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as highly toxic persistent organic pollutants, internationally prohibited agrochemicals, harmful experimental biological technologies and agents and genetically modified organisms that harm human health or threaten food sovereignty or ecosystems, and we prohibit the introduction of nuclear and toxic wastes into our national territory. In that light, the very existence of chemical and biological weapons is therefore just as immoral as that of any weapon of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. We therefore call for the elimination of chemical and biological weapons without further delay, and we also call on the nuclear-weapon States to end their production and possession of nuclear weapons and to eliminate them.

I would like to take advantage of this debate to reiterate Ecuador's full support for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In fact, a regional exercise to respond to chemical emergencies had been scheduled to take place from 14 to 18 October in Quito, but unfortunately, due to reasons of force majeure that are well known, it has had to be postponed to an as yet undetermined date. It is an honour for my country of Ecuador to continue cooperating in this regard with the OPCW, the States of the region and the world. The full version of my statement will be made available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Based on the belief of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic that the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, is immoral and to be repudiated and condemned, on its firm belief in the importance of achieving a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and of proving to the world that it opposes any use of chemical weapons, my country acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and implemented all of its commitments under the Convention. We ended our chemical-weapon programme

and ensured the destruction of all our production facilities and chemical stocks, which was done outside Syrian territory on Western ships, first among them the United States vessel MV Cape Ray. Accordingly, Syria no longer possesses any of the chemical weapons or chemical substances that are banned by the Convention. My country has cooperated with the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its Director-General in every way, and we are fully prepared to continue our discussions of all outstanding matters and address all issues of common interest. That is now up to the OPCW, whose Director-General has suspended those discussions.

We emphasize here that since we acceded to the Convention in 2013, Syria's cooperation with the OPCW has gone beyond what is required by the Convention. We are still waiting for teams to arrive from the OPCW's Fact-finding Mission in Syria to continue their investigation of the incidents that we have reported, including those in Kharbit Masasneh, Kleib Al-Thor, the Yarmouk camp and Aleppo. Certain Western States, led by the United States, Britain, France and Germany, have continued to mislead the international community with lies and fabrications that are morally and practically unacceptable. In that regard, we object to recent statements by the United States Secretary of State, which are nothing but shameful lies that trespass on the authority of the OPCW, in which he accused the Syrian army of using chlorine gas in the Latakia countryside. It would have been better for the United States Administration to declare that it is serious about its commitment to destroying its own chemical stockpile. We here are all confident that the United States will not eliminate any of its own weapons of mass destruction. That is why it is conducting activities developing new biological weapons on the territories of other States.

It is the terrorist organizations that are supported and trained in the use of chemical weapons by Turkey, the United States, France, Britain and Israel, together with various other States, that constitute the real threat confronting every country in the world. The full version of our statement will be available on PaperSmart.

The Chair: We have heard from the last speaker on the cluster "Other weapons of mass destruction". I shall now call on speakers who have asked to speak in right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): All of us in this room are aware of the ways that the United States Administration uses lies and fraud to fabricate the accusations in its policies. We all remember the lie about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that resulted in the destruction of that country and the presence of terrorist organizations in our region. That is why we have to once again remind everyone here that the United States is in no position, politically or morally, to make accusations about other countries.

For Britain, the creation by British intelligence officer James Le Mesurier of the terrorist organization known as the White Helmets was a source of pride. As we all know, the White Helmets are a propaganda tool of the Al-Nusra Front terrorist organization, which is linked to Al-Qaida in Syria. The British regime is the true founder of the White Helmets terrorist organization, which is behind the fabrication of chemical incidents designed to mislead public opinion against my country, of course. We have previously stated that this British policy is a toxin with no antidote.

As for what the representative of the French regime said in his statement about preventing impunity, the issue here is whether or not the French regime will prosecute one of its former Foreign Ministers, Laurent Fabius, who was involved in the 2013 chemical incident in eastern Ghouta, in Damascus. The French regime must stop sending French chemical experts and toxic chemical substances to terrorist groups in my country.

The representative of Germany may be able to inform the Committee about his country's violation nine years ago of its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention and about how that file was quickly closed. Some northern European regimes on whose behalf the Norwegian representative spoke are involved in sending terrorists to my country, Syria, including some with extensive experience in making toxic chemicals. I would like to ask them from this rostrum to stop sending terrorist groups to my country.

Syria has committed to all the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and complied with all of its obligations. We reject the unacceptable and pointless remarks of the representative of the European Union (EU) in her statement. The EU knows that our chemical stockpile was destroyed outside my country on Norwegian and Danish ships from Europe. We all know that the EU representatives have made a profession of lying, hypocritical statements. It is their custom to

make baseless claims about countries that refuse to commit to their instructions and policies and are not affiliated with them. Quite a number of European Union countries have supplied armed terrorist groups, particularly Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front, with toxic chemical materials to be used in my country. In addition, they have sent European experts specializing in toxic chemical materials to train terrorist groups on mixing and using toxic chemicals. If the representatives of the European Union were serious, they would have conducted an investigation to find out the truth and reveal it to the world rather than lying. They should reveal the names of the States involved in delivering toxic chemical substances to the armed terrorist groups in my country, or the names of the States that have organized the transfer of terrorists, weapons, materiel and munitions to terrorist organizations that are on the Security Council's terrorism lists.

The Turkish regime is the regime primarily responsible for all the chemical incidents in my country. It has allowed its territories to be used for training terrorists in using toxic chemical weapons. It has also allowed toxic chemical substances to be transferred to terrorists in Syria through the border between Syria and Turkey, as well as chemical warhead missiles, and it has supervised the distribution of those missiles among the armed terrorist groups.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to speak about a number of statements that have accused Russia of violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and to draw the attention of the countries making the accusations to the following facts.

Today the United States remains the only State party to the CWC that still possesses a military arsenal of about 2,000 tons of chemical weapons based on mustard gas, VX and sarin and other substances. The pace at which the United States is destroying its chemical weapons continues to be very slow, which raises doubts about its commitment to its main obligations under paragraph 2 of article I of the CWC. Washington has actually continued to develop and improve its chemical weapons, in violation of paragraph 1 (a) of article I. It is well known that the United States has issued some 500 patents for military applications in the area of the production of chemical weapons and their means of delivery and use, including binary contents.

The United States is not complying with its obligations regarding its declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the facts of its manufacture of chemical weapons on the territory of other countries in connection with article III of the CWC. Washington has not acknowledged the American origins of munitions left in Panama that contained phosgene, although the OPCW Technical Secretariat experts confirmed that as long ago as 2002. In Cambodia in 2012 large amounts of buried chemical munitions belonging to the United States were discovered and their origins confirmed by a special OPCW commission. The United States has distanced itself from dealing with the problem. According to reliable sources we know that the United States participated in deliveries to Iraq of chemical weapons and technologies for their production during the Iran-Iraq conflict. Wanting to conceal its participation in expanding Iraq's technical military capacity during Saddam Hussein's rule, the United States secretly, without the involvement of the OPCW, destroyed about 4,500 munitions armed with chemicals, thereby violating article III of the CWC.

In 2003 and 2015, in contravention of paragraph 5 of article I, the United States adopted a number of documents authorizing the possibility of using chemical substances in combating disturbances in order to resolve military problems. With regard to those CWC provisions that the United States does not overtly violate, Washington has followed a selective approach by maintaining 28 reservations about them. In that way the United States authorities can refuse to admit international inspections, forbid the removal outside the country of chemical tests made on United States territory or impose restrictions on the conduct of the inspections themselves. The Americans also continue to maintain reservations regarding the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Among other things, the reservations provide for the possibility of the retaliatory use of chemical methods for temporarily disabling purposes.

We urge the countries of Europe to turn their attention to the real violations of the CWC by the United States, which is a strategic ally of the majority of European countries, rather than making accusations about us and other States.

Mrs. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): In response to a few delegations that mentioned Israel in their statements, especially some from the Middle East, I would like to stress the accurate facts that Israel has been a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) since 1993 and is also a signatory to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which sets the norm. Being a party or signatory to arms-control and disarmament treaties such as the CWC and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons without implementing or complying with them, as is the case with Iran in Syria, is not relevant.

Israel has a robust national export-control mechanism that embodies the norms, goals and obligations of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Israel acts in the spirit of the Convention and shares the set of values it represents, unlike others in the region that are parties to the Convention but violate it, and unlike others that have not signed it at all. In response to the statement by the representative of the Iranian regime, it is very clear that Iran is a serial violator of the obligations that it has taken upon itself so far.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have taken the floor in exercise of my delegation's right of reply with regard to the statement by the representative of France concerning the relationship between Iran's ballistic-missile programme and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). Iran's ballistic missiles are designed for purely defensive purposes with conventional capability and have no relationship to the substance of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The French delegation's claims and assertions are therefore unfounded and unacceptable. Iran's defensive capability is an effective means for promoting and maintaining stability in the region and deterring aggression against the Iranian nation. France should understand and know that the irresponsible transfer and export of billions of euros' worth of weapons to the countries of the Middle East that are involved in conflict and military aggression against other nations in the region is the most destabilizing action it could possibly take. Those transfers and exports are in violation of France's commitment under the Arms Trade Treaty and the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. We call on France to respect its international obligations and refrain from exporting weapons to countries involved in conflict, occupation and aggression in the Middle East.

I will not dignify the assertions by the representative of the criminal Israeli regime with a response other than to reject them.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply to a couple of statements made today. With regard to the remarks by my Russian colleague and some others who made a similar point, I have said this over the past couple of years. The United States is on track to complete the destruction of its chemical-weapon stockpile by 2023. We have been very clear about that. The process has been very transparent.

In listening to my Russian colleague in attributing certain things to so-called reliable sources, I would just suggest that the Committee be careful about what it hears based on Russia's reliable sources, which do not enjoy much credibility, to say the least. I do want to say that the United States is quite pleased about the fact that Russia completed the destruction of its chemical-weapon stockpile in 2017. Unfortunately, our Russian colleague forgot to mention — and this is an important point for those who are new here and may not have heard it — that the United States provided approximately \$1 billion of financial assistance in in-kind contributions to the destruction of Russia's chemical-weapon stockpile. And Russia is very welcome.

In response to the representative of the Syrian regime, I would just note that he clearly has a flair for prevarication. We all know that Syria has not provided a complete declaration to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with regard to its chemical-weapon stockpile. Let us be clear that there is no debate about whether the Al-Assad regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people. That debate is over, and despite the regime and its enablers' attempts to try to shift the debate and claim that the regime did not use chemical weapons, that debate must end. It simply cannot continue, and we in this room should not listen to the voices that claim that Syria has not used chemical weapons. On top of that, for the representative of that regime to call the White Helmets a terrorist organization defies logic. It is a sad moment. I would just ask Member States and observers not to listen to the regime's representative when he patently denies that the regime used chemical weapons against its own people. We should no longer have to listen to that in this body.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to respond to the representative of Iran with regard to his country's ballistic-missile programme. Iran's missiles can be used offensively. Technically speaking, they are not defensive systems. The assertion that the Iranian missile programme is defensive in nature does not correspond to the facts. Its technological developments, especially in terms of accuracy, show that those missiles are designed to be used in theatres of operations. The systems that Iran has developed are not anti-aircraft or anti-missile defence systems. This is a sophisticated and multipurpose ballistic-missile programme whose military applications go beyond merely defensive missions.

Iranian missiles are also being used in theatres of operations in a particularly destabilizing manner by entities affiliated with Iran, and a large majority of Iranian missiles are dual-use and can deliver nuclear or conventional payloads. The high-precision Iranian missiles with conventional payloads are themselves a source of concern. That is why my delegation's statement was very specific in drawing the attention of the international community to the subject.

In response to the representative of Syria, this time with regard to the issue of chemical weapons, I had occasion during the general debate to respond several times to comments by the representative of Syria. I will be brief. I simply want to highlight a few points. I listened carefully to the debate today and yesterday (see A/C.1/74/PV.13). My understanding is that no one in this room denies that chemical weapons were used in Syria. The question is whether we will stop there and whether those crimes will go unpunished. Is the international community willing to do what must be done to identify those responsible for those attacks?

The second question we must ask is whether the Chemical Weapons Convention regime will emerge stronger if we do not identify the parties responsible for the attacks in Syria. That is a fundamental question. How can we prevent the use of such weapons in future if we do not apply the required sanctions? What kind of shape will the security of all of us be in — not just in the Middle East but worldwide — if we do not take the necessary measures and instead close the file on the chemical-weapon attacks in Syria? This is a historic challenge. If we do not take it on, we run the risk of being harshly judged not just by the victims of such attacks and their families, but by the global conscience of future generations.

Mr. Yakut (Turkey): I am exercising my right of reply in response to the remarks by the representative of the Syrian regime. Unfortunately, today we have once again heard him repeat the same baseless allegations and thereby abuse this Committee meeting. We know the reasons for them very well. It is to fabricate delusions and divert attention from the abhorrent crimes that the regime has committed against its own people. Let me say once again that the Syrian regime lost its legitimacy long ago and will eventually be held accountable for its crimes. I do not deem it necessary to dignify its representative's baseless allegations with a further response.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to respond to the remarks by my American colleague.

I would first like to remind everyone that the destruction of Russia's chemical arsenal took place in full compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, with due transparency and monitoring by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Furthermore, the complete destruction of the Russian arsenal was certified by OPCW experts. As for the \$1 billion that the United States contributed in support of the process of the destruction of Russia's chemical arsenal, I would like to remind my American colleagues that about half, or possibly more, of that sum was spent by the United States itself on administrative, protocol-related and other needs that had absolutely nothing to do with the destruction of Russia's chemical weapons. The real amount of assistance was therefore roughly \$500 million. I would like to thank the United States for that assistance on behalf of the Russian Federation.

The United States has a much larger manufacturing, technological and economic capacity than Russia did 20 years ago, and it could easily spare an amount much smaller than \$500 million in order to destroy the remaining 2,000 tons of its own chemical weapons. If we take the overall defence budget of the United States, the amount needed to eliminate the remaining United States chemical arsenal would be a drop in the ocean. I do not think that the United States is not in a position to find that drop and use it to ease the concerns of the international community, which has expressed alarm about the fact that one of the leading States of the world, laying claim to a global role, has maintained a huge arsenal of chemical weapons.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Israeli entity has violated every Security Council resolution on countering terrorism and has provided Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front organizations with toxic chemical materials, something that we informed the relevant authorities about. It has used chemical and biological weapons, as well as other prohibited substances, in its acts of aggression against Arab States.

Every time he speaks, the representative of the Turkish regime tries desperately to distract attention from his regime's involvement in facilitating the acquisition of chemical materials and even chemical weapons by terrorists. He is also trying to avoid acknowledging the fact that his regime trains terrorists in the use of chemical weapons, but we all know that the Turkish regime is involved in all the chemical attacks by the terrorists whom it supports.

As for what the representative of the United States regime said, it is well known that the United States has used chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in a number of States. Consider Viet Nam, for example, where many babies have been born with deformities as a result of United States chemical weapons. It is natural that representatives of the United States Administration should defend the White Helmets terrorist organization, because they provide it with money and information, and together with other States they have asked it to fabricate chemical incidents. The statements of United States representatives have no credibility. Everyone knows that they invent conspiracies.

We once again ask France to stop providing assistance to terrorists and sending experts to my country to support terrorists. The desire of French leaders to fan the flames of the world's recent conflicts is incomprehensible.

The Chair: The Committee will now take up the cluster on "Conventional weapons". We have a long list of speakers for this cluster, so I am asking for the full cooperation of all delegations in observing the established time limits in order to enable the Committee to avoid falling behind schedule.

Ms. Austin (Guyana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Among the several challenges to sustainable development in the Caribbean community is the high

incidence of violent crime, which has reduced citizen security, impeded socioeconomic development, eroded confidence in nation-building and heightened fear among the population. In that context, CARICOM remains seized of the need to combat the main drivers of criminality in the region, among them the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their associated ammunition. More than 70 per cent of the people who die a violent death in the Caribbean region are killed with a gun. That statistic is even more alarming when we consider that the region does not manufacture, export or re-export small arms, light weapons or their ammunition, nor does it import them on a large scale. Nevertheless, the region continues to battle the ill effects of the illicit proliferation of such weapons in our territories, and we are increasingly convinced of the need for heightened concrete action at all levels to combat this scourge, which constitutes a serious obstacle to our development efforts. Our situation is especially challenging given our porous borders, financial constraints and limited capacities.

CARICOM remains a strong advocate of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), conscious as we are of the significant contribution it makes to international and regional peace, security and stability. On 24 December, the ATT will celebrate the fifth anniversary of its entry into force, with a total number of 104 States parties. It makes adequate provision for regulating the international trade in conventional weapons and addresses critical elements, including the diversion of such weapons to illicit markets. CARICOM believes that the ATT's intended objectives should remain foremost in our minds until they are achieved, and we call on Member States to strengthen their national control systems and update their national legislation, policies and procedures to increase their compliance with their ATT obligations. On that note, CARICOM underscores the need for a strong humanitarian element in decisions on arms transfers. As the Secretary-General stated in his 2018 *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*,

"High levels of arms and ammunition in circulation contribute to insecurity, cause harm to civilians, facilitate human rights violations and impede humanitarian access."

The universalization of the ATT remains a concern for CARICOM and we urge Member States that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so as a matter of urgency. CARICOM wants to ensure its universalization

and commends States that have recently ratified it, including one of CARICOM's member States, Suriname. CARICOM is encouraged by the outcome of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, under the able presidency of Ambassador Janis Karklins of Latvia, and looks forward to the Working Groups' continued work based on the mandate given at the Conference. We again urge all States parties to act in good faith in order to ensure the Treaty's full and effective implementation.

Ms. Bonkougou (Burkina Faso), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

CARICOM also renews its support for key instruments that address the trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its accompanying International Tracing Instrument of 2005, as well as the 2005 Firearms Protocol, which complements the 2003 Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the 2014 Arms Trade Treaty. CARICOM welcomes the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which presents an opportunity to assess progress towards the implementation of the results of the June 2018 Review Conference on the Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex). The results included strong statements on many issues, such as ensuring that gender concerns are mainstreamed in policies on transfers of small arms and light weapons, as well as the destruction of surplus, confiscated, seized and collected small arms and light weapons.

CARICOM hopes that in the short-term Member States can summon the political will to hold deliberations on small arms and light weapons that are fully practical and that address all aspects of the illegal trade in such weapons, including ammunition, because the vast majority of deaths and injuries due to the use of small arms and light weapons occur during the commission of crimes.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I must ask the speaker to conclude her statement.

Ms. Austin (Guyana): CARICOM is of the view that more work must be done to promote a common understanding of how all disarmament processes, including those relating to conventional weapons, feed into the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, including Goal 16 and its related objectives.

In conclusion, CARICOM reiterates its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the various international instruments governing conventional weapons and stresses that they require global commitment and global action to succeed.

Mr. Viinanen (Finland): It is an honour for me to address this Committee on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland. A full version of this statement has been uploaded to PaperSmart.

Advancing gender equality as a cross-cutting theme throughout the entire spectrum of disarmament and arms control is a key priority for the Nordic countries. The advantages of the full and equal participation of women in disarmament and arms control are clear. The arms-control community in this room can do its part by advocating for an improved gender balance throughout the various activities debated in the First Committee.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which established norms that are widely respected and adhered to, including by States that have not ratified the Convention. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is our most successful multilateral disarmament treaty. Since its adoption in Oslo in 1997, 164 States parties have joined the Convention, nearly 53 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed and vast areas of land have been successfully cleared and released to local communities. However, established international norms are under pressure, and it is our responsibility to protect them. We are witnessing the new and widespread use of landmines of an improvised nature, many of which are produced and used as tools of war and terror by non-State actors. One of the priorities of the Norwegian presidency this year is the protection of affected communities and groups that are particularly vulnerable, including internally displaced persons and refugees.

Poorly regulated small arms and their ammunition are key enablers of violent conflict. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, which the Nordic countries fully support, highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to addressing issues of arms and ammunition. We welcome the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in

surplus, to be convened in early 2020. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) remains a high priority for the Nordic countries. In its first five years, it has already proved its value in promoting a more responsible and transparent legal trade and improving actions to counter the illegal spread of arms and ammunition. The focus of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty on gender aspects, including gender-based violence, as well as the continued attention given to the risks of diversion, are welcome and valuable.

We remain strongly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. The Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems has been an extremely valuable forum for international work on this multifaceted and exceptionally complex arms-control topic. Progress has indeed been made, including on the guiding principles, which now number 11. Strict adherence to international law, and in particular international humanitarian law, is and must continue to be the cornerstone of the use of every kind of weapon. The High Contracting Parties to the CCW should seize the opportunity to consider and clarify the normative and operational framework for lethal autonomous weapon systems. That should be done through the Group of Governmental Experts in Geneva, which we see as the appropriate forum for this topic.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the ATT, the CCW and other important multilateral conventions cannot function without adequate resources. We call on States parties that have not yet done so to pay their assessed contributions and arrears in full and without delay.

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

The Group of Arab States is paying increasing attention to combating the illicit trafficking and supply of small arms and light weapons, especially in the light of the catastrophic impact that its unprecedented rise has had on the humanitarian, economic and security situation in the Arab region. It appears that some Governments supply weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups with a view to prolonging conflicts and achieving their own prejudiced political objectives, in

violation of the most basic rules of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and a number of relevant Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2370 (2017). In that context, the Arab Group underscores the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We call for its preservation as a consensus instrument of the United Nations whose main purpose is to build trust and strengthen cooperation among the countries of the world with a view to ending the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. However, any actions undertaken in that regard must not contradict States' legitimate right to self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, or hamper the manufacture or importation of conventional weapons for that purpose.

The Arab Group stresses the importance of distinguishing between the fight against the illicit trafficking and supply of weapons, which is the Programme of Action's main objective, and the imposition of politicized, discriminatory or monopolistic restrictions on the legal trade in conventional arms between Governments according to their sovereign discretion and the nature of the security threats they face. We reiterate the importance of upholding the ban on supplying weapons to any entity without first obtaining official authorization from the competent authority of the importing State. In that regard, the Arab States once again reject any attempt to impose obligations based on non-consensus treaties and mechanisms that have not achieved universality.

The Arab Group maintains that the Programme of Action is a stand-alone international framework. It is important to ensure that its implementation does not overlap with any other international mechanisms or provoke controversy. We reaffirm the importance of enhancing international cooperation and providing technical assistance in implementing the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, including by strengthening States' capacities through the provision of the relevant modern technologies, particularly in the areas of stockpile and border control, and without interfering with State sovereignty or imposing conditions that run contrary to the spirit and objectives of the Programme of Action. The Arab Group believes that the provision of assistance to any State should not lead to a reduction of official development assistance for that State or to attempts to

find ill-defined links between assistance in the fight against illicit supplies of conventional weapons and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly with regard to target 4 of Goal 16, on the issue of illicit weapons.

We reiterate that we must focus first and foremost on bridging the gaps that hamper the effectiveness of the efforts, both by the United Nations and multilaterally, aimed at combating the illicit trafficking and supply of weapons before we consider the problem of ammunition. There is a need for an in-depth study by technical and legal experts on the technical, economic, security and legal implications of any proposals regarding the implementation of various mechanisms and rules applicable to weapons and ammunition.

I will stop at this point. My full statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Kemppainen (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania and the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States consider the universalization and effective implementation of conventional arms-control and disarmament instruments a high priority. We contribute actively to their effective functioning and achievements through office-holder positions and significant voluntary funding. We once again urge all States that have not yet done so to pay their contributions in arrears in full and without further delay.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a good example of effective multilateralism and international cooperation, combining a strong global norm with impressive results on the ground in the areas of humanitarian protection, stabilization, development and disarmament. We encourage all parties to accelerate the progress towards achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines by 2025. Our common objectives for the Oslo Review Conference are laid down in the European Council conclusions of 25 June on strengthening the ban against anti-personnel mines. The European Union and its member States are among the top donors for mine action. The combined funding

by EU institutions and member States has amounted to more than €500 million since 2014.

We would like to remind the Committee that illicit, poorly regulated or unregulated flows of arms and ammunition contribute to instability and conflicts and fuel terrorism, organized crime and violence, thereby threatening international peace and security and causing a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. The European Union advocates an integrated approach, such as that of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, with prevention at its core, in order to target the root causes of violent conflict. We call on all States Members of the United Nations, particularly the major arms exporters, importers and transit countries, to join the Arms Trade Treaty. We welcome the work done this year under Latvia's presidency to fully consider gender in relation to the Treaty. We urge States to improve their national arms export-control systems. We consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to be the appropriate global framework to counter the threat posed by illicit small arms and light weapons and call for its full and effective implementation.

In November 2018 the European Union adopted a new strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. A number of new capacity-building projects have already been launched in support of small-arms control in the Western Balkans, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. We also provide funding for a United Nations project in support of gender mainstreaming in policies, programmes and actions against small-arms trafficking and misuse. Over the past 15 years, the European Union has contracted for more than €100 million to control projects for small arms and light weapons in third countries. In line with those commitments, we have decided to become a supporter of action 22 of the Agenda for Disarmament, on securing excessive and poorly managed stockpiles.

We will mark the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions at its second Review Conference next year. The European Union supports the Convention's humanitarian goal. We also stress the importance of compliance with all the provisions of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols. Finland and Poland are chairing the respective bodies under two of the Protocols.

We appreciate the efforts to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law and to raise awareness of the risks associated with the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas and their impact on civilians and civilian objects. The EU and its member States were among the 133 States that attended the recent Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare.

The EU welcomes the outcome of the 2019 session of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We emphasize that human beings should make the decisions with regard to the use of lethal force, exert control over the lethal weapon systems they use and remain accountable for life-and-death decisions in order to ensure compliance with international law, particularly international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We call on all the High Contracting Parties to the CCW to engage constructively in order to agree on substantive recommendations regarding aspects of a normative and operational framework ahead of the Convention's 2021 Review Conference.

The full version of this statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Ke (Cambodia): I have the honour to address the First Committee today on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Cambodia.

ASEAN is deeply concerned about the illicit proliferation of conventional weapons around the world. The proliferation of conventional arms contributes to violence and instability and perpetuates poverty, undermining human welfare. More than 200,000 civilian casualties are caused every year by the use of small arms in conflict situations. ASEAN recognizes that effective regulation and control of conventional weapons is important to realizing peace, stability and sustainable development efforts. We support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which can help global efforts to regulate the flow of such weapons and combat their illicit trade at the national, regional and international levels. In that light, we look forward to the seventh Biennial Meeting of States Parties, to be

held in 2020. In line with the conclusions of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action in 2018, cooperation on efforts to achieve more efficient global control of small arms and light weapons is essential. Strengthening capacity-building measures and exchanging information and experience among partners are crucial to enhancing the regulation of conventional weapons. ASEAN supports multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures to address the global control of conventional weapons.

ASEAN welcomes the Agenda for Disarmament launched by the Secretary-General, which recognizes the immeasurable cost of human suffering resulting from the proliferation of conventional and other types of weapons. We fully support the Secretary-General's focus on saving lives through disarmament, including by mitigating the humanitarian impact of conventional arms and addressing the illicit trade in such weapons. For its part, ASEAN has been working diligently to reinforce the disarmament machinery in our region and beyond. We continue to address arms smuggling through ASEAN's Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime and our regional forums. Moreover, the annual meetings of ASEAN police chiefs enable stronger regional cooperation in transnational crime investigations. At the same time, the ASEAN Forensic Science Institute helps promote the exchange of information on forensic investigations related to illicit arms.

If we are to achieve the goal of disarmament, we need consistent international action. In that context, ASEAN notes the developments under other frameworks and international legally binding instruments, including the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We also look forward to the outcome of the fourth Review Conference of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, to be held in Oslo next month.

The ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, in Phnom Penh, was established as a regional centre of excellence to help address the humanitarian aspects of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war. The Centre facilitates appropriate medical and rehabilitation assistance for victims and strives to enhance community awareness through research and technical assistance projects. It continues to uphold ASEAN's strong cooperation with the Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Given the devastating effects of landmines on civilian populations, particularly

women and children, it is important that demining projects be developed with a holistic approach that includes victim support and a strong focus on community development. To that end, ASEAN calls on all States, particularly developed countries, to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance with ordnance clearance and the reintegration and rehabilitation of victims.

In conclusion, ASEAN recognizes the adverse effects that result from the illicit transfer of conventional weapons and the dangers posed by the presence of unexploded ordnance. Their long-lasting impact affects communities and undermines global sustainable development efforts. The international community must actively address those issues through coordinated action.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Responsible State use of conventional weapons contributes to global and regional security and stability. However, in the wrong hands, those tools of security are a source of global and regional destabilization. The international community must cooperate to reduce the risks posed by illicitly traded small arms and light weapons, including man-portable air defence systems and related ammunition. We look forward to both the 2020 Biennial Meeting of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the 2020 sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of ammunition stockpiles in surplus as opportunities to address issues raised by illicitly traded or unsecured small arms, light weapons and ammunition stockpiles.

States also must act responsibly in their weapon transfers. We applaud the work of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in reviewing the Register to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. We urge all States to demonstrate that it is by reporting to the Register.

Some States have expressed concerns about lethal autonomous weapon systems. We are prepared to continue to work in the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The Group has made significant progress on that complex topic, and we urge the CCW High Contracting Parties to endorse the

recommendations in its report (CCW/GGE.1/2019/3) and enable it to continue its work through 2021.

The United States military has robust programmes and processes for implementing international humanitarian law. Advanced technologies have been shown to improve the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Being willing to invest in such capabilities, along with the implementation of other good practices, can improve protections for civilians.

The United States participated in the recent Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare. We support the sharing of good practices on civilian protection and compliance with international humanitarian law. In our view, efforts to ban or stigmatize the use of explosive weapons are impractical and counterproductive, because they would hamper efforts to protect civilians from bad actors such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham or encourage bad actors to use human shields and to hide in urban areas. Sharing and promoting good practices through non-political, military-to-military exchanges should be our common focus.

Lastly, clearing explosive hazards contributes to stability and protects civilians. The United States is the single largest financial contributor to conventional-arms destruction efforts. Since 1993 we have provided more than \$3.4 billion in assistance to more than 100 countries in order to reduce excess arms and ammunition from State stockpiles, improve stockpile security and remediate explosive hazards. We plan to provide further support, particularly as humanitarian mine action plays an increasing role in our effort to deliver stabilization assistance in both post-conflict and conflict zones. A more detailed statement will be posted online.

Ms. Goh (Singapore): Singapore aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the statement to be delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

More than half a million people die every year due to armed conflicts and lethal armed violence. A key factor in that is the widespread availability, illegal circulation and misuse of firearms, which the international community must address. I want to make three points today.

First, Singapore is fully committed to international efforts to curb the illicit production, trafficking and trade in small arms and light weapons. A critical element in those efforts is the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument. We regret that the 2018 third Review Conference of the Programme of Action could not achieve consensus. We urge States to work collectively during the seventh Biennial Meeting of States of the Programme of Action in 2020. States should strengthen their export-control regimes, cross-border controls and relevant legislation. At the national level, Singapore maintains a robust export-control regime and legislation.

Secondly, Singapore will continue to contribute to efforts to establish common international standards in the conventional arms trade. We are a strong proponent of transparency and have been submitting annual national reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) since 1993. Singapore has also started reporting on small arms and light weapons to UNROCA, fulfilling the seven-plus-one formula. We were honoured to contribute to the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms with the aim of keeping this voluntary reporting instrument updated and relevant, and we look forward to contributing to the process in the future. We signed the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014 and are currently undertaking the necessary domestic reviews to enable its full implementation.

Thirdly, Singapore recognizes the impact that the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons can have on innocent civilians. We have consistently supported United Nations resolutions and international initiatives under the relevant conventions. We have also imposed an indefinite moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions.

States must fulfil their international obligations to curb the illicit trade and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons. However, a balance must be struck. The sovereign right of States to acquire weapons for self-defence and responsible law enforcement must be respected. Singapore reiterates its commitment to preventing and regulating the diversion and illicit trade of conventional small arms and light weapons in order

to achieve a safer and more secure world for all. 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, and I will now add some remarks in my national capacity.

The United Kingdom welcomes the positive progress we have made in international conventional arms control, which is crucial to tackling threats to life and security as part of the rules-based international system. It is in our collective interest that all the relevant instruments function. That can happen only when they are fully funded, implemented effectively and include all relevant stakeholders.

The United Kingdom remains strongly committed to the Arms Trade Treaty and its aims of effectively regulating the international trade in conventional arms and preventing their illicit trade and diversion. It is essential to consolidate the provisions of the Treaty and implement them fully in order to achieve those objectives. It is also crucial that major exporting and importing States accede to the Treaty. In that regard, we welcome China's announcement of its intention to begin the accession process. We also welcome the outcome of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and congratulate the outgoing Chair on his work.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which is celebrating its twentieth anniversary, has delivered a significant humanitarian impact. But we need to do more. The Review Conference in Oslo in November gives us an opportunity to review progress, reaffirm our commitment to our core obligations and renew our determination to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. The United Kingdom continues to make steady progress in meeting its own obligations to clear the Falkland Islands. The United Kingdom also remains deeply concerned about reports of the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions. We encourage all States to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to support draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.46, on the Convention.

The United Kingdom considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to be a vital arms-control instrument. We welcome the progress made this year by the CCW's Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We look forward to the formal endorsement of the guiding principles affirmed

by the Group at this year's Meeting of High Contracting Parties and welcome the continuation of its mandate through to the 2021 Review Conference.

The United Kingdom has consistently been at the forefront of global efforts to counter the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. It is a transnational problem, and we continue to work with individual States, regional organizations, industry and civil society to strengthen cooperation and reduce the supply of illicit weapons. The United Kingdom looks forward to the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus and to supporting its recommendations.

Mr. Elhomosany (Egypt): Egypt remain fully committed to engaging in any balanced multilateral endeavour that aims to tackle the multiple challenges and threats arising from the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, provided that those endeavours are consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and do not seek to negatively affect the rights of States to acquire their legitimate defence needs.

We continue to fully support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as an essential multilateral instrument that contributes to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We also look forward to the successful conclusion of its forthcoming Biennial Meeting of States in June 2020, which should focus mainly on preventing and combating the diversion and the illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients, as agreed at the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action in 2018.

The Middle East and Africa are facing severe threats due to the increasing illicit flows and intentional transfers of small arms and light weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups. It is obvious that a flow as unprecedented as this one is conducted with the direct support of a few States that resort to arming terrorists as a tool of their foreign policies, in clear violation of the Charter.

We reiterate that the various shortcomings of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), especially its lack of clear definitions and criteria, largely undermine its possible effectiveness and make it possible to misuse it as a tool

to manipulate and monopolize the legitimate trade in conventional weapons in a politicized manner, while ignoring the importance of preventing the intentional supply of weapons to unauthorized recipients such as terrorists and illegal armed groups. We reiterate our call to the States parties to the ATT to ensure that its implementation is consistent with the Charter and in no way infringes on the right of States to meet their national security and self-defence needs.

It is important to highlight that most of the challenges that we face today with regard to the provision of conventional arms to terrorists and illegal armed groups are due primarily not to a lack of proper export controls or inadequate stockpile security but to the fact that certain States continue to deliberately supply illicit weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups. That issue requires that the United Nations give it immediate attention and take more tangible measures to deal with it.

Mrs. Mills (Jamaica): We would like to make some additional points to those in the statement delivered by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community, with which we fully align ourselves.

The gravity of the situation in my country is manifest in the fact that Jamaica, which is neither a manufacturer nor a net importer of small arms, continues to see high homicide rates, a majority of which involve the use of a firearm. Increased ammunition recovery and seizures by the police, along with spent shells at crime scenes, also reveal a proliferation of illicit ammunition being used to perpetrate those crimes. The Secretary-General's report (A/74/187) provides an important framework for us to assess how we should confront this universal problem. We should first take a multifaceted, multipronged approach, and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament has a role to play in that regard. Another important aspect relates to the acknowledged need to ensure effective coordination on small arms, including by the United Nations system. For that reason, we applaud the work of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms. As a beneficiary of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, we also welcome the increased number of projects that have been funded since the Facility was created in 2013.

The work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLiREC) deserves

special commendation. We have had a very fruitful relationship with the Centre over the years, and we look forward to deepening that relationship in the years to come.

Significant strides are also being made at the national level to ensure that the requisite legislative and policy frameworks are in place to address the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. As part of that endeavour, we have begun engaging private security companies to prevent the diversion of licit arms and ammunition into the illicit market in order to increase accountability for private stockpiles. Our Ministry of National Security has also drafted a policy for regulating the importation of unmanned aerial vehicles. In September, in collaboration with the Government of Germany and UNLiREC, Jamaica was pleased to host a regional seminar on conventional ammunition management in preparation for the upcoming meetings in 2020 of the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) continues to be a driving force in tackling issues related to the illicit trade in small arms. We welcome the steady progress being made in the deliberations of States parties on a number of issues, not least the session on diversion. We also commend the efforts of the Latvian presidency of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the ATT for championing the gendered impact of armed violence in the context of the Treaty.

I would like to reiterate that Jamaica stands ready to work with our Government partners as well as those from civil society in addressing the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The full text of my statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Ms. Al Khalil (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of Arab States and that to be made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Iraq recognizes that the challenges posed by developments in conventional weapons have the same catastrophic implications as those of weapons of mass destruction, owing to the huge negative consequences that they are likely to have for societal development. The illicit trade in conventional weapons is a key factor

in fuelling armed conflicts and organized crime all over the world, as well as the main source of financing for terrorist groups. The random and large-scale proliferation and abundance of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition contribute to prolonging and intensifying violence. My Government therefore affirms the need for the international community to step up its efforts to establish an integrated system to combat the illicit trade in all kinds of small arms and light weapons and to ban their export and control their movement across borders with a view to building a world where security and peace can prevail. In that context, Iraq welcomed the outcome document of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex). We also look forward to a positive outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of Member States in June of next year.

The problem of the proliferation of anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions is a key issue in this area, given its environmentally and economically destructive effects. Iraq is top of the list of the States suffering from problems related to landmines. The criminal practices of Da'esh terrorist gangs whereby mines and explosives were planted in vast areas of Iraq were a major factor in preventing displaced persons from returning safely to their homes.

Iraq recognizes the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the only multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament. We emphasize once again how important it is for Member States to shoulder their full responsibility, show flexibility and demonstrate political will so that the Conference can resume its negotiating role, end the impasse it has been witnessing for almost two decades and develop a programme of work that responds to Member States' concerns. In that regard, Iraq stresses the important role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the multilateral deliberative body concerned with issues of disarmament within the United Nations. We deeply regret that the Commission did not hold its session this year, and we look forward to seeing it resume its work in the upcoming session.

Mr. Masmajan (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Conventional weapons constitute a threat to peace and security. If we want to save lives and prevent conflicts, it is essential to pay special attention to them.

The millions of stockpiled mines and cluster munitions that have been destroyed under the framework of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions will claim no more victims, and the land that has been cleared can now support socioeconomic growth. The professional and social reintegration of victims and their relatives is progressing. Unfortunately, despite these advances, many challenges remain. This year's Review Conference of the parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and next year's for the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), will enable us to define the measures needed to achieve the objectives set by the States parties — that is, to have a world free of mines by 2025 and of cluster munitions by 2030. Switzerland plans to use its presidency of the second Review Conference of the CCM to help achieve those objectives and work for the Convention's universalization.

Armed conflicts are occurring ever more frequently in urban areas, and that poses significant challenges to the protection of civilians. In that context, it is crucial for all the parties to such conflicts to strictly abide by international humanitarian law. In that regard, Switzerland supports the joint statement on the subject to be made by the representative of Ireland.

A key vector in today's conflicts is ammunition. Switzerland has been working for many years to ensure that ammunition stockpiles are managed safely and securely and to prevent their diversion. Two key areas of work in that regard are the implementation of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and their current review cycle. Although we are aware of the myriad challenges that this issue continues to pose, we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

While we welcome the progress made by the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, we believe it should intensify its efforts and from now on focus on developing concrete measures that clarify the operational and normative framework governing such weapons so as to more effectively limit the challenges that they pose. Besides lethal autonomous weapon systems, a number of technological developments also require our attention. For instance, the growing use of artificial intelligence could affect means and methods of war and command-and-control systems.

The contribution of artificial intelligence to human decision-making is growing, and we must therefore fully comply with our obligation to conduct legal reviews of those means and methods.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): The destabilizing effects of conventional weapons on security and stability at the regional and subregional levels, as well as their humanitarian toll, underscore the importance for continued action to control them, for which we need a comprehensive and equitable approach. It is also essential to ensure that the pursuit of nuclear disarmament not give way to a destabilizing conventional imbalance. The final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament provides clear direction in that regard. It says:

“Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of armed forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all States to protect their security.” (*resolution S-10/2, para. 22*)

Several worrying trends are emerging on the horizon of conventional weapons. The level and scale of global military expenditures top that list. The reflection of that troubling trend is mirrored at the regional level, particularly in South Asia, where one State's military spending dwarfs that of others, fuelling instability and jeopardizing a delicate regional balance. We remain concerned about the growing transfers of conventional armaments, especially in volatile regions, which are inconsistent with the imperatives of maintaining peace, security and stability. Policies of double standards regarding South Asia, based on strategic and commercial considerations, must cease. Pakistan is committed to the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia that includes an element of conventional-force balance. We neither want nor are engaged in an arms race in the region.

Pakistan is a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its five Protocols. We presided over the fifth CCW Review Conference in 2016 and are again serving as Chair of the annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW this year. We hope to facilitate substantive outcomes that will strengthen the CCW's implementation

and improve its financial sustainability. Pakistan is fully cognizant of the need to address the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of cluster munitions. India, which is a State party to the CCW, recently used cluster munitions in populated areas, resulting in deaths and injuries to civilians, including women and children, and damage to civilian infrastructure. That inhumane action occurred across the line of control in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, in violation of the most fundamental principles of international law. Similarly, the use of pellet guns against unarmed protesters in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir is against the spirit of the CCW, which places the civilian population under the protection and authority of the principles of international law at all times. The use of pellet guns on civilians is inconsistent with the basic tenets of international law, including the most fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Pakistan has developed the necessary legislative, regulatory, enforcement and institutional mechanisms to address the wide-ranging issues relating to the regulation of conventional arms. We remain committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and

we are keeping under review our potential accession to the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. The next meeting of the Committee will take place tomorrow morning, Thursday, 24 October, at 10 a.m. in this conference room. The Committee will first engage in an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and hear briefings by other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament. Thereafter the Committee will resume its consideration of the “Conventional weapons” cluster.

I would like to remind all delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic discussion segment will close today at 6 p.m. I also want to remind delegations that they should remain seated for the informal meeting convened by the Office for Disarmament Affairs announcing the endorsement of the Chair-designate for the 2020 seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which will take place in this conference room immediately after the meeting.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.