



# General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

## First Committee

5<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thursday, 5 October 2023, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Paulauskas . . . . . (Lithuania)

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

### Agenda items 90 to 106 (continued)

#### General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Chair:** I count on the cooperation of delegations in respecting the time limit for statements and to speak at a reasonable speed to allow for adequate interpretation. Longer statements can be posted on the eStatements portal.

**Mr. Sun Xiaobo (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its current session. We assure you of our full cooperation with you and other delegations to make this session a full success.

At present, in the area of international security, the obsolete cold-war mentality of a zero-sum game and bloc confrontation are resurfacing. Geopolitical conflicts continue to escalate, undermining global strategic balance and stability. In the face of multiple risks and challenges, Chinese President Xi Jinping has proposed a Global Security Initiative, offering China's input on achieving lasting peace in the world.

I wish to further elaborate on China's position and proposals.

First, it is key to jointly uphold global strategic stability. President Xi Jinping has pointed out on many occasions that nuclear weapons must not be used and that a nuclear war must never be fought. In January last year, leaders of the five permanent members of the

Security Council issued a joint statement on preventing nuclear war and averting an arms race. China supports the implementation of the joint statement so as to uphold strategic stability and reduce strategic risks.

The policy of no first use of nuclear weapons should be widely adopted. China calls on nuclear-weapon States to negotiate and conclude a treaty on mutual no first use of nuclear weapons and an international legal instrument on security assurances. Nuclear disarmament should be achieved in a fair and reasonable process of gradual and balanced reduction, following the principles of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all in a step-by-step, rational and pragmatic manner.

States with the largest nuclear arsenals should earnestly fulfil their special and primary responsibilities in nuclear disarmament, continue to effectively implement New START and further drastically and substantively reduce their nuclear arsenals to create conditions for other nuclear-weapon States to join the process.

Intermediate-range missile and missile defence issues have an impact on global strategic stability, regional peace and security, and strategic mutual trust among major Powers. A certain country has hyped up the threats posed by other countries, deployed weapons systems around the world, even at the doorstep of other countries far away from its homeland, and strengthened so-called extended deterrence. It even seeks to extend nuclear-sharing arrangements to the Asia-Pacific region. China strongly urges the countries concerned to adopt a responsible approach and to stop such extremely dangerous and wrong acts.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0928 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

23-28932(E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



Secondly, we must firmly uphold the current nuclear non-proliferation regime. Nuclear non-proliferation is the shared vision of the international community. As the new review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) starts, China advocates promoting the three major goals established by the NPT in a balanced manner. China will continue to fulfil its obligations in good faith; firmly uphold the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its cornerstone; actively support international cooperation on peaceful uses; and strive to ensure positive outcomes for the review process.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is the only proper solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. The United States must make a political decision, respond actively to the legitimate concerns of Iran and work to restart negotiations on a return to compliance. The parties concerned should step up diplomatic efforts to restore the full and effective implementation of the agreement at an early date.

The crux of the Korean peninsula nuclear issue is the absence of a peace mechanism and the remnants of the cold war. All parties should address their legitimate security concerns in a balanced manner through dialogue and follow the dual-track approach to establish a peace mechanism and realized denuclearization on the peninsula.

The Australia, United Kingdom and United States nuclear-powered submarine cooperation contravenes the object and purpose of the NPT, undermines International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, poses serious proliferation risks and endangers regional peace and stability. China stands for an open, inclusive, transparent and sustainable intergovernmental process to discuss the relevant safeguards arrangement and make decisions by consensus. Pending that, those three countries should not proceed with the relevant cooperation.

The Japanese Government should fully respond to the concerns of the international community about the release of nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean and fulfil its international obligation in good faith to stop the discharge; fully consult with stakeholders, including neighbouring countries; dispose of the nuclear-contaminated water in a responsible manner; and accept stringent international monitoring.

Thirdly, there is a need to strictly abide by international security norms. China consistently supports the purposes and objectives of the Biological

Weapons Convention (BWC) and welcomes the establishment at the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC of a Working Group on the strengthening of the Convention. China calls on the international community to jointly advocate responsible scientific research in the biological field and encourages all stakeholders to adopt voluntarily the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists.

With the completion of the destruction of global chemical-weapons stockpiles, we should actively promote the transition of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and focus its resources on priority areas such as international cooperation and the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons. China urges Japan to speed up the destruction of the chemical weapons that it abandoned on the territory of China.

Fourthly, it is vital to continue to strengthen governance of emerging technologies. China proposes that within the framework of the United Nations, using the Global Initiative on Data Security as a blueprint and focusing on critical issues such as data security, we should develop common rules on globally interoperable Internet data and supply-chain security in order to foster a cyberspace that is more equitable, fair, open, inclusive, secure, stable and dynamic, and work together to build a community with a shared future in cyberspace.

In order to realize the peaceful use of outer space, we must first prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. China calls for the early start of negotiations on an outer space arms-control treaty to ensure a fruitful outcome for the new Group of Governmental Experts on prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Regarding global artificial intelligence (AI) governance, China supports the role of the United Nations as the main channel to facilitate the joint exploration of effective ways to mitigate risks; to ensure that AI is safe, reliable and controllable; and to deliver its technologies to humankind, including developing countries.

Fifthly, we must continue to uphold multilateral arms-control mechanisms. The existing multilateral arms-control and disarmament mechanisms have played an irreplaceable role in maintaining the stability of the international security order.

China supports the international arms-control process on conventional weapons and fully fulfils its obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty. China is steadily advancing domestic procedures to ratify the United Nations Firearms Protocol and will continue to support the implementation of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030 initiative.

**The Chair:** I apologize, but the representative of China has exceeded the time limit that the First Committee has imposed on itself. The full version of his statement can be posted to the e-deleGATE portal. I also thank him for the kind words he addressed to me and to the Bureau.

**Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. You can count on Bulgaria's full support.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.2). I would like to highlight several points of particular importance to my country.

We deeply regret the fact that yet again the First Committee is convening under extremely difficult security circumstances, caused by the Russian Federation's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine. Since February 2022, Moscow has been continuously demonstrating its complete disrespect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international human rights law. The results of its actions are the loss of innocent human lives, forced displacements, human rights violations, the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure, severe environmental damage and worldwide food insecurity and economic crises.

The Russian Federation, a nuclear-weapon State and a permanent member of the Security Council, is also deliberately subverting the global arms-control and non-proliferation architecture by withdrawing from key arms-control agreements, violating the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, undermining the safety and security of the nuclear power plants on Ukraine's territory and threatening the world with the use of nuclear weapons.

Bulgaria strongly condemns Russia's irresponsible and dangerous behaviour and once again calls on it to end its war of choice now, abide by its international commitments and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

It is evident that our troubled world needs further progress on nuclear disarmament and a strengthened non-proliferation regime now more than ever. Bulgaria reiterates its commitment to the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We believe that nuclear disarmament should be effective, verifiable and irreversible and that it can be attained only within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) framework, namely its article VI, and through a progressive approach based on mutual trust.

The absence of a consensual report from the first session of the NPT Preparatory Committee, less than a year after the failure to adopt an outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, is regrettable. However, NPT States parties must continue exploring all avenues to bridge their differences during the current NPT review cycle. We cannot afford another missed opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen the Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and a framework for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

As an annex 2 country that has signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Bulgaria continues to urge all States, in particular annex 2 States that have not done so yet, to sign and ratify the Treaty without any delay. Its entry into force will be a crucial step towards the ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Bulgaria is particularly honoured to be among the newly elected Vice-Chairs of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). During our term we will spare no effort to counter global non-proliferation challenges and threats to nuclear security and safety, as well as to promote the benefits of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

We also call on Iran to come back to its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to compliance with the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and with the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements.

Bulgaria remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and all decisions taken by its States parties. We deplore the fact that the Russian Federation

and Syria obstructed the adoption of a consensual outcome document by the fifth session of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the CWC in May this year. Syria's repeated use of chemical weapons has been thoroughly investigated by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the Russian Federation must stop shielding Syria as concerns its failure to comply with its obligations under the Convention.

As a member of the Executive Council, Bulgaria will continue its strong support for the efforts of the organization aimed at ensuring that all perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or those otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons will be held accountable.

Despite all the challenges that the global arms-control and non-proliferation architecture is facing, we are encouraged by the successful outcome of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which proves that the international community is still able to overcome differences and achieve consensus in order to reiterate its commitments to the ban against biological and toxin weapons and to strengthen the institutional capabilities of the Convention.

Making progress in the area of conventional weapons is of equal importance. The increased use of antipersonnel land mines and cluster munitions, especially since the beginning of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, poses grave threats to the civilian population. That indiscriminate means of war contaminates lands and waters and deprives people of their use for agriculture and other economic purposes, thus exacerbating the ongoing food crisis.

Bulgaria is fully committed to the humanitarian objectives of the Antipersonnel Landmines Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, aiming to prevent the unnecessary suffering of civilians during conflict and in post-conflict situations, and to their universalization. We are proud to announce that this year Bulgaria completed its process of the destruction of all cluster munitions stockpiles in possession of the Bulgarian armed forces. That marks the fulfilment of Bulgaria's obligations in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We welcome the adoption of the final report of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework

that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management. We also hope that the fourth 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 will manage to build on the successful outcome of the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States.

Finally, we are encouraged by the fact that Working Group II of the United Nations Disarmament Commission managed to adopt by consensus its recommendations on promoting the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. We congratulate the Chair on that achievement. We will continue to work on improving and modernizing the disarmament machinery in order to keep it fit for purpose.

**Ms. Rodríguez Mancía** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations, and the other members of the Bureau on their election. Be assured of the full support and cooperation of Guatemala in carrying out the work of the First Committee.

My country is firmly committed to the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are a strong promoter of general and complete disarmament. We will never tire of recalling that only in a world free of nuclear weapons will it be possible to speak of peace and security.

Nuclear disarmament is a theme of vital importance for global security and the survival of humankind. Nuclear weapons represent an existential threat that must be addressed urgently and in a decisive fashion. Today more than ever, we are facing an international situation marked by threats to peace and security, confrontation, the polarization of ideas, the imposition of interests and the consequent breakdown in trust between Powers.

The illegal, unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is a clear example and has put the Ukrainian people on the front lines of the direct consequences of the war. Guatemala reiterates its unequivocal backing of the territorial integrity of the country, as recognized and supported by international law.

In that regard, we strongly condemn Russia's actions with respect to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant, a situation that makes us vulnerable to a potential



disaster. That is compounded by the lack of quantitative steps forward in the area of the reduction of nuclear arsenals and the growing threat of nuclear-weapon States perfecting or increasing them.

It is extremely worrisome that current spending on arms continues to increase even as it is being said that there are not sufficient resources to address the challenges that afflict our people, such as hunger, poverty and disease. Guatemala is convinced that coexistence in a world without nuclear weapons is possible and that maintaining international peace and security without the use of the nuclear deterrent is, in addition to being an ethical imperative, an achievable objective, in line with the goals of this forum.

My country's commitment to nuclear disarmament is reflected in our being a State party to the international treaties on the issue and the particular interest we have in their effective implementation. We recognize that Latin America and the Caribbean have contributed not only to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation but also to regional and global peace and security through the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

As a peace-loving nation, we welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which represents a milestone and a major step that legally obligates us to eliminate nuclear weapons and complements the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, strengthening the three pillars of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of any type of nuclear test, wherever it may occur and by any actor. In that regard, we call on all States listed in annex 2 to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to accelerate the process of signature and ratification without further delay so that the Treaty can enter into force as soon as possible.

In addition, my delegation believes that outer space is governed by the principles of non-appropriation and use and cooperation, and at the same time it expresses its concern about a possible arms race in outer space, taking into account the fact that that has the potential to destabilize international relations. It could also increase the threat of military confrontation and have a negative impact on peaceful exploration.

We also highlight the importance of opting for the elimination of the production of fissile material and bringing about a significant reduction in such material. That would disincentivize the accumulation of reserves for the manufacture of nuclear weapons and could encourage nations to reduce their existing nuclear arsenals and strengthen States' commitment to non-proliferation. In that regard, we issue a call for progress to be made on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

As concerns chemical and biological weapons and their devastating effects not only for humankind but for the environment, my delegation strongly condemns the use of such weapons by any person under any circumstances. Such weapons have the potential to cause suffering and death in an indiscriminate manner, which is why they are legally prohibited in the respective conventions on the issue. We must prevent their proliferation and bring those who resort to the use of such weapons to justice, using the legitimate and legal mechanisms created by the international community for that purpose.

The security and protection of civilians, which has been affected throughout history by armed violence, is a priority for my Government. Armed violence is a scourge that is growing with the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which pose a threat to the protection of persons and the physical and moral integrity of inhabitants, and clearly represents an obstacle to the creation of an environment with adequate conditions to support human development in a comprehensive and sustainable way.

Guatemala welcomes the successful adoption without a vote of the final report of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management. Control of small arms and light weapons is an indispensable factor in the fight against organized crime, which is why we believe in the importance of a holistic approach.

Guatemala condemns the use of any weapons with indiscriminate effects as well as scientific and trade-related progress in the area of artificial intelligence and the use of technology with a view to the development of new weapons, which should be prohibited by means of a legally binding instrument that would include autonomous lethal weapons systems.

Full disarmament is an act of bravery and wisdom. It means renouncing the idea of resolving conflict through mass annihilation and instead embracing diplomacy, cooperation and empathy as tools for dispute resolution. That spirit must be reflected in the New Agenda for Peace and in the Summit of the Future. It is a commitment to a world in which dialogue replaces destruction and in which life and peace prevail over fear and war.

**Mr. Mohamed** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. I also congratulate the other members of your Bureau and assure you of our full support. We are confident that you will be able to skilfully and professionally lead the work of the Committee.

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Arab Group and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.2), as well as that of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/78/PV.3). I want to deliver the following statement in my national capacity.

The international situation is dangerous and complex, with emerging threats and challenges to international peace and security. Therefore, the First Committee and the entire United Nations system assume great responsibility to address that issue. As we cannot live in a world of peace and security if nuclear weapons continue to exist, we must agree on practical measures to completely eliminate such weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is facing unprecedented challenges that require us to take action to protect it. The most important challenges include the failure of two consecutive review conferences to produce a consensual outcome document. Those challenges also include a significant regression and a lack of tangible progress in terms of nuclear disarmament and implementing conventions and legal obligations, especially by nuclear-weapon States.

The complex security circumstances accompanied by efforts to increase confidence and reduce nuclear threats cannot be a pretext for delaying the implementation of effective nuclear disarmament measures. Instead of honouring their legal obligations, nuclear-weapon States continue to develop their nuclear

weapons and incorporate them into their military doctrines, increasing their spending and budgets on developing them. Utmost priority must be accorded to allocating those resources to supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing challenges due to climate change, as well as other issues of concern to the world today.

The resolution pertaining to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, contained in document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex, has always been an integral part of the indefinite extension of the NPT. However, it is unfortunate that certain parties in the Middle East region still reject that resolution and refuse to take part in conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations that garnered consensus from the countries of the region with a view to discussing details leading to a legally binding agreement related to establishing such a zone.

Those same parties refuse to join the NPT or to let the International Atomic Energy Agency oversee their nuclear programmes and facilities. That is a violation of international law and a threat to regional and international peace and security.

In the same context, the Sudan welcomes the holding of three successful sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which reflects the commitment and seriousness of the countries of the region to establish such a zone.

My delegation hopes that all States and parties involved will participate in the fourth session of the Conference, which will take place in November and be presided over by the sisterly State of Libya. We reiterate our call on all States to support the work of that conference, which is an important step towards strengthening trust and transparency and dealing with all the concerns of States prior to arriving at the stage of drafting the final text. That would help to achieve binding and sustained consensus.

Although nuclear weapons represent a major threat to the world, conventional weapons are the ones that kill the most people, and the need to control them is increasing by the day. We stress the inherent right of States to manage their conventional-weapons stockpiles and munitions in a manner commensurate with their circumstances and their security, national and regional strategies. However, there is a need to make concerted

international efforts to prohibit illicit trafficking in such weapons and prevent terrorist groups, gangs and armed militias from using them.

In that regard, the Sudan welcomes the adoption of the final document of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and hopes that the fourth Review Conference, to take place next year, will yield positive results.

My country's delegation welcomes the progress made in the area of conventional ammunition, especially after the adoption of the voluntary working framework, including voluntary policies for managing conventional ammunition throughout its life cycle.

Accelerating development in information and communications technology requires critical and continuous coordination among all States under the auspices of the United Nations. We also welcome the annual report of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies, which we believe provides the appropriate mechanism for reviewing all perspectives in a transparent and independent manner. That can help bolster confidence while taking into consideration all viewpoints. We reiterate our support for that group.

We also support the proposal to establish a legally binding mechanism to regulate State behaviour in cyberspace. Outer space is the common heritage of humankind, which is why all States must shoulder a moral responsibility and prevent an arms race in outer space and to ensure that it is used for peaceful purposes to further our common interests.

We reiterate the importance of all existing international instruments to ensure the peaceful use of outer space. However, there is a need to develop a legal mechanism that prohibits the placing of any weapons in outer space, as that could have catastrophic consequences for humankind. To that end, the Sudan supports the efforts of the Group of Governmental Experts established under resolution 72/250.

In conclusion, my country's delegation stresses that it is ready to positively participate in the work of the Committee and calls on all States to demonstrate enough flexibility and political resolve to overcome the obstacles in the area of disarmament and to emerge from the impasse of the Review Conference.

**Ms. Kesse Antwi (Ghana):** We extend our congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, and to the rest of the Bureau on your election. We wish you great success in leading us during this session and assure you of Ghana's cooperation.

Ghana associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.2) and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/78/PV.3) and wishes to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

In 2023 the world finds itself grappling with an alarming surge in violent conflicts. As highlighted by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed's sobering statement earlier this year, the world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since the end of the Second World War, with a quarter of humankind living in conflict-ridden areas.

Amid that troubling global context, Ghana remains deeply concerned about the pressing issue of nuclear disarmament. Despite the widely recognized dangers posed by nuclear weapons, nuclear-armed States continue to maintain and upgrade their arsenals. Some States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) even allow the hosting of nuclear weapons on their soil or permit their potential use through military alliances and agreements. The dream of disarmament and a world free from the looming spectre of nuclear annihilation and unchecked violence seems to be slipping further from our grasp.

To truly understand the status of disarmament, one must start with the NPT. The NPT, often described as the cornerstone of the disarmament regime, has experienced an ongoing deadlock, with a regrettable inability to achieve agreement at two successive Review Conferences. Adding to that disappointment, even the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, concluded in August, was unable to reach consensus.

In the light of those challenges, we urge all Member States to fully recommit, in their entirety, to the three pillars of the NPT: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We also stress the significance of nuclear disarmament by nuclear-weapon States and call upon them to uphold their commitment to complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization, as agreed at past NPT Review Conferences, including those held in 1995, 2000 and 2010. Additionally,

agreements on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as the Treaty of Pelindaba, remain a vital tool in the disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), another instrument that plays a pivotal role in shaping the disarmament landscape, is regrettably yet to enter into force. Despite that challenge, its robust verification regime continues to ensure that no nuclear test goes unnoticed, while its primary goal to ban all nuclear explosions has served as a vital measure in preventing the modernization of and upgrades to nuclear arsenals. We urge the remaining annex 2 States, whose ratifications are required for the CTBT to enter into force, to do so without further delay.

My delegation acknowledges that despite the rather bleak outlook on the disarmament landscape, there have been notable achievements and advancements in recent times. The landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in January 2021, stands out as a significant milestone. That treaty represents the world's first legally binding international agreement that comprehensively bans nuclear weapons. While major nuclear-armed States have chosen not to be part of the Treaty, its existence serves as a ray of hope for disarmament advocates worldwide.

Concerning other weapons of mass destruction, Ghana acknowledges the confirmation by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons of the irreversible destruction of the last chemical-weapon stockpile by the last possessor State in July. Similarly, we welcome the increased number of parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and stress the need to forge consensus towards the establishment of a verification regime.

My delegation also recognizes the essential work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and that of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We implore Member States to ignite a renewed vigour within the disarmament machinery of the United Nations and call for the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without further delay.

On the conventional arms front, although the Arms Trade Treaty has garnered a significant number of ratifications since its inception, challenges remain in enforcing its provisions and convincing major arms producers to join. The issue of conventional weapons is of particular importance to Ghana because the diversion of and illicit trade in small arms and light

weapons and their ammunition perpetuate conflicts and pose significant threats to the stability of emerging democracies across Africa. We therefore anticipate that the establishment of a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons will greatly benefit our region.

My delegation also remains concerned about the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the threat of the weaponization of outer space. Those threats to outer space, which is a common heritage of humankind, require urgent renewed focus to ensure safety for our common good.

On the issue of autonomous weapons and lethal autonomous weapons systems, the spectre of machines making life-and-death decisions without human control is a chilling prospect that the international community must prevent. Such weapons and systems pose profound challenges across the ethical, legal, security and humanitarian dimensions.

Ghana also recognizes the significant connection between disarmament and sustainable development. We believe that reducing military expenditures and advancing disarmament can free up resources to support critical Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty reduction, education, health care and environmental preservation.

In conclusion, my delegation calls on all Member States to embark on this collective endeavour for a safer world with a profound understanding of the magnitude of our responsibilities and the imperative to transcend narrow interests. We must unite our efforts, ensuring that our collective actions carry genuine meaning and efficacy. Together, through strong multilateralism, we can forge a path where peace and security prevail for the benefit of all humankind.

**Mr. Thapa (Nepal):** I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on being elected to steer the work of the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

I align my statement with that delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.2).

Once again we are convening in the midst of multiple challenges to international peace and security. Conflicts and geopolitical tensions are expanding. Polarization, distrust and dissension are rising, but



dialogue and diplomacy are sidelined. Nuclear arsenals and an arms race are on the rise. Annual global military expenditure has soared to \$2.4 trillion, and resources that should have been used to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals have been diverted.

The disarmament and non-proliferation regimes have seen setbacks in recent years. On the other hand, the modernization and upgrading of nuclear arsenals continue unchecked. It is imperative that we pause to reflect. Advanced arms or modernized nuclear weapons and the narrative of deterrence promise nothing but destruction.

Today no nation is immune to the spectre of catastrophic consequences arising from the accidental or deliberate use of nuclear weapons. For that reason, we strongly believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee of the non-use of such weapons. We call for legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Nepal's commitment to general and complete disarmament is total and unwavering. That emanates from our Constitution and remains a salient feature of our foreign policy. Nepal believes that the use or threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction is against the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and against international humanitarian, human rights and environmental law.

As a committed party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Nepal unequivocally calls for the general and complete disarmament of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner. The TPNW complements and bolsters the objective of general and complete disarmament, and Nepal is committed to ratifying it at the earliest possible date.

We consider the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We deplore the persistent failures of NPT Review Conferences to reach a consensus on a substantive outcome. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate renewed political will for the successful outcome of the eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Nuclear-weapon States must fully honour their legal obligations by ensuring the transparent, irreversible and verifiable elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We also stress the need for an early conclusion of the fissile material cut-off treaty.

Nepal lends its full support to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are building blocks of disarmament and a world free from nuclear weapons.

Nepal strongly supports the inalienable right of States, as stipulated in article IV of the NPT, to harness nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The International Atomic Energy Agency should continue promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy while strengthening its safeguards mechanism to prevent proliferation.

Nepal commends the Chemical Weapons Convention on its effective operation and verification mechanisms, which provide credibility to the regime. Likewise, the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention stands as a vital framework to prevent the weaponization of biology, and we must bolster its foundations. We need a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding mechanism to address biological threats urgently.

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons remains a persistent cause of violent death globally owing to their use by criminals and human rights abusers, including terrorists. We should continue to build on the outcome of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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.

As a global common heritage of humankind, outer space must be safeguarded against the perils of an arms race and weaponization. It should be reserved solely for peaceful endeavours. We advocate for transparency and confidence-building measures in all matters related to outer space. We are concerned that both outer space and cyberspace are poised to become arenas of conflict amid growing mistrust and confrontation.

The prospect of the malicious use of information and communications technology (ICT) and frontier technologies is looming large. Nepal emphasizes the pressing need for a global regulatory framework to ensure an open, secure, and accessible ICT and cyberspace. Developing countries should be provided support to enhance their cybersecurity capabilities.

Disarmament machinery should not be held hostage to parochial national interests. The United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament must operate effectively to propel us forward in non-proliferation and disarmament.

We support the inclusion of gender perspectives in disarmament frameworks, recognizing that women, youth and civil-society actors are catalysts for change within the disarmament architecture.

We believe that regional disarmament institutions and regimes play a crucial role in complementing the global disarmament framework by fostering dialogue and confidence-building measures. We must enhance the role of the United Nations regional centres for disarmament.

On that score, Nepal, as a host country, will submit a draft resolution entitled “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific” (A/C.1/78/L.22). My delegation looks forward to receiving the continued co-sponsorship and support of all Member States, as we have enjoyed in the past, for the adoption of that draft resolution by consensus.

In conclusion, Nepal reaffirms its commitment to the pursuit of disarmament, peace and security. Our collective future depends on the solidarity and cooperation that we forge within and beyond this Committee. Let us work together to build a safer and more peaceful world for all.

**Mr. Baissuanov** (Kazakhstan): I would like to warmly congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Paulauskas on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee as well as the members of the Bureau on their election.

Nuclear disarmament is an urgent issue and should be our collective priority. President Tokayev, in his recent address to the General Assembly (see A/78/PV.5), underscored once again that the threat of the use of nuclear weapons remains a major and the most destructive challenge for humankind. Only mutual trust and cooperation between nuclear Powers leading to a world free of nuclear weapons can produce global stability. Hence, taking practical steps in that direction is the only effective way to implement the pledge to never wage a nuclear war.

In that context, we welcome the Secretary-General’s recent call for collective action to ensure peace and security contained in his New Agenda

for Peace. His proposals, including the first one, regarding the elimination of nuclear weapons, are fully consistent with the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We are witnessing growing impatience over the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. In the meantime, real fears are increasing about the actual evidence of a nuclear build-up.

Given the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a step aimed at pursuing the full implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We join others in firmly reiterating the collective conviction that the TPNW and the NPT are compatible and mutually reinforcing.

We welcome the entry into force of the TPNW and applaud the pace of its universalization and appreciate the outcomes of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty, chaired by Austria. We are looking forward to working with the Mexican presidency and all States parties at the second meeting, to be held in November.

We devote particular attention to the humanitarian goals of the Treaty, embodied in articles 6 and 7, as positive obligations to address the harm from the use and testing of nuclear weapons and prevent future damage. Kazakhstan and Kiribati have jointly introduced a new draft resolution entitled “Addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons: providing victim assistance and environmental remediation to Member States affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons” (A/C.1/78/L.65), which aims to utilize the framework of multilateral treaties to promote victim assistance and the remediation of contaminated environments on a voluntary basis.

We are committed to engaging actively with all interested parties during the current NPT review cycle. As Chair of the second session of the Preparatory Committee, Kazakhstan will pursue a balanced and constructive approach to the advancement of the NPT’s main objectives.

We believe that the temporary voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing by the nuclear Powers cannot be a substitute for a legally binding Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Allow me to reiterate once again that nuclear testing cannot and should not be resumed for any reason or under any pretext.

Once again, we call on the remaining annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty. We also call on States, civil-society organizations, young people and academia to actively observe the International Day against Nuclear Tests on 29 August and to raise awareness across the globe about the inadmissibility of nuclear testing.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones remain an important element of global non-proliferation efforts. Kazakhstan, together with its neighbours in the region, established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia in 2006. At the Fifth Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia, the five leaders once again reconfirmed their commitment to the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and underscored the need for ratification of the Protocol by all its parties.

We wholeheartedly support the further expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world as a key element of global peace and stability. We are also committed to further enhancing cooperation among existing zones and hope to bring them together in 2024 to facilitate greater coordination among them as a follow-up to a similar meeting held in Astana in 2019.

The pandemic highlighted the validity of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the urgency of developing a mechanism to implement its norms. Kazakhstan has therefore proposed to establish an international agency for biological safety aimed at enforcing the ban on biological weapons, developing international cooperation and promoting capacity-building. We encourage all States to join those discussions in the framework of the BWC. We have organized several events on the sidelines of BWC meetings and other forums and intend to continue that practice in order to promote an inclusive and results-oriented dialogue. We pursue a gradual, balanced and consensus-based approach.

Kazakhstan is fully committed to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We therefore call on all members of the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group to consider positively Kazakhstan's application to join those regimes.

Kazakhstan has an impressive record of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Despite that, we are deprived of the right to join the regional group in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This year Kazakhstan initiated a resolution on the issue of sovereign equality

and the right of 17 States that are not part of any regional group. That resolution establish the group of friends, chaired by Slovenia, to address the issue of sovereign equality and restoring democratic norms at the IAEA. We are determined to push that issue further.

Now more than ever, we require dialogue and trust in order to pave the way for peace, security and development for our nations. Kazakhstan is ready to actively participate in that process.

**Mr. Sawicz (Poland):** Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. You can be assured of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Poland given the strong ties between our countries.

Poland fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.2). Let me highlight several issues in my national capacity.

Russia has been continuing its brutal, unprovoked aggression against Ukraine for more than 18 months. We are witnessing Moscow's premeditated destruction of the rules-based international order. By violating international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, by attacking critical infrastructure, by killing civilians and committing war crimes, Russia is determined to achieve one primary goal: to restore its imperial Soviet Union ambitions and its sphere of influence. That goal is being realized not only on the battlefield but also in diplomatic forums, where Russia is continuing the destruction of indispensable pillars of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation — inter alia, the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the clear weakening of the effectiveness of the Open Skies Treaty and, more recently, its formal withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, effective on 7 November, and the suspension of the implementation of the New START Treaty. Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine violates the commitments to Ukraine enshrined in the Budapest Memorandum and gives no illusion as to Russia's commitment to the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Russia is continuing with its notorious threats to use nuclear weapons against other States. Russian troops are illegally occupying the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. For the first time in history, a nuclear power plant

has been deliberately located in a zone of open, full-scale armed conflict. That is in clear contradiction not only to the NPT but also to numerous international nuclear-safety regulations. Additionally, the announcement of the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus increases the danger of an escalation and is having a severe impact on the regional and global security landscape, including proliferation threats.

In those demanding circumstances, we cannot lose sight of the security threats and challenges evolving in other regions of the world. Here let me move to my next point. We took note with serious concern of the steps constantly being taken by Iran, highlighted in reports of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) over recent weeks and months. The recent refusal to allow IAEA inspectors to carry out their duties at Iranian nuclear facilities continues down the nuclear trajectory and undermines the IAEA safeguards system.

Our perception remains unchanged: it would be of utmost importance for parties to reach consensus on the reactivation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to ensure the reliability of the non-proliferation pillar of the NPT and restore trust in multilateral agreements.

Also, the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains an absolute imperative and priority. We are concerned by the continuation of the nuclear programme, for example the reported preparations for the next nuclear test and the unprecedented number of unlawful missile launches. We remain convinced that a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula can be achieved only through peaceful means. The last meaningful agreement regarding the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea took place in 2005, as the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. That time frame alone shows the constant deterioration of the situation, with no sign of improvement.

Upholding and strengthening the NPT as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation of the pursuit of effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament in accordance with its article VI remains one of the crucial goals of our non-proliferation policy. The failure to achieve a consensus outcome at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, despite enormous efforts and owing to a veto cast by a single, isolated

country — Russia — does not change the approach. We have to be ambitious, as well as realistic, in the current strategic context. Our approach will not change even in the wake of the disappointing outcome of the first Preparatory Committee for the eleventh NPT Review Conference, held in Vienna. Despite the deliberately unconstructive attitude of a few States, the NPT remains the sole anchor for the entire non-proliferation, disarmament and arms-control architecture. No one is questioning or denying that, including supporters of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to which Poland is not party, as we claim the right to observe a policy of nuclear deterrence as a legitimate one.

Furthermore, we need to address the future of the global arms-control system. Its current state has been a source of concern for some time. The New START Treaty seems to be the only mechanism for controlling non-conventional arms still in place. Nevertheless, our position on the future rectification of arms control is firm. It should lead to a broader follow-on treaty that covers all nuclear weapons, including non-strategic ones in Europe and their new types. China should constructively engage in those efforts. Realistically, any dialogue clearly depends on rebuilding mutual trust and confidence based on respect for international law. The spirit of Reykjavik should therefore not be forgotten even in these difficult times and circumstances.

Despite undeniable success in curbing the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, of which the best example is achieving the destruction process for declared chemical weapons in the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), we cannot neglect the threats and challenges related to their use. For that reason, as in previous years, Poland will introduce the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in the General Assembly. The Assembly should send a strong and unambiguous signal of support from the whole international community for the CWC's integrity and the leading role of the OPCW, which is particularly important after the conclusion of the 2023 Review Conference of the States Parties to the CWC.

In this difficult situation, we will do our utmost to respond to the challenges of today and tomorrow, in a spirit of realism and awareness of the limitations. A pragmatic approach is badly needed in these times to gradually pave the way for improving the global security situation generally. The Committee also has a role to



play with regard to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Poland's record on non-proliferation, arms control and export controls is strong, and we will continue engaging actively in the efforts in this area, with the overriding aim of strengthening and preventing the collapse of the non-proliferation system as a whole. A full version of this text will be provided to the Secretariat.

**The Chair:** I thank the representative of Poland for his kind words addressed to me in my capacity as Chair.

**Mr. Alqaisi** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I want to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, and to wish you every success in your work. Let me reiterate that my country's delegation looks forward to working with the Bureau to see our shared goals achieved. I would also like to thank and express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka for his efforts in facilitating the work of the First Committee during its previous session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Jordan, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.2), and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Jordan reiterates its deep concern about the continued failure to achieve effective and tangible progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament, the implementation of agreed obligations and the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially given the current international situation. We regret the fact that the States parties to the Treaty failed for a second consecutive time to agree on an outcome document. The stalemate in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime at the international level is impeding efforts to establish peace and security, rid humankind of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and divert human and financial resources from armaments to development.

We reiterate the need for a comprehensive and balanced dialogue to ensure the success of the eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in 2026, with the aim of adopting an inclusive final document that once again reflects States' commitment to the NPT. That includes the implementation within a

specific time frame of commitments made at previous Review Conferences, in particular with regard to nuclear disarmament and the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In order to promote the international efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, Jordan calls on all NPT States parties to work to guarantee the immediate and full implementation of the resolution adopted in 1995 and contained in the annex to document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. We also urge Member States to endorse the outcomes of the first, second and third sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, presided over by Jordan and our sister States of Kuwait and Lebanon, in order to support the efforts by States of the region to reach a legally binding instrument for eliminating the risk of non-conventional weapons in the region and promoting international and regional peace and security. In that regard, we wish our sister State of Libya every success in presiding over the fourth session of the Conference and call on all to participate actively in it in order to ensure its success. We also stress the need for greater efforts to build on the progress that has been made and reiterate the call to Israel to join the Conference without preconditions. It is imperative that Israel accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities and activities under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Jordan stresses the importance of ensuring that international efforts in outer space focus on using it solely for peaceful purposes. While the relevant international conventions have gone some way to promoting peaceful uses of outer space and regulating activities in space, there is an urgent need to speedily adopt a new legally binding instrument banning all non-peaceful uses of outer space. The international efforts to that end should build on the results achieved by the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In that regard, Jordan welcomed the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts and its recommendations on a new legally binding instrument and looks forward to the consultations it will hold in November.

Concerning cybersecurity, Jordan supports international efforts aimed at promoting the security of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in order to defend States from any cyberattacks that could undermine their interests. We also emphasize the need to actively engage with the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies with regard to creating a road map for promoting cooperation and coordination mechanisms under the auspices of the United Nations aimed at addressing the growing threats and challenges related to the use of ICTs. In that context, my delegation commends the work of the Permanent Representative of Singapore as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group and calls on all Member States to actively participate in its efforts to promote ICT security.

With regard to conventional weapons, Jordan stresses the need to operationalize the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, particularly with regard to preventing terrorist groups from gaining access to those weapons. In that regard, we stress the importance of supporting developing countries in achieving border security in order to prevent the smuggling of small arms and light weapons, especially in conflict zones. Jordan also calls for enhanced transparency among States with a view to ensuring that weapons do not illegally fall into the hands of terrorist groups. With regard to conventional ammunition, my country's delegation welcomed the conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management, chaired by Germany. We reiterate here the voluntary nature of the document adopted during the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group (see A/78/111), which places no obligations on States and must be applied consistently with States' legal and constitutional systems.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my delegation's full support for the work of the First Committee, and we look forward to working closely with all Member States during this session.

**Mr. Gusmão de Sousa** (Timor-Leste): At the outset, Timor-Leste joins others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session, and expresses its appreciation and support to you and the

members of the Bureau. We would also like to take this opportunity to appreciate and recognize the work of the Under-Secretary-General, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and their teams for their tireless efforts and contribution to our work.

Timor-Leste aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.2).

In the current context, the maintenance of peace and stability has proved essential and urgent. It is critical that we continue our efforts to pursue our disarmament agenda as we see the steadily growing challenges that the world is facing, from the modernization of conventional weapons to the advancement of artificial intelligence. That has affected the complexity of the global security environment, making it more difficult to predict the impact of such weapons.

Within the context of our work here, disarmament and arms control have played a critical role in preventing and ending most crises and armed conflict. Nevertheless, we need to be reminded that our goal is ensuring the security and stability of our peoples, because it is they who are at the centre of our work. That has guided Timor-Leste in its efforts to achieve meaningful progress towards disarmament. For that reason, we believe that disarmament and arms control are more critical than ever to our implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as they help foster socioeconomic progress, establish a peaceful and secure society and promote our peoples' welfare. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's vision as reflected in his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), and in his proposed New Agenda for Peace.

Global peace and security can be achieved through the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The failure to adopt an outcome document during the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2022, and the result of the Preparatory Committee meeting held recently for the eleventh Review Conference, were major setbacks in our progress towards nuclear arms control and non-proliferation. We therefore reiterate our concern about the potentially catastrophic humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction, which means that the only guarantee against their use or threat of use is their total elimination. At the same time, we welcome the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on

the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to be held next month, as the first Meeting of States Parties, held in 2022, laid a solid foundation for complementing and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Timor-Leste is one of a small number of States that recently ratified the Conventional Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as we consider it an important part of the efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that regard, we urge States that have not yet joined the Treaty to do so, as that will contribute positively to our goal of improving our global security environment.

The proliferation and illicit transfer of conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, pose serious threats to us all. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a central, multilateral framework for addressing that complex issue. The misuse and illicit circulation of such weapons remain a major cause of armed conflicts and violence. The inadequate control of firearms, which are mainly brought in during conflicts, has been shown to contribute to challenges in post-conflict reconstruction. The illicit trade in those weapons is interconnected with a variety of other areas, including international peace and security, terrorism, transnational organized crime and socioeconomic development.

The successful adoption of an outcome document during the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, held in 2022 (A/CONF.192/BMS/2022/1), reflects everyone's desire to address that multidimensional problem. We believe that it will facilitate the upcoming fourth Review Conference of the Programme of Action, and we want to highlight the need for sustainable international cooperation and assistance in implementing the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, as major foundations for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action.

Given that the consequences of illicit arms transfers vary among States, we believe that strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation is one of the most important mechanisms for controlling the proliferation and illicit transfer of such weapons. We therefore appreciate and recognize the importance of information-sharing platforms among regional and bilateral partners to address those security threats. We also welcomed the adoption of the final report of

the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management (see A/78/111). We hope that the commitments will address the existing gaps, including in cooperation and assistance, without prejudice to national legal systems.

We also believe that cooperation at the regional and subregional level, which is considered on a voluntary basis, will assist States in addressing the issues. In that regard, Timor-Leste appreciates the active role and dedication of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to efforts to implement the disarmament agenda and of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) in its efforts to promote multilateral disarmament issues within the region by bridging needs and fostering cooperation among States and stakeholders. We see value in our cooperation with UNRCPD, and we will continue to work closely to address the challenges in our region.

Over the past decades we have strived to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. However, threats in this area persist, and we cannot afford to be negligent. In that connection, we wish to stress the important role of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which can act as a link regarding issues between the relevant frameworks on weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and non-proliferation in ensuring that such weapons do not fall into the wrong hands. Threats posed by chemical weapons remain high in many parts of the world, and we therefore call on Member States to comply with their international obligations.

Within the development of new technologies, our disarmament efforts must encompass a common understanding of emerging technologies as tools to be used solely for peaceful purposes. In line with the ongoing discussion on the use of information and communications technologies, we welcome the adoption of the second annual progress report of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021–2025 (see A/78/265), and we emphasize that capacity-building programmes are essential to addressing growing cyberthreats, particularly for developing States. Lastly, we hope that the Committee's efforts will have a positive impact and can generate momentum in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control

efforts. We reaffirm our commitment to upholding our obligations and to working with all parties to achieve a more secure and peaceful world.

**Mr. Guerra** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and to wish you and the members of the Bureau every success. We want to assure you of Argentina's full support during this session.

We regret the resort to nuclear rhetoric in a context of tensions and of the expansion and modernization of nuclear arsenals, in which there has even been talk of nuclear war. We reiterate our grave concern about the threat to humankind posed by the existence, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, in addition to their humanitarian and environmental effects, all of which takes on particular importance in view of the current international circumstances that we are experiencing. We declare categorically that such weapons must never again be used by any actor in any circumstances and must be eliminated.

Argentina has a substantive nuclear programme, designed for exclusively peaceful purposes as a producer and exporter of nuclear technology within a framework of the strictest respect for the norms enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also belong to and participate actively, together with other international partners, in export-control regimes for dual-use and sensitive technologies, with a view to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Recalling Argentina's efforts during its presidency of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we reaffirm our support for the process leading up to the eleventh Review Conference and for its Preparatory Committee. We regret that within the framework of the work of the first Preparatory Committee meeting in July, the relevant Working Group was unable to adopt recommendations on strengthening the Treaty's review process that could undoubtedly have contributed to strengthening its implementation. In that context, we urge States possessing nuclear weapons to fulfil their clear obligations to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with article VI of the NPT and the commitments arising from the NPT Review Conferences. We reaffirm once again that the NPT does

not establish any right to the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by any State, given that it establishes a transitional status.

Ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a clear and urgent objective. As was expressed in the context of the Article XIV Conference, we are pleased with the instrument's growing universality, evidenced by the accession of new members. We urge the States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty to carry out the necessary measures to expedite the process of its signature and ratification.

Argentina is part of a region that has historically been at the forefront of disarmament and non-proliferation, even before the entry into force of the NPT. The 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco has made a real and effective contribution to peace and security at the regional and global level, not only because it has strengthened the commitment of our countries to disarmament and non-proliferation but also because under its Additional Protocols, nuclear-weapon States have agreed not to violate the region's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We once again call on those that have made interpretive declarations to revise them so that they align with the goals and purposes of the Treaty. In that connection, we renew our support for the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We also want to highlight the path of cooperation and transparency that we have been working on with Brazil for many years now. Both countries renounced the possibility of the development, production, acquisition or use of nuclear weapons and jointly created the Argentine-Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials. The Agency represents much more than a bilateral safeguards institution. It is a paradigm for integration and trust-building between countries that have gone through times of tension, and it is a source of inspiration for other regions of the world.

Within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, Argentina supports negotiating a treaty that prohibits the placement of weapons in outer space. Until such an agreement is reached, we commend and encourage the strengthening of transparency and confidence-building measures in activities in the area. In that context, we highlight the recommendations to promote the practical application of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities adopted by consensus within the framework of the 2023



substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. That set of recommendations, after a six-year impasse, demonstrates how diplomacy can bring concrete results for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and contribute to our work on an issue that is proving increasingly challenging, owing to technological advances in the space industry.

The development of information and communications technologies has enormous implications in terms of the possibilities offered by economic progress and scientific advances, as well as posing serious security risks. In the understanding that it is essential to strengthen and promote spaces for dialogue and cooperation in cyberspace, my country participates actively in the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021–2025, and supports the efforts of its Singaporean chairship. We were pleased with its consensus adoption in July of its annual progress report (see A/78/265) to be presented to the First Committee, which we hope will adopt it in the same manner. We emphasize the proposed establishment of a global directory of points of contact as a tangible contribution to diplomacy in cyberspace and urge the membership to continue working on capacity-building in order to adequately address the joint challenges posed by the issue.

**Mr. Montalvo Sosa** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will read an excerpt from our full statement, which will be published on the e-deleGATE portal. When my time is up, I will stop. And at the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and all the other members of the Bureau on your election.

Ecuador defends a rules-based international system, as established by the Charter of the United Nations, upholding the sovereign equality of States and the prohibition of the use of force in any way incompatible with the Charter's purposes.

In Ecuador's view, nuclear weapons can never be in good hands. The potentially catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of their use are well known, and their very existence is a threat to the survival of humankind. We are deeply concerned about the growing risk that nuclear weapons could be used — a risk that has been exacerbated by an increasing level of rhetoric encompassing threats of their actual use, as well as by the modernization and expansion of arsenals. That challenge has global dimensions and demands that we redouble our efforts to reduce the threat of the

intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, as well as the possibility that they could fall into the hands of non-State actors. The United Nations has a central role to play in that task.

Ecuador recognizes the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation architecture, which is why I reaffirm my country's support for strengthening it. Based on its article VI, we call on nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their commitment to eliminating their arsenals completely. We also urge all States that possess nuclear weapons to undertake total disarmament and those that have other countries' weapons stationed on their territories to cease to do so. I join others in calling for the signature and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), whose second Meeting of States Parties will take place in November, which we are sure will be successful under Mexico's leadership. The TPNW complements and reinforces the NPT as an effective nuclear disarmament measure.

My delegation reaffirms the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and reiterates the need for its early entry into force. I urge those States that have not yet acceded to it, particularly those listed in its annex 2, to do so as soon as possible. I emphasize that all States should refrain from carrying out tests for the purposes of developing nuclear weapons, since any type of nuclear test represents a serious threat to international peace and security.

My country is proud to be a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which enabled Latin America and the Caribbean to become the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region.

I reaffirm Ecuador's commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention of the Geneva Protocol, as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention. We condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone against anybody, anywhere and in any circumstances. There can be no impunity for those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. Any incident involving their use should be addressed with absolute transparency and subject to exhaustive investigations, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Since its adoption in 2004, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) has been an essential component of the global non-proliferation architecture and a key instrument for countering the threat of proliferation

among non-State actors of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems. Ensuring its full and effective implementation continues to be a long-term task that will require continued efforts at the national, regional and international levels. We encourage all Member States to make use of the resolution's mechanism for facilitating assistance, as the threat of proliferation among non-State actors transcends national borders and can be prevented only through effective cooperation.

Small arms and light weapons are the most widely used in armed conflicts, and their excessive stockpiling, in addition to their illicit transfer or misuse, is a serious threat to international peace and security and puts the lives of civilians, especially women and children, in danger. Ecuador encourages increased compliance with the marking, registration and traceability standards for such weapons, along with efforts to manage stockpiles and ammunition effectively. In that regard, we support the work being done in the context of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework to Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management, in addition to all initiatives under the key instruments that make up the international regulatory framework aimed at addressing the trafficking and inappropriate use of small arms and light weapons.

*Mr. Eustathiou de los Santos (Uruguay),  
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

One measure that continue to contribute to supporting populations in their pursuit of peace and stability is the arms embargo. In that connection, the Security Council, in its adoption of resolution 2699 (2023), on the situation in Haiti, submitted by Ecuador and the United States, decided to broaden the scope of the arms embargo on Haiti in its recognition that the illicit transfer and trafficking of arms have been key factors in the deterioration of the country's security situation.

I will not go into detail about other issues such as the efforts that are needed with regard to cyberspace, or, for example, Singapore's able leadership of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021–2025, which is aimed at eliminating cybersecurity threats and fostering an open, stable, secure, accessible and peaceful environment for the benefit of all.

I should not conclude without reiterating that all States have a responsibility to comply with their disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. We will always believe firmly in the value of all multilateral efforts aimed at building a path to peace and security for every country in the world based on international law and the principles of the Charter.

**Mr. Pavlov (Belarus)** (*spoke in Russian*): As this is my delegation's first statement at this session of the First Committee, I would like to congratulate the Chair on his election to his high office and to assure him of my delegation's full support.

The current international security situation is characterized by escalating tensions against a backdrop of a spiralling arms race and increasing military expenditures, especially on the European continent. The degradation of a number of the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control mechanisms that make up the unifying fabric of the international and regional security architecture continues. That depressing list includes the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the New START Treaty, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Open Skies Treaty. Our disarmament forums continue to be held hostage by politicized approaches and confrontations. The First Committee is a clear example of that polarization, as it adopts fewer and fewer resolutions by consensus every year.

The unprecedented level of politicization during the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) represented a serious challenge to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, in addition to regional nuclear risks and stagnation in nuclear disarmament. We need decisive steps if we are to comprehensively strengthen the NPT regime and create the conditions for gradual progress to be made towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The joint statement in January 2022 by the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States on the prevention of a nuclear war and an arms race was a responsible approach on the part of the nuclear Powers and should be supported.

We also need to take concrete measures to reduce nuclear risks and make nuclear disarmament multilateral and irreversible. It is vital that we ensure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as soon as possible. We welcome the growing number of countries that have acceded to the CTBT and

urge the States on whose actions the Treaty's future depends to demonstrate political will and take swift measures to ensure its entry into force. Consideration should be given to the development of a global, legally binding agreement in which nuclear-weapon States would provide unequivocal and unconditional assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

In that context I should not fail to mention the issue of the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus, since that issue has already been the subject of unfair insinuations on several occasions, including in this conference room. Almost 30 years ago, Belarus, guided by a sense of deep responsibility, made a conscious choice to renounce possession of its own nuclear weapons without conditions or reservations and join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. At the moment we are being subjected to unprecedented political and economic pressure. My country has suffered for years as a result of violations of the Budapest Memorandum. That is all taking place against a backdrop of escalating military and political tensions in the region, a build-up of military capabilities in the territory of neighbouring NATO member States and the intensification of military activities close to our borders. Given the situation, Belarus therefore had to respond to the challenges and risks to its national security by taking measures designed to strengthen its own defence capabilities. The nuclear cooperation between Belarus and Russia poses no threat to third countries and is within the framework of international law and in strict compliance with the provisions of the NPT. Such cooperation is nothing new and has long existed within the NATO countries, both in the form of so-called joint nuclear missions and in the deployment of United States nuclear weapons on the territory of five non-nuclear-weapon States members of the alliance in Europe.

As we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), we note the exceptional importance of that international instrument, which not only banned an entire category of weapons of mass destruction but also required the destruction of all their stockpiles under international control. We call for the depoliticization of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and for its activities to return to a consensus basis in order to restore the effectiveness of the CWC regime. We should also further strengthen the Biological Weapons

Convention, first and foremost by adopting a legally binding protocol that would enable the verification of compliance with the Convention's provisions. We support updating the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons in order to respond effectively to risks arising from the development of chemical and biological weapon technologies.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is a unique instrument that provides a comprehensive approach to combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials and preventing them from falling into the hands of non-State actors. We are confident that last November's extension for 10 years of the mandate of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) will contribute to strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. We note the importance of resolution 1540 (2004) at the regional level and the role of the relevant international organizations in assisting States in implementing its provisions.

This year Belarus will be submitting to the First Committee its traditional draft resolution, entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament". The draft resolution is preventive in nature, which is especially important in the context of the emergence of new technologies that could be diverted from peaceful uses to military purposes. We call on countries to support the draft resolution, which has undergone no changes except for technical revisions. We support a speedy resumption of the full-fledged and depoliticized work of the Conference on Disarmament as a unique negotiating forum on disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

It is important to maintain our focus on preventing an arms race in outer space. In that context, we support the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the non-placement of weapons in outer space and on the threat or use of force against space objects.

It will be essential to further strengthen global information security. In that regard, we support the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021–2025, which should result in the development and adoption under United Nations auspices of universal rules of responsible State

behaviour in cyberspace. We also hope that next year's fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will make a major contribution to the efforts to prevent the proliferation of these types of weapons at the regional and global levels.

In conclusion, I want to point out how important it is to maintain an equitable and mutually respectful dialogue when discussing issues related to international security, disarmament and arms control. Belarus is prepared to engage in open and constructive cooperation with all Member States in order to strengthen peace, security and stability and reduce tensions.

**Mr. Ogasawara (Japan):** I would like to congratulate Ambassador Paulauskas on his election to chair the First Committee and to assure the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Seventy-eight years have passed since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ever since then, Japan has assigned to itself the mission of leading the international efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. The tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated. The path to a world without nuclear weapons is becoming rockier, owing to deepening divisions within the international community and the Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, which has included threatening to use of nuclear weapons. Against such a backdrop, maintaining and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is in the interests of the international community. In that regard, the Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament of the leaders of the Group of Seven (G-7), issued at the G-7 Hiroshima Summit this May, has provided a solid platform for working towards a world without nuclear weapons. Japan will continue to advance realistic and practical efforts in line with the Hiroshima Action Plan, which Prime Minister Kishida of Japan announced last year.

We are concerned about the possibility that the trend to a decrease in the global nuclear stockpile could be reversed for the first time since the Cold War by a rapid expansion of nuclear arsenals, including China's nuclear capabilities, without sufficient transparency. That threatens to spark a new arms race and take us further away from realizing our collective objective of a world without nuclear weapons. We must also breathe new life

into discussions on a fissile material cut-off treaty. To that end, Australia, Japan and the Philippines co-hosted a high-level event during the General Assembly's high-level week to refocus political attention on the issue. We should also enhance transparency, as the foundation of all nuclear-disarmament measures. We call on nuclear-weapon States to promote effective and responsible transparency measures by providing data on their nuclear forces and the objective size of their nuclear arsenals. This year Japan will once again submit a draft resolution to the Committee entitled "Steps to building a common roadmap towards a world without nuclear weapons". We hope it will garner the widest possible support from Member States as a vehicle towards our genuine aspiration for our shared goal.

Japan is seriously concerned about the intensified nuclear and missile activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which pose a grave threat to the international community. It will be essential for the international community to be united in fully implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions aimed at achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Japan urges North Korea to abide by all the Council's resolutions and to return to full compliance with the NPT and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as soon as possible.

Regarding the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Japan fully supports and contributes to the work of the working group that was established last year by the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention in order to strengthen and institutionalize the BWC. With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we fully support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons aimed at the destruction of chemical weapons and preventing their re-emergence.

Japan is deeply concerned about the disproportionate civilian casualties caused by the use of conventional weapons in acts of military aggression and regional coercion. The illicit trade, diversion and inappropriate stockpile management of conventional weapons also accelerate regional instability and the spread of terrorism. The universalization and effective implementation of the existing frameworks for conventional arms continue to be key to tackling those challenges. Together with Colombia and South Africa,



this year Japan will once again submit a draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, and we hope that its consensus adoption will enhance our cooperation in the area.

Japan believes that landmine and unexploded-ordnance clearance is an important prerequisite for the future rehabilitation and reconstruction of Ukraine and other conflict areas around the world. We remain a staunch supporter of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and have decided to seek the presidency of the twenty-second Meeting of States Parties in 2025. In the 2022 fiscal year, Japan's contribution to mine action exceeded \$52 million across 22 countries, and we reaffirm our strong commitment to the realization of a mine-free world.

The military use of artificial intelligence should be responsible, transparent and based on international law. In that regard, Japan welcomed the adoption in May of a substantive report by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, and supports the continued work within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Regarding outer space, Japan highly values the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours. Although it is regrettable that no report was adopted, the inclusive and interactive discussions in the Working Group greatly contributed to deepening understanding among stakeholders on space security issues and identifying issues for further consideration. Japan strongly supports its continued work as a meaningful contribution to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.

Japan is firmly committed to ensuring a free, fair and secure cyberspace and welcomed the adoption of the second annual progress report (see A/78/265) of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021–2025. Once again, Japan supports the establishment of a programme of action and will spare no effort in cooperating with other Member States to address cyber issues.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to the Chair and the other members of the Bureau.

**Ms. Balázs** (Hungary): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating the Chair on his election and assuring him of my delegation's full support. It is good to see him up there.

Hungary associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.2), and I will therefore make just a few remarks from my national perspective.

The current security environment is extremely challenging and complex due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, which also increases the risk of nuclear escalation and miscalculation. Against that backdrop, the objective of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation is more important than ever, and it is therefore our moral obligation to do everything we can to attain it.

Despite the challenging circumstances, we held out a strong hope that after the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, where consensus eluded us in the end, we would be able to make tangible progress at the first Preparatory Committee meeting, held in August. Despite the obvious difficulties we faced, we remain steadfast in our belief that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to serve as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the indispensable basis for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, as outlined in the Treaty's article VI, and a vital component in advancing nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes, based on article IV. However, it is incumbent on us to do our best to make the new NPT review cycle, which has already started, a success, and to preserve and strengthen the NPT's relevance and integrity. In order to do that, we need to concentrate on the issues that unite rather than divide us under all three of the Treaty's equally important and mutually reinforcing pillars.

Regarding nuclear disarmament, Hungary agrees with the ultimate objective of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. In the light of the growing threat of the use of nuclear weapons, it is imperative to intensify our efforts to that end and reject policies that threaten their use. At the same time, it is important to recognize that there are no shortcuts to nuclear disarmament, which requires an incremental approach involving gradual and concrete steps that can yield tangible results. Our focus should be on identifying those areas where common ground and a consensus that includes nuclear-

weapon States can be reached. Those critical milestones include the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the prohibition of fissile material production for nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive devices. Moreover, we must actively explore avenues for achieving significant progress in strategic nuclear risk reduction, transparency and confidence-building, as well as formulating robust verification mechanisms. In that context, Hungary took an active part in the work of the second Group of Governmental Experts to Further Consider Nuclear Disarmament Verification Issues and welcomed the fact that the group was able to adopt a substantive report by consensus (see A/78/120). And as part of its active contribution to these efforts this year, Hungary hosted the plenary meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Hungary firmly believes that it is also essential to effectively address existing and newly emerging risks in the realm of nuclear non-proliferation, and we contend that multilateral export-control regimes play a pivotal role in that endeavour. In the context of non-proliferation, we share the concerns about the uncertain fate of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which was designed to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, as well as the lack of progress in achieving the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

I want to underline that there have been some positive developments as well. An important accomplishment in 2022 was the successful conclusion of the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Review 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. We are pleased that against all odds, States managed to agree on an outcome document by consensus (A/CONF.192/BMS/2022/1). We hope the fourth Review Conference, to be held in 2024, will have a similar success based on that positive development.

We are also pleased that after many years of impasse, not only was the Disarmament Commission able to resume its work in 2022 and 2023 under the chairmanship of South Africa, but its Working Group II, on outer space issues, managed to adopt its recommendations by consensus. That is a significant and positive step, because we strongly believe that the Disarmament Commission can make a meaningful

contribution to the disarmament and non-proliferation work of the United Nations. We hope that next year we can begin discussions on a new topic acceptable to all.

Regarding space issues, starting in November Hungary is proud to have been invited to participate in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

I should emphasize that beyond the work of the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission, Hungary reiterates its support for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as well. We were pleased that under Hungary's chairmanship this year, the CD Member States were able to agree on a substantive report. In that regard, we are currently working on a draft resolution that we hope will be adopted by consensus.

In these disturbing times we cannot overemphasize the importance of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), a fundamental pillar of the international community's efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. For its part, Hungary will submit the annual draft resolution on the BWC. We trust that as has been the case every year so far, the Committee will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Hungary for her kind words addressed to the Chair and the other members of the Bureau of the First Committee.

**Mr. Feruță** (Romania): I too would like to congratulate the Chair and the Bureau of the First Committee and to express Romania's full support for the work in this forum.

Romania fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.2), and I would like to add the following points.

This session of the First Committee is once again taking place in a very particular context. While the global arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture has been under considerable pressure for some time, Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has drastically changed the paradigms for both European and global security and will have long-term consequences. Its impact is aggravated by the status of the aggressor, a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear-weapon State, a status

that demands the highest level of responsibility. Our ultimate goal is to uphold the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The security landscape continues to be seriously tested. The consensus on a final outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last year was blocked, and there was no final consensus document this year at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Nor has there been any meaningful progress during this year's Conference on Disarmament or on other collective commitments. They all represent missed opportunities for advancing international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. It is appropriate in the context to recall the long-standing policy — jointly agreed on and promoted by the nuclear-weapon States, but also tested in the past year — that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and an important instrument in the promotion of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. As the next NPT review cycle has started, we should remain committed to upholding and preserving the integrity of the Treaty and building on the valuable work done for last year's NPT Review Conference. Romania calls on all parties to work together for the goal of achieving the NPT's universalization and full implementation across all three of its pillars, which are equally important and mutually reinforcing. Romania remains fully committed to a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the objectives of the NPT, and advocates for a gradual and pragmatic process of nuclear disarmament based on a step-by-step approach that ensures undiminished security for all. The immediate start of discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are the next logical steps for advancing nuclear disarmament and preventing proliferation. We urge all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

Romania is also concerned about other proliferation challenges. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued advancement of nuclear and ballistic-missile capabilities is deeply worrisome and represents a significant source of instability.

Its unprecedented numbers of various ballistic and cruise-missile launches in the past month are blatant violations of multiple Security Council resolutions. Its actions are not only illegal but threaten international peace and security. We urge it to resume meaningful denuclearization talks and to refrain from further nuclear and ballistic-missile tests. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must immediately cease all of its destabilizing actions and abandon its ballistic-missile, nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The situation surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme is also worrisome. We still believe that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is the best option for ensuring that the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear programme is used for exclusively peaceful purposes. We urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to resume full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to provide assurances that its nuclear programme is peaceful.

Romania currently holds the presidencies of both the tenth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In those capacities, I reiterate my country's unwavering commitment to contributing to international peace, security and stability by promoting the objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and OPCW. Romania calls on States that have not yet done so to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the ATT and the Chemical Weapons Convention. During the ATT Conference of States Parties in the tenth cycle, the Romanian presidency will continue the previous efforts to universalize the Treaty and to promote an inclusive approach to its implementation and to ensuring its effectiveness. In that regard, we trust that our presidency's priority theme, which is the role of inter-agency cooperation in the effective implementation of the ATT, will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in meaningful discussions and measures to strengthen the Treaty's implementation. Romania will promote a draft of the 2023 Arms Trade Treaty resolution for adoption by the First Committee, and we look forward to the support of all States. The Treaty's objectives can only be achieved through cooperation and coordination on the part of the international community.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Romania for the kind words addressed to the Chair and the Bureau of the Committee.

**Mr. Goebel** (Germany): First allow me to join others in congratulating the Chair on his election to lead the First Committee. He and the members of the Bureau can count on my delegation's full support.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union earlier this week (see A/C.1/78/PV.2).

Fifty years ago, Germany joined the United Nations. As our Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in his address to the General Assembly a few weeks ago (see A/78/PV.5), the accession of the then two German States was accompanied by commitments to resolving conflicts without force, renouncing any form of revisionism and engaging in cooperation beyond dividing factors. That is why, since its reunification in 1990, Germany has been very actively engaged in working for multilateralism and a world governed by international law and the Charter of the United Nations in which shared principles and norms guide relations between sovereign nations, and for a disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation architecture that makes us more secure.

All of that has come under huge strain as a result of Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, which has violated the most fundamental principles of the Charter and international law, undermined the arms-control and non-proliferation architecture that helped to foster security and completely disenfranchised the concept of trust- and confidence-building of past decades. Russia has employed irresponsible nuclear threats and jeopardized nuclear security by occupying and militarizing Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. It has weakened nuclear arms control by suspending the New START Treaty and withdrawing from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. It has also blocked consensus in a number of key non-proliferation and arms-control forums, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours. Its persistent unsubstantiated claims that Ukraine is using or preparing to use chemical agents constitute an abuse of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and in addition,

it has engaged in a disinformation campaign targeting biological threat reduction measures. On top of that, Russia is working against inclusivity by blocking both a consensus on permitting observer States to attend the Conference on Disarmament and increasing the participation of non-governmental organizations in the NPT review cycle.

In a situation like this, it becomes very obvious that peaceful international relations, multilateralism and international security can be guaranteed only if every country abides by the rules and principles of international law and the Charter. That includes respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all countries. International relations cannot be guided by brute force or the law of the strongest. That is why, to complement the necessary deterrence and defence, we remain committed to pushing for progress on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, despite the fact that Russia has been turning its back on major arms-control agreements. Germany will not cease striving to build bridges across the current divides. Together with many partners, we will continue to advocate for concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament through the Stockholm Initiative and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. We will urge for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, despite the odds.

Germany also wants to engage in dialogue and cooperation on victims' assistance and environmental remediation for long-term damage caused by nuclear testing. We will continue to work with our partners to make sure that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. Strengthening nuclear non-proliferation is an important contribution to nuclear disarmament and vice versa. We remain firmly committed to upholding the norm against the use of chemical weapons and fighting their re-emergence. We are committed to strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention in order to address persisting and newly emerging threats emanating from both State and non-State actors.

By making progress on humanitarian arms control, we can protect the lives of millions. Anti-personnel mines leave wounds that bleed into bodies and souls for generations. That is why Germany, as President of the Ottawa Convention this year, will not cease to push for a world free of anti-personnel mines. We also continue to support and strengthen other conventional arms-control instruments, including the Convention on Cluster



Munitions and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. And we have been at the forefront of efforts to create a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management. In that regard we count on Member States' support for the draft resolution that we are introducing this year together with France.

New technologies represent opportunities for our armed forces, but they also pose challenges for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. At the moment these are areas that often feature inadequate rules, a multitude of actors, free availability and blurred boundaries between civilian and military uses. Together we need to search for approaches that will help us build greater security. Germany is very actively engaged in the processes of creating norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour, including by supporting important initiatives and draft resolutions in the Committee on outer space and lethal autonomous weapons systems. It is in those areas in particular that we have to be creative, seek cross-regional alliances and literally rethink arms control with a view to improving international security.

Germany published guidelines this year for a feminist foreign policy. We aim to strengthen the rights, resources and representation of women and marginalized groups in peace and security policies, among other things, which also include our approach to arms control and disarmament.

In short, international peace and security can only exist in a world order that is based on international law, the United Nations Charter and the sovereign equality of States. Germany continues to believe firmly that there can be no sustainable peace and security in the long term without arms control, disarmament and the preservation of the non-proliferation regime. These are key pillars of an international order that today we must defend more staunchly than ever. We must protect them so that they can continue to protect us.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Germany for his kind words about the Chair and the Bureau of the Committee.

**Mr. Vidal** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a privilege to be addressing the Committee today. I wish the Chair of the Committee and the entire Bureau every success in the work entrusted to them and congratulate them on their election.

Chile aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.2), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/78/PV.3).

We reiterate our firm commitment to contributing actively and positively to the outcome of the Committee's deliberations, given that besides being an ethical imperative, maintaining international peace and security without resorting to nuclear deterrence is an achievable goal that is consonant with the international system for the protection of human rights.

We would like to remind everyone that threats of the use of weapons of mass destruction are a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We are especially concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the use of even one nuclear weapon, which is why it is essential that we achieve a world free of such weapons. In that connection, Chile recognizes that the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) supports the multilateral order and system in the fight against the possession of such weapons. That is why we support the Treaty and invite those States Members of our Organization that are not yet party to the TPNW to sign and ratify it. We believe firmly that through the commitment and joint efforts of the parties to the Treaty we can achieve the best possible results at the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty, soon to be held here at Headquarters under Mexico's leadership.

Chile also attaches the greatest importance to the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as a fundamental instrument of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We therefore reiterate our call for redoubling diplomatic efforts to achieve its ratification without delay, especially by the countries listed in its annex 2. We recall that Latin America and the Caribbean was the first densely populated region in the world to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone, through the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 1967.

Chile considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons to be the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We want to highlight the importance of achieving its universalization and the balanced application of the three pillars that give it its fundamental structure — disarmament,

non-proliferation and the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. For that reason, we find it disturbing and concerning that an opportunity was missed to achieve consensus not only on a final document and an action plan at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last year, but also at the recent first session of the Preparatory Committee of the eleventh Review Conference, less than two months ago.

We call for continuing all multilateral efforts in support of disarmament, non-proliferation and the prohibition of the use or possession of all weapons of mass destruction. We also condemn the military use of biological and chemical weapons in any circumstances and urge for universal accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We recognize that the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is a scourge with immensely destructive effects that extend across borders to affect international security. We want to see regulation aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating their illegal trade. In that connection, we highlight the consensus achieved in June at the fourth substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition on a specific regulatory framework for conventional ammunition at the global level.

Given the risks it poses, cyberspace demands that we assume serious responsibility for its security, especially considering its global and cross-border nature. Chile therefore welcomed the adoption by consensus on 28 July, at the fifth substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021–2025, of the Working Group's second annual progress report (see A/78/265).

In conclusion, Chile would like to emphasize the importance of keeping a gender focus in mind with regard to the areas addressed in the First Committee. That includes incorporating gender indicators, promoting national action plans and disaggregated and evidence-based statistics and encouraging women's participation in decision-making processes and commitments that affect them. It is essential to build a critical mass of highly qualified women in those areas so that they can meaningfully shape processes to address their needs and those of their community, thereby guiding gender-sensitive policies and programmes. It is

well known that disarmament and international security threats can have particular impacts on women and girls, as well as on other groups, of course. We urge Member States to work to better understand the negative effects arising from and related to armed violence on women and girls.

**Mr. Kattanga** (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania would like to congratulate the Chair of the Committee and all the members of the Bureau on their election and to assure them of its full support and cooperation.

Tanzania aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria (see A/C.1/78/PV.3), on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia (see A/C.1/78/PV.2), on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and I would like to complement them with the following remarks.

My delegation would like to recall that one of the core objectives behind the establishment of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. However, it is disappointing that today, almost 78 years after the founding of the Organization, some countries are still afflicted by violence and armed conflict. We see nations struggling to break out of the trap of the vicious circle of conflict and fragility that has stranded them for more than 60 years. In addition, the world is currently witnessing a major geopolitical crisis that has massively destabilized the global economy and security. All of that serves as a reminder that the main goal of the United Nations has not been fully achieved, and that we therefore need to revise our commitment to international peace and security. In accordance with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, Tanzania believes that war is not an option. Member States are therefore encouraged to create an environment that can facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflicts, strengthen trust between nations and promote a culture of peace.

The proliferation of conventional weapons such as small arms and light weapons, landmines and cluster bombs is seen as our most urgent security challenge, as such weapons continue to fuel civil wars, violence, organized crime, insurgencies and terrorist activities. There can be no question that small arms and light weapons pose a serious threat to every individual. The United Republic of Tanzania, as a signatory to various relevant international treaties, reiterates its full commitment to supporting the efforts of the

international community to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in such weapons in all its aspects, in compliance with the Charter. Moreover, Tanzania will continue to support the good work of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. In addition, I would like to assure the Committee that Tanzania will continue to support the measure put in place to deal with the dangerous weapons that are posing an indiscriminate threat to our current and future generations. In that regard, my delegation is calling upon all Member States, in particular the so-called nuclear-weapon States, to voluntarily fulfil their obligations.

According to a report of the Office of Counter-Terrorism issued on 21 September, Africa has become a new epicentre for terrorist groups. There are various challenges that have hindered efforts to combat terrorism in Africa, including climate change, the lack of funds, poor technology and the lack of expertise. Thus, African countries need the support of developed countries to be able to fight the relevant threat. In that regard, Member States are encouraged to set up measures that facilitate cooperation and collaboration between counter-terrorism agencies, as well as an inclusion of African States in African counter-terrorism projects.

Cyberspace is a technology that offers opportunities, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, poses a serious threat to global security. Developing countries are more vulnerable to cyberthreats. Among the factors that weaken the ability of developing countries to prevent cyberrisk are lack of expertise, lack of technology and weaknesses in institutional, legal and policy frameworks. The war in Ukraine has provided evidence that information and communications technology (ICT) can be a military weapon. In that regard, Tanzania insists that Member States put in place measures that will prevent the use of ICT technology. In addition, Tanzania calls on developed countries to consider supporting developing countries in cybersecurity as an urgent matter to prevent developing countries from becoming an epicentre for cybercriminals. On that note, Tanzania will continue to support the good work of both the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 and the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes.

In conclusion, the United Republic of Tanzania reiterates its commitment to disarmament, the maintenance of international peace and security through multilateral and regional platforms and, thus, will continue to be part of the United Nations initiatives to bring peace and security in the world.

**Ms. Guraisha** (Maldives): The Maldives aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.2).

I extend warm congratulations to the Chair and the esteemed members of the Bureau on their election. I assure them of my delegation's full support and cooperation, as they steer the work of the Committee.

The fundamental purpose of the United Nations, as outlined in the first Article of its Charter, is to uphold international peace and security and to prevent threats to peace through peaceful methods. As such, the United Nations provides the international community with the essential tools for trust-building, dialogue and mediation required to drive forward the agendas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Maldives remains a steadfast advocate for disarmament and non-proliferation. As one of the first signatories of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we strongly urge States that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

The Maldives ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2019. As a State party, we were happy with the outcomes of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that took place in Vienna last year. We also welcome the strong commitment demonstrated by States during the meeting held on the margins of the high-level week to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. It is our hope that the second Meeting of States parties to the Treaty scheduled for November will keep up that momentum to reach towards our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Maldives also welcomes the convening of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in April. The Commission has the sole power within the United Nations multilateral disarmament system in addressing various challenges related to disarmament and submitting concrete recommendations to the General

Assembly. We look forward to the 2024 session of the Commission and hope more substantive proposals are put forward.

There is no denying that our security is inextricably linked to the actions of others. The continued presence and the ever-impending threat of weapons of mass destruction remains a significant concern. To that end, the Maldives has acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty to record its voice and join others in calling for an end to weapons of mass destruction to save innocent lives and to embrace our shared humanity.

Our pursuit of disarmament must extend beyond nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Conventional arms control, the prevention of illicit arms trafficking and the responsible use of emerging technologies with the potential for causing major disruptions are equally vital components of our collective security agenda.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, the intrinsic connection between peace and development is undeniable. The proliferation of weapons makes the world less safe and less peaceful. It obstructs our progress aimed at fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those relating to peace, justice, strong institutions, reduced inequalities, economic growth, health, gender equality and safe cities and communities.

As we look ahead to accelerate actions towards reaching the SDG targets, we must also recognize that the resources saved through disarmament can be redirected towards addressing some of the most pressing global challenges of our time. Poverty, climate change and pandemics are global threats that demand our immediate attention. We can find a solution to those issues by investing in sustainable development, by ensuring resilience and by prioritizing humanitarian efforts.

We must also remain attuned to the rapid evolution of weapon technologies, as well as emerging technologies that can be weaponized. As they continue to advance, it is incumbent upon us to comprehend their potential implications for the security of generations to come. Those new technologies, while offering great potential, also present challenges to established legal, humanitarian and ethical norms. They are an impediment to non-proliferation efforts, international stability and the broader realms of peace and security.

Throughout the years, the Committee's statements have highlighted significant discrepancies obstructing progress in disarmament and security. Discussions remain largely static, with a limited acknowledgment of the perspectives of other States and a constrained willingness to re-examine our own viewpoints. Resistance to resolutions representing consensus on disarmament issues frequently results in the emerging of repetitive annual resolutions. It is vital that we repurpose the Committee from being a generator of repetitive resolutions to a forum committed to fundamental discussions on key issues influencing international peace and security.

The international community has a moral obligation to both current and upcoming generations to actively take measures that will rid our planet of nuclear weapons. Let us collectively renew our commitment to disarmament, carving a path towards a world of progress — a world where the instruments of violence are replaced by tools of progress, a world where the dialogue of cooperation supersedes the language of war and, most importantly, a world where peace becomes the cornerstone of our shared human legacy.

**Mr. Jievaltas** (Lithuania): Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.2).

In my national capacity, I would like to stress the following. We continue to see Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, brutally and openly violating international peace and security and the global rules-based order. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's deliberate and unprovoked war on Ukraine and demand that it immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. The United Nations and its Member States must refrain from aiding the aggressor. We condemn Belarus for its support of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and reiterate our call on the Belarusian authorities to stop enabling that aggression and to abide by its international obligations. Iranian drones are being used by Russia against Ukraine, in violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). We are also concerned about the announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its willingness to provide munitions to fuel Russia's war in return for advanced-weapon technologies.



As we are meeting in the Committee, Russia's most recent attack, on Hroza in Ukraine today, has just killed 51 innocent civilians. As a United Nations representative has stated, the deliberate targeting of civilians is a war crime. We condemn Russia's war crimes, whose perpetrators will have to be held accountable. Russia's attacks on critical civilian infrastructure, including ports, grain warehouses and energy supply facilities, along with its destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam and attacks on various cultural sites, are devastating, and all of them constitute violations of international humanitarian law. I want to remind the Committee that by withdrawing from the United Nations-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative and blocking exports of Ukrainian grain, Russia has subjected people of many nations to food insecurity. It will take decades to address the consequences of the war. Huge parts of Ukraine's territory will remain covered with mines and other unexploded ordnance for many years to come. While it is the people of Ukraine who are suffering the most from all the horrors of Russia's war, all of us are seeing that the war also is having global consequences.

Apart from the grain crisis that I just touched on, global security is being threatened by Russia's irresponsible and dangerous nuclear rhetoric, including blackmail that is being made real through Russia's announced deployment of its nuclear weapons in Belarus and the action it has taken that has put Ukraine's nuclear energy facilities in jeopardy. The deployment of nuclear weapons to Belarus contravenes Belarus's international obligations as a non-nuclear-weapon State under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The occupation and unlawful seizure of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant by Russia's military forces remain alarming. Russia is fully compromising the seven indispensable pillars of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in violation of its international obligations and commitments. The only sustainable solution to the situation is the unconditional withdrawal of all of Russia's armed forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine.

The global arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture continues to be put under severe pressure. As a result of the positions that Russia has taken, three major review conferences since the summer of 2022 have been prevented from issuing full-fledged outcome documents. We continue to strongly support the NPT, as the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and

our ultimate goal remains the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons through the implementation of all of the NPT's elements, including article VI, building on the principles of effectiveness, verification and undiminished security for all. Russia's suspension of its participation in the New START Treaty is one more example of Russia's trend to increased reliance on nuclear weapons. We call on it to return to full implementation of the New START Treaty. Lithuania continues to believe firmly that future arms-control arrangements should include all types of nuclear weapons. We also welcome some nuclear-weapon States' efforts to show transparency by reporting on their nuclear-weapon stockpiles. In that regard, we call on China to demonstrate responsibility and join the nuclear arms-control talks.

We remain strong supporters of the Biological Weapons Convention, as well as of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the professional work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. As part of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has also engaged in a disinformation campaign, spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations about Ukraine and other countries regarding biological and chemical weapons, while exposing the Ukrainian people to toxic chemicals through its deliberate attacks on civilian industrial facilities. Given Russia's track record on the use of chemical weapons, there have long been concerns that it could choose to use chemical weapons in its war on Ukraine. Lithuania strongly supports the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

The hope of a mutual return to full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action has continued to fade. Iran has continued to develop its nuclear programme, which is increasing proliferation risks in the region and beyond. It is also failing to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and at the same time is expanding its nuclear activities, including by installing additional enrichment capacity and deploying advanced centrifuges. We have also long had concerns about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes. Last year, in violation of a number of Security Council resolutions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched various types of ballistic and cruise missiles.

The universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains one of our priorities. And until a fissile material cut-off treaty can enter into force, we call on all States concerned that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those delegations that have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind delegations that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes for the first intervention and three minutes for a second.

**Mr. Ogasawara** (Japan): I feel compelled to exercise my right of reply since references that were not based on fact were made earlier in the statement by the representative of China about the discharge of Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS)-treated water into the sea. The Government of Japan has always provided the international community with transparent and detailed explanations of the matter, based on scientific evidence. We have continued those efforts while undergoing the review by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has the authority to establish, adopt and apply international safety standards in the area of nuclear energy and other IAEA responsibilities. The IAEA has positively noted that Japan has provided information, engaged in consultations with the parties concerned in Japan and abroad and conducted significant outreach activities with a view to ensuring transparency. The Government of Japan has been taking measures that are strictly in accordance with the applicable international law, while giving due consideration to international practices, and it will continue to do so.

The discharge of ALPS-treated water started on 24 August. The Government of Japan and the Tokyo Electric Power Company operator, with the involvement of the IAEA, are monitoring the discharge, and no anomalies have been detected. The IAEA has confirmed and publicly stated that the level of tritium in the discharged water is below the standard limit. The Government of Japan will continue to provide the necessary information, including the results of monitoring, to the international community in a timely and transparent manner and will continue efforts to gain further understanding from the international community regarding the handling of ALPS-treated water.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we would like to reject the accusations that we have heard against the Russian Federation because they are absolutely unfounded. The heightened attention paid to my country by European Union (EU) delegations, devoting 90 per cent of their statements to our country, is flattering, but it clearly shows that the EU delegations, as demonstrated just now by the statement delivered by the representative of Lithuania, have simply been missing bilateral contact with the Russian Federation in order to resolve the problems that they are trying to raise. We will try to help them by using multilateral forums such as the United Nations.

Along with our Belarusian friends, we are forced to respond to provocative statements by a number of Western countries in the context of the Russian-Belarusian cooperation in the military nuclear field.

On one hand, when these claims are made by NATO member States, it goes without saying that they have no leg to stand on. On the other hand, it would be wrong not to comment on such a clear and striking illustration of beholding the mote in thy brother's eye while ignoring the beam in thine own eye — in other words, double standards. In reality, a destabilizing policy in this area has been pursued for years by NATO countries, which proclaimed themselves to be a nuclear alliance. For decades, NATO members have conducted and are now continuing to expand their so-called joint nuclear missions.

This practice is based on United States nuclear weapons deployed in six military facilities in five countries on the European continent, of which the United States is obviously not a part of. Washington has deployed those weapons, which it is actively modernizing, on forward bases thousands of kilometres from its national territory. The weapons can be used to rapidly strike an increasingly number of strategic targets on the territory of Russia and Belarus. In addition, it is absolutely no secret that it is those scenarios that are being practiced in joint exercises involving the second-tier NATO countries that are prepared to provide air support and cover for United States nuclear-weapon delivery vehicles.

At the same time, virtually all NATO members are directly involved in planning the use of nuclear weapons. These joint nuclear missions have become increasingly significant under current circumstances,

when Russia has to take into account the steeply escalating threats resulting from the West's efforts to inflict a strategic defeat on our country while teetering on the brink of direct military confrontation between nuclear Powers. Our closest allies in Belarus are also experiencing growing military and political pressure from the United States and NATO, including through countries that are direct neighbours to our Union State — several of which have long and openly been clamouring for the deployment of United States nuclear weapons on their territory.

For a long time we have shown restraint. For years we called on Washington, in vain, to follow our example and withdraw all nuclear weapons to its national territory. We therefore had to take a different approach. The response measures taken by Russia and Belarus are purely last resort and reactive in nature. They are taken strictly within the logic of deterrence. They are carefully modulated actions that are not comparable in scope to the NATO practices and take place on the territory of two brotherly countries united into one Union State and constituting a single defence space.

At the same time, the very question of revising Russia and Belarus's joint nuclear decisions is entirely impossible unless the United States and NATO renounce their dangerous trajectory towards undermining our security, fully withdraw American nuclear weapons from Europe and dismantle the relevant infrastructure.

As for Western insinuations about violations of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, we do not see any grounds for serious discussion. This is simply a desperate attempt to find additional fodder for propaganda against Russia. We believe it is sufficient to recall that the Budapest Memorandum was a component of the process of the successful accession of Belarus to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

**Ms. Wood** (Australia): I take the floor on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) to respond to comments made in the general debate today regarding Australia's acquisition of naval nuclear-propulsion technology. It is important that we provide a factual response to the misinformation we heard today.

Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are resolutely committed to our respective obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime. Australia's acquisition of a

naval nuclear-propulsion capability will occur within their framework of its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol and will be fully consistent with our international obligations under the NPT and the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Rarotonga.

The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Grossi, has confirmed that the Agency will develop a safeguards approach for Australia's naval nuclear-propulsion programme, which will enable the IAEA to continue to meet its technical verification objectives in Australia, including through an article 14 arrangement, for which negotiations have commenced. It is critical to the international non-proliferation regime that the IAEA continue to be allowed to fulfil its clear and long-established mandate to engage with member States on safeguards issues, with independence and without interference. The nuclear fuel that Australia would receive under AUKUS cannot be used in nuclear weapons without further chemical processing. That would require facilities that Australia does not have and will not seek, and the IAEA will be able to verify the absence of such facilities.

Let me be clear — Australia does not have and will not seek nuclear weapons. AUKUS does not change that.

**Mr. Kim In Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is taking the floor to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by Japan.

We categorically rejected the absurd allegation that Japan levelled against my country. As of now, Japan's dangerous arms build-up has gone beyond the limit and can no longer be overlooked. It is an open secret that Japan has steadily upgraded and extended its military and attack capabilities by distancing itself from the principle of exclusive defence, under which Japan is constitutionally bound to renounce war, has no right to be belligerent or to be able to launch war and is allowed to possess only the minimum necessary defence capability. Coupled with an alarming increase in its national defence budget, Japan is drastically implementing the security strategy that was revised last year to be guided by a doctrine of pre-emptive strike and a war footing.

It is concerning that, with a view to exploiting Japan as a shock brigade for carrying out its Indo-Pacific strategy, the United States is systematically handing its high-tech armaments over to Japan, which is hell-bent on

transforming into a military Power for invasion. While praising Japan's access to counter-attack capabilities for bolstering deterrence in the region, the United States has embarked on strengthening its military alliance with Japan and is facilitating the provision of 400 Tomahawk long-range cruise missiles — with a range of about 1,600 kilometres — to Japan.

Worse still, Japan quite recently made public its 2023 white paper on defence, in which it justified the moves for turning itself into a military Power by alleging the most severe and complicated security environment since the Second World War and presaging the advent of a new era of crisis, under the pretext of threats from neighbouring countries. Japan's allegations about threats from neighbouring countries are nothing but a smokescreen to provoke the international community into condemning others and to justify its efforts to turn itself into a major military Power. The international community is watching Japan's dangerous military moves with deep concern as it continues to follow the United States' aggressive and exclusive Indo-Pacific strategy while refusing to make any kind of sincere apology for its past crimes. If Japan has no hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its other neighbours, it has no reason to worry about the security environment around the archipelago.

We condemn in the strongest terms Japan's discharge of nuclear-contaminated water, which is a crime against humanity and could bring humankind yet another nuclear disaster. We strongly urge Japan to heed the deep concerns and condemnation of its neighbours and the international community and to end its discharge of contaminated water once and for all. It should keep in mind that as long as it pursues its wild ambitions by confronting its neighbours with an arms build-up, without a sincere apology or reparations for its past colonial rule, it is not contributing to strengthening its own security.

**Mr. Turner** (United States of America): I am taking the floor to respond to some of the comments made about the United States' nuclear weapons in Europe and the nature of United States alliance commitments around the world. United States nuclear weapons in Europe are, and will remain, under United States custody and control. They are not transferred to the possession or control of other countries, and that policy has not changed for more than 70 years. NATO nuclear burden-sharing arrangements are fully consistent with the obligations of both the United States and host countries

under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including its articles prohibiting the transfer of nuclear weapons or control over them to any non-nuclear-weapon State party. The accusations that those arrangements contradict the letter and spirit of the NPT are wrong. As the Treaty negotiating record makes clear, the issue of multilateral nuclear arrangements was the subject of lengthy discussions on articles I and II. Those arrangements have been in place within NATO since before the NPT entered into force in 1970. Russia did not raise this as an NPT issue until 2015, 45 years after the Treaty entered into force, but just one year after Russia's seizure of Crimea. We should recognize Russia's attention to this issue for what it is, a diversionary tactic designed to draw attention away from its further invasion of Ukraine.

The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. NATO's goal is a safer world for us all. The NATO allies have a long and distinguished track record on disarmament and non-proliferation. Allies' efforts on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation aim to reduce risk and enhance security, transparency, verification and compliance. Those goals have not changed, despite Russia's reckless nuclear rhetoric in its unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine and its announced decision to station nuclear weapons in Belarus. Under the NPT, Russia must retain custody and control over any of its nuclear weapons in Belarus — just as the United States must do, and does — and it must also retain custody and control over any weapons it stations there, as we do for our NATO allies. Mr. Lukashenko's assertions that he has control over nuclear weapons are concerning, and if true, would indicate a violation of obligations under the NPT.

I would also like to address some of the apparent misunderstandings that seem to exist with respect to the alliance commitments of the United States, whether with our NATO allies or other allies such as Japan, the Republic of Korea and Australia. Language referring to those countries as American satellites is misplaced, although I understand that certain countries with authoritarian systems and harbouring territorial ambitions may have some difficulty understanding the true nature of those commitments. First and foremost, they are exclusively defensive alliances with sovereign countries that share with the United States certain values, such as respect for international law, democratic



principles and transparency. Secondly, the countries that choose to associate with the United States, through NATO or other arrangements, have done so entirely of their own volition, as is their right. NATO accession requests are a demand-driven process in response to the strong desire of other sovereign States to join us in defending our common interests and shared values against the potentially aggressive designs of others. The same holds for our other relationships. The purpose of those commitments is not hegemony or to create a bloc mentality. Rather, it is to promote international security and stability by upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and working cooperatively with others to promote a more secure and peaceful world.

**Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked to exercise my right of reply in response to a reference to my country in the statement by the representative of Bulgaria. My delegation rejects that statement, and would like to note the following in order to set things right.

At yesterday's meeting (see A/C.1/78/PV.4), my delegation rebutted the claims about the participants' inability to achieve a consensus on a final document at the fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). I would like to reiterate in that regard that what obstructed that consensus was the selfishness of some Western countries, which insisted on using the Conference as a platform for their own interests, prioritizing them over those of the rest of the States parties, by seeking to include in the document controversial paragraphs regarding the so-called Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Syria and other States parties have refused to recognize or accept the team's findings, because it is an illegitimate body not established by consensus. The final document that was submitted was highly selective, lacked due balance and failed to take into account the comments of a large number of countries, despite repeated attempts by Syria and others to introduce amendments to it in line with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and established practices in that regard. The Syrian delegation and a number of other delegations sought to reach a consensus and unpoliticized final document, but Western pressure made that impossible. That pressure and interference in the work of the OPCW

have diverted it from its technical nature and rendered it captive to political tensions. As a result, the reports of its various teams lack objectivity and professionalism.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate my delegation's condemnation of the use of chemical weapons at any time, anywhere, by anyone or in any circumstances. I reaffirm Syria's full cooperation and transparent work with the OPCW, and we are ready to fulfil all our commitments under the CWC. Syria took the strategic decision to accede to the CWC in 2013 and immediately implemented all its provisions even before our accession entered into force. We submitted detailed information about our chemical weapons programme and destroyed all our chemical stockpiles and production facilities in record time, despite the difficult circumstances we were dealing with at the time.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to ask delegations to keep their statements as brief as possible. The interpreters have given us some more time, but we are approaching our time limit for this meeting.

**Mr. Sun Yiliang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In response to Japan's justification of its discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima accident, I would like to emphasize the following point. If the nuclear-contaminated water from Fukushima is safe, there is no need to discharge it into the sea, and if it is not safe, it should not be discharged into the sea.

First of all, the contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear accident that Japan is discharging into the sea contains dozens of radionuclides, some of which are extremely toxic. There is no international precedent for discharging contaminated water from a nuclear accident into the sea.

Secondly, the long-term reliability and effectiveness of the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) water-purification system is questionable. The reliability of the ALPS treatment requires further testing and verification. In its next three decades of operation, its reliability and effectiveness may decline as the facility ages.

Thirdly, the long-term impact of discharging nuclear-contaminated water into the sea is unknown. Nuclear-contaminated water contains dozens of long-life radionuclides that are difficult to process. The discharge, which will last for three decades, may have long-term cumulative effects on the marine environment

and human health. Based on the current level of scientific knowledge, it is impossible to arrive at conclusive determinations. The only certainty is that nuclear-contaminated water is harmful. Discharging it into the sea will increase the total amount of radionuclides in the environment. That is why refraining from discharging that water is the responsible thing to do.

Japan often cites the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) *Comprehensive Report on the Safety Review of the ALPS-Treated Water at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station* to justify its argument for discharging the water, but I should point out that the IAEA report, which does not discuss alternative disposal options or assess the long-term reliability of the system, proves nothing about the legitimacy, legality or safety of Japan's decision. The Director General of the IAEA has also repeatedly pointed out that the report is neither an endorsement of Japan's discharge plan nor a policy recommendation, and is therefore not a green light for Japan to discharge the water. I ask Japan to stop using the Agency as a shield for its actions.

With regard to the justifications by the countries concerned regarding the nuclear-submarine cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, AUKUS, China's view is that the AUKUS nuclear-submarine cooperation is a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the safeguards system. According to article 14 of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards agreement, some military activities can be exempt from the safeguards. But at the moment there is no international consensus on what kind of activities belong to that category. Does article 14 apply to transfers of naval submarine propulsion power or weapons-grade highly enriched uranium? There is no consensus on that either. In the circumstances, a safeguards arrangement for AUKUS should not be agreed by the IAEA secretariat and the three countries concerned alone. The relevant safeguards arrangement will constitute a precedent, and all member States of the Agency have a stake in it. In that regard, we need to refer to the Agency's historical experience in strengthening its safeguards system, and all of its interested member States should engage in an open, transparent, inclusive and sustainable intergovernmental process in order to fully discuss the issue and seek a consensus.

**Mr. Ogasawara** (Japan): I feel compelled to once again exercise my right of reply in response to the completely unfounded remarks addressed to my Government.

First of all, the discharge of the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS)-treated water began on 24 August. The Government of Japan and the Tokyo Electric Power Company, the operator, with the involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), are conducting monitoring but have not found any anomalies. The IAEA has confirmed and publicly stated that the level of tritium in the discharged water is below the standard limits. The Government of Japan will continue to explain its efforts to the international community in a transparent manner, with the continued involvement of the IAEA. Japan is willing to discuss the details based on scientific evidence in the appropriate forums and with the relevant expertise. In any case, Japan's basic position remains the same, and the Government of Japan will continue to provide necessary information, including the results of the monitoring, to the international community in a timely and transparent manner, and to make efforts to enable further understanding on the part of the international community regarding the safety of ALPS-treated water discharges.

As for the completely unfounded allegations addressed to my Government by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to state that Japan has adhered to the basic precepts under its Constitution of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy, refraining from becoming a military Power that poses threats to other countries and observing the three non-nuclear principles. Based on those precepts, Japan will never, ever change the course it has taken as a peace-loving nation. Our defence-capacity capability is and will continue to be for Japan's own defence, and we ensure the transparency of our defence and security policy and defence-related expenditure by adhering to strict civilian control of the military and through various publications that are available to all.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have the interpreters here until 1.10 p.m. I therefore ask delegations to limit the length of their statements for the interpreters.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We feel compelled to once again exercise our right of reply with regard to the unfounded statement by the United States representative, which was a clear example of double standards. The United States delegation is trying to say that where joint nuclear missions are concerned, everything that it does is

good and correct and does not violate the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in any way, whereas any action by States that are inconvenient to the United States — for example, the Russian Federation and Belarus — is wrong and contravenes international law. What is that if not double standards? The difference between the United States' joint nuclear missions and what Russia is doing is that the United States began doing it based on absolutely nothing and with no grounds for its implementation. It was said that it was for the purposes of deterrence. To deter whom, might I ask? Considering that on its own territory the United States already has every capability for carrying out nuclear deterrence, as it did during the Cold War, why would it deploy nuclear weapons in such quantities to five European countries? That is incomprehensible.

Moreover, in the current circumstances it looks especially escalatory and represents a major nuclear risk, given the United States' loud pronouncements about the need to inflict strategic defeat on the Russian Federation and the United States' increasing involvement in the Ukrainian crisis through its supply of various types of weapons, which are more and more high-tech.

With regard to the cooperation between the United States and its allies aimed at spreading democracy and stability, I would like to ask, have the countries in which the United States has attempted to spread democracy and stability, such as Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia, Libya and Iraq, become more stable and democratic?

The Russian Federation is taking forced measures of last resort in the nuclear field to ensure deterrence. The nuclear weapons we have deployed on the territory of Belarus are fully under the control of the Russian Federation.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. We see that there are more requests to exercise the right of reply. Those will continue tomorrow morning.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. sharp in this conference room. I appeal to all delegations to be punctual to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*