



# General Assembly

Sixty-second session

First Committee

**18**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 26 October 2007, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Official Records*

*The Chairperson:* Mr. Badji ..... (Senegal)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

## Agenda items 88 to 105 (*continued*)

### **Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items**

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): This morning, we shall conclude our thematic discussion on disarmament machinery. We will then suspend our formal meeting to hear presentations from representatives of five non-governmental organizations on issues pertaining to nuclear weapons, outer space and small arms and light weapons, followed by an informal discussion and question and answer period with those representatives. Finally, the Committee will resume its thematic discussion on conventional weapons.

In that connection, we still have a lengthy list of delegations wishing to make statements on conventional weapons. I do not to expect to be able to conclude that discussion today, although that would be desirable. Thus, the Chairperson of the Fourth Committee has agreed to help us by giving us some time, and I shall convene a short meeting of the First Committee on Monday, 29 October, at noon, in addition to our 3 p.m. meeting, in order to hear a few more speakers on conventional weapons. I hope that those two meetings will enable us to conclude our thematic discussion, so that on Tuesday, 30 October,

we can begin the third phase of our work: action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions.

We shall now resume our thematic discussion on disarmament machinery.

**Mr. Kennedy** (United States of America): In the interests of time, our full statement is being circulated in writing and I will deliver a shortened version, because some of the things have already been referred to.

The United States is committed to the employment, where appropriate, of multilateral approaches to solutions to the challenges of non-proliferation, the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and the control and elimination of other weapons that undermine international security. Our consistent support for the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are clear evidence of this commitment.

We are pleased that this year, 2007, is the tenth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention, an important landmark in the history of disarmament and testimony to what effective disarmament machinery can be. However, the United States believes that signing weapons reduction treaties and making statements on non-proliferation are not enough. To be effective, disarmament machinery needs to be backed up by the political will not only to sign but to implement substantive treaties. Nations must then have

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the political strength to comply with the treaties they sign. And the international community must insist on full compliance with international obligations.

This Committee embarked on a self-improvement programme in 2004, and in 2005 we adopted a resolution outlining ways to improve our working methods. Last year, some of those measures were implemented. But more can be done.

The thematic debates, such as the one we are engaged in now, have proved valuable in bringing focus to current issues and helping the Committee to use its time more efficiently. However, in my delegation's view, this body still has a tendency to function far too often like a vehicle on automatic pilot. We continue at each session to see the same draft resolutions reintroduced that have been adopted for many years, even when they do not remain relevant to today's international security situation. My delegation strongly urges delegations to seriously reconsider the utility of reintroducing draft resolutions that have been introduced five or more times.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the most universal tool in the non-proliferation toolbox. The NPT, however, confronts tremendous challenges today, the most fundamental being a crisis of non-compliance. This challenge requires no elaboration, but it is worth emphasizing that this year was the first time that NPT States parties began a treaty review cycle since some of the worst of these problems first appeared. Some of these we have addressed in other statements.

These developments present the NPT regime today with the most significant challenge it has ever faced: how to ensure its continued viability in the face of flagrant non-proliferation non-compliance. Failure to ensure NPT compliance undermines the Treaty's bedrock objective, which is to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

No discussion of disarmament machinery is complete without a few words on the Conference on Disarmament. Under the invigorated leadership of the six Presidents of the 2007 session, the Conference held the most substantive discussions on issues related to disarmament in many years. This year, with the exception of a handful of delegations, all members of the Conference agreed on, or agreed not to prevent, consensus on a proposed programme of work, the closest we have come to this goal in over 10 years.

The single most important issue that the Conference can and should address is a legally binding ban on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The international community has expressed a desire for such a treaty for decades, and it is irresponsible to delay further.

The United States made a conscious decision this year to go the extra mile to achieve consensus on a proposed programme of work, and we urged all delegations to demonstrate the same flexibility. This year we saw the finish line, but could not quite cross it. We are resolved to do so next year.

My delegation was pleased that, in 2006, the United Nations Disarmament Commission broke its long stalemate over its agenda. In particular, we welcomed the inclusion of non-proliferation on the agenda as a concern equal to nuclear disarmament, as well as an item on the agenda related to improving the Commission's working methods.

Still, the credibility of the Disarmament Commission was eroded by its selection of a Vice-Chairman, more than once, from a State that is under heavy international scrutiny for its clandestine nuclear weapons programme. In our view, the conduct of the last Disarmament Commission session, unfortunately, does not give reason for optimism that the current three-year study cycle will have a productive result.

In conclusion, the United States delegation would like to commend the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for its work in promoting implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We have heard very encouraging results from regional seminars held in China, Ghana, Jordan and Peru. The United States also appreciates the highly professional manner in which the Geneva branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs serves the Conference on Disarmament. And, of course, we appreciate the support that the Office is providing us here in the First Committee.

**Mr. Gartshore** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The importance currently accorded by numerous Governments, including Canada's, to results-based management applies also to the disarmament machinery. It is for this reason that we need to continue to ensure that the main disarmament bodies assist us in attaining our objectives and not become an end in themselves.

From this perspective, Canada listened attentively to the statement by High Representative Sergio Duarte in this forum last week, which provided follow-up on resolutions and decisions recommended by the First Committee. In his statement, the High Representative noted the extraordinarily weak follow-up on the part of Member States. Our delegation is concerned by the High Representative's figures, which suggest that Member States as a whole attach more importance to the resolutions themselves than to reporting on their implementation. Canada's record on reporting is not perfect, but, in general, it has done well in this area. It is important for everyone to note the need to turn our words into actions.

In few places have our results been as limited as in the Conference on Disarmament, where success has been "just around the corner" for about a decade now. This is not to say there has not been any progress: this year, the Conference on Disarmament came closer than ever to consensus on a workplan, and the six-Presidents initiative has allowed for a focused discussion and substantive papers on key non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament issues.

However, it is negotiation — and not discussion — that is the *raison d'être* of the Conference and, in this respect, progress has been zero for almost 10 years. National policy differences, justified by reference to regional security concerns, are increasingly being cited by a small number of countries as their basis for disagreeing on how and what the Conference should negotiate.

Because of this, the body can neither agree on a programme of work nor get down to the business of negotiating. To focus our efforts on making 2008 the year that marks forward movement on a fissile material cut-off treaty, Canada had proposed a draft decision which would have placed the issue of the treaty on the agenda of the First Committee for next year. Regrettably, we did not succeed in gaining consensus on even this limited effort.

*(spoke in English)*

On occasions where progress is not promising on key issues, we need to remember that disarmament efforts can occasionally benefit from creative approaches in order to advance a file. Ten years after the Ottawa Convention, we now have a stronger Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). And the CCW Convention will continue to flourish

even if, in coming months, another process assists us in addressing the issue of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable humanitarian consequences.

The Ottawa and Oslo examples point to two conclusions: first, that if States are serious about accomplishing something, they will find the appropriate diplomatic vehicle for so doing; and, secondly, that innovative external processes most often bring us back — sooner rather than later — to working within our treaty-based multilateral agreements and multilateral bodies and to making them more relevant and robust.

Universalization of the key non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament treaties and conventions is a cornerstone of our efforts to make a safer world. Ensuring the maximum possible membership in and compliance with the NPT, as well as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, must continue to be our collective priority. When it comes to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, it is essential that States possessing nuclear weapons be at the table.

This brings me back to this body, the First Committee. This year, Canada appreciated the fact that discussions under each cluster commenced with a panel of experts. This should become the norm. This year we have taken significant steps to organize our work better through the use of thematic clusters and better time management of our sessions, and towards more interactive and inclusive debate, through invited speakers, including from civil society. It is now time to take the next logical steps. The cluster approach should be reflected in our formal agenda.

Efforts of recent years must be continued in order to biennialize or triennialize resolutions wherever possible and to replace lengthy pro forma delegation statements with shorter, more focused texts, as this frees up time for valuable informal interactive debate.

Finally, and perhaps most important, we must endeavour in the First Committee to rise above our local and regional security concerns in order to arrive at consensus on our draft resolutions. At present, over one third of First Committee draft resolutions have votes cast in dissent. Our disarmament machinery runs well only when we decide together to engage the gears in one direction. Disaccord in the First Committee sends the wrong signal to practitioners in our nuclear

non-proliferation and disarmament community, who need consensus to deliver results. This year, Canada opted not to proceed with a draft decision on a fissile material cut-off treaty precisely because of this lack of consensus.

Concluding on this theme of results, the principle of accountability obliges us in the First Committee to invite Chairs of working groups and expert groups to address the Committee, to report on what they have accomplished and to discuss the challenges they face, and this has been done.

Canada also applauds the fact that in these past weeks we have heard from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, as well as representatives from bodies such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, among others.

But we should look for additional ways in which to include, as fully and directly as possible, civil society and non-governmental organizations in the work of this Committee. Fostering wider, more informed and more inclusive participation in the First Committee can only help to make debate more useful and our time here more productive.

Mindful of my own suggestion to limit statements to allow more time for informal debate, I will end my statement here.

**Ms. Vatne** (Norway): Multilateral approaches to disarmament and non-proliferation are essential in developing, maintaining and further strengthening fundamental norms. In recent years, we have observed that several key multilateral bodies have been struggling to live up to their expectations or, even worse, have been fully paralysed. The main responsibility lies with us, the Member States.

While the situation is serious, we see some encouraging trends. First, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the appointment of Ambassador Sergio de Queiroz Duarte as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Given his impressive experience, we are fully confident that he will perform his tasks more than well.

Last year, we ensured a successful outcome for the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,

Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. The Chemical Weapons Convention has, over the past 10 years, delivered impressive results. The same can be said of the Mine Ban Convention. We are also witnessing a readiness to really address the humanitarian impact caused by cluster munitions. The 2010 review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had a good start this spring. Efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) are gaining momentum.

That having been said, no one can deny that the situation in the Conference on Disarmament is unsustainable. We have been grappling with the programme of work for too many years. This spring, there was hope that we could finally get the Conference back to work; yet, once again, we did not reach consensus. If that situation prevails, the credibility of the Conference will be more than eroded.

Norway urges States members of the Conference on Disarmament — especially those that have not yet joined consensus — to demonstrate flexibility and allow the Conference to perform its tasks. It should be remembered that a programme of work will only allow negotiations and consultations to start, nothing more.

We are in the middle of the three-year cycle of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation appreciated the exchange of views at the previous session. We hope that these deliberations will, for the first time in many years, lead to agreed Commission recommendations. Otherwise, we will need, in the long run, to take a serious look at the Commission's working methods.

My delegation notes the call for the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Norway would have been pleased if there had been a consensus on the modalities for such a conference, and if we had strong confidence that there would be a positive and forward-looking outcome. To that end, Norway has provided financial support for enhanced consultations on a fourth special session devoted to disarmament. At this stage, the consensus needed has not emerged. My delegation believes that more consultations will be needed before a decision can be taken to convene a special session.

Finally, Norway has a particular interest in the functioning of the First Committee. Given its universal nature, we consider this body of the General Assembly

to be fundamental in advancing the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation. We have seen progress in the way in which the First Committee works, but more needs to be done.

We reiterate our view that when a draft resolution has been adopted, it should stand unless the Committee decides otherwise. My delegation hopes that, to the extent possible, we can reduce the number of repetitive draft resolutions. At every session, we notice that tremendous efforts are put into mobilizing the highest possible number of sponsors. We should ask ourselves whether this race for sponsorship is the best way to make use of the four weeks available to the Committee. At least for small delegations, it can be quite time-consuming to review the many invitations for sponsorship received. Could we not consider limiting the possibility of sponsorship to draft resolutions that are being introduced for the first time in the Committee?

Finally, the overall picture of the disarmament machinery is mixed. We could do better, but the situation could also be worse.

**Mr. Chang Dong-hee** (Republic of Korea): I would like to make some brief comments on the issue of disarmament machinery.

First, with regard to the Conference on Disarmament, yesterday, the representative of Chile, in his capacity as President of the Conference, eloquently explained where the Conference stands. My delegation appreciates the coordinated efforts of the six Presidents — the so-called P6 — to move the work of the Conference forward. As a member of last year's inaugural P6, I am pleased to note that this year's Presidents have built effectively on last year's achievements. Having successfully conducted thematic discussions on major issues, the P6 managed to present document CD/2007/L.1, as a proposed programme of work. Regrettably, however, the Conference fell just short of reaching consensus on its adoption. I appeal to States members of the Conference on Disarmament to be a little more flexible so that we can break the impasse and return to work.

As for the Disarmament Commission, my delegation believes that, in spite of challenges and setbacks, its three-year cycle has made steady progress in the second year, building on last year's groundwork. My delegation hopes that the Commission can successfully conclude its work next year with practical

recommendations for the advancement of the disarmament and non-proliferation agendas for both nuclear and conventional weapons.

As for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ms. Patricia Lewis for her scholarly and erudite presentations, which sometimes were even quite philosophical. They provided us with enormous insight into possible ways out of the difficulties currently facing the disarmament machinery.

UNIDIR has been actively engaged in a number of discussions and seminars on various issues, from nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to outer space security and from weapons of mass destruction to conventional weapons. We welcome its participation in the informal plenary discussions of the Conference on Disarmament in 2007. That participation deepened member States' understanding and helped to make the discussions more productive and alive. UNIDIR's positive influence was also felt in the areas of regional and human security, as the Institute broadened the views of the international community on the issue of disarmament. My delegation sincerely appreciates the work of UNIDIR's relatively small but dedicated staff. We will continue to support its efforts to identify and address key disarmament issues.

As for the consultations on a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, convened this year under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Labbé of Chile, the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session devoted to disarmament achieved considerable success, even if it could not fulfil its mandate of agreeing on the objectives and agenda for such a session. Member States engaged in a serious dialogue and exchanged views in a friendly manner on many of the most difficult issues. As Ambassador Labbé stressed, long-term gains in disarmament must be built upon trust, and trust requires both time and understanding. My delegation believes that there is value in convening a fourth special session and hopes that we can soon reach a consensus on that important issue.

Finally, regarding the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, my delegation highly appreciates its work and its contributions, not only in advising the Secretary-General on how to promote the

disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, but also in providing insights, ideas and opinions to the whole United Nations family. Given the keen interest that the new Secretary-General has shown in revitalizing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda through greater personal involvement and the restructuring of the Secretariat's disarmament body, I am sure that in the coming years the Advisory Board will play a more important role than ever before.

This year's report on the work of the Advisory Board (A/62/309) contains several important proposals for the First Committee to take into account. We hope that the Secretariat will look carefully into those recommendations and that it will seek to reflect them in the Secretary-General's future agenda on disarmament and non-proliferation. Of particular significance to my delegation is the emphasis on enhancing regional approaches that can contribute to global disarmament efforts. The progress being made on the Korean peninsula is mentioned in the report as an example of such an approach.

As my delegation has often noted, the Republic of Korea strongly supports multilateral security cooperation in North-East Asia and deems it a high-priority issue. We are grateful for the cooperation and the support of the countries that helped to bring about the agreement at the recent Six-Party Talks on the second-phase action plan for implementation of the Joint Statement, setting the stage for the success of the second North-South summit earlier this month.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will strengthen the NPT regime, serving as a useful example of a negotiated solution for similar problems in other parts of the world. We hope that the support of the international community will continue as we strive to achieve a true and lasting peace.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/62/L.17 and A/C.1/62/L.15.

**Mr. Rachmianto** (Indonesia): Under this cluster, I have the honour, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), to introduce two draft resolutions for the Committee's consideration.

The first is the draft resolution entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (SSOD-IV), under agenda item 98 (g), which is contained in document

A/C.1/62/L.17. With this draft resolution we would like to continue the active consideration of the objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee. For that reason we are calling for the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group and requesting that it hold an organizational session in order to set the date for its substantive sessions in 2008 and that it subsequently submit a report on its work before the end of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

NAM continues to regard working towards the convening of SSOD-IV as a necessity and reaffirms its strong support towards that end, taking into account the constructive dialogue that took place and the active engagement that existed among Member States, including key delegations, during the 2007 substantive sessions of the Open-ended Working Group.

In this regard, NAM encourages all Member States to continue to work together closely and constructively to fully utilize the forthcoming substantive sessions of the Open-ended Working Group mandated to consider the objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV. NAM believes that the convening of SSOD-IV can set the future course of action and define a balanced approach in order to reach new consensus in arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and related international security matters, including a comprehensive review of the disarmament machinery.

Secondly, we would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament", under agenda item 99 (a), as contained in document A/C.1/62/L.15. NAM stresses that the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament have been instrumental in promoting understanding and cooperation among States in their respective regions in the fields of peace, disarmament and development. The General Assembly continues its appeal to all Member States, international governmental and non-governmental organizations to make voluntary contributions to the centres in order to strengthen, facilitate and implement their programmes and activities.

In closing, the Non-Aligned Movement hopes that all delegations will be able to join us in supporting the draft resolutions that my delegation has just introduced.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Uruguay to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.3.

**Mr. Perazza** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ambassador Rosselli, Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, is away from New York right now. He will thus be unable to personally introduce the draft resolution on the report of the Disarmament Commission. I will therefore read out on his behalf his prepared statement.

“As Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 2007 session and on behalf of the Commission’s expanded Bureau, it my pleasure to introduce to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.3, entitled “Report of the Disarmament Commission”. I would like to emphasize that this draft resolution is sponsored by all the members of the expanded Bureau of the Commission. This draft resolution is the outcome of informal consultations among member States, and it has been prepared in a manner similar to earlier Disarmament Commission draft resolutions.

“The resolution contains organizational elements that are no different from the ones found in the previous year’s resolution (resolution 61/98). In accordance with consultations carried out under my chairmanship, the Bureau of the Disarmament Commission decided to propose the dates of 14 April to 2 May 2008 for the Commission’s 2008 session. Those dates have been suggested bearing in mind other meetings of the disarmament machinery that will be taking place next year.

“Allow me now to explain, very briefly, the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission contained in document A/62/42. As in past years, the report contains four chapters that reflect the results of the deliberations at the 2007 substantive session. The first three chapters are the introduction, the section on organization and the list of documentation. Chapter IV, ‘Conclusions and Recommendations’, contains the reports of the two Working Groups that were adopted by consensus. One of these was adopted under agenda item 4, entitled ‘Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear

weapons’, and the other was adopted under agenda item 5, entitled ‘Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons’.

“The United Nations Disarmament Commission organized its 2007 substantive session in accordance with the mandate that was agreed upon in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978; the guidelines established in the reform programme ‘Measures to improve the functioning of the Disarmament Commission’, which were adopted unanimously by the Disarmament Commission in 1990; decision 52/492 recommended at the resumed session of the First Committee in 1998; and resolution 61/98 adopted last year, which sets out measures for improving the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission’s methods of work.

“In accordance with the decision taken at its organizational session last year, the Disarmament Commission held three weeks of substantive meetings this year, between 9 and 27 April. At those meetings, the Disarmament Commission considered its two substantive agenda items, on nuclear disarmament and on conventional weapons.

“In the course of the 11 meetings of Working Group I to discuss the item before it, delegations made comments on a broad range of themes linked to nuclear disarmament and matters related to international security. They expressed their concerns regarding emerging trends and also presented ideas and concrete proposals. As a result, the Chairman of Working Group I submitted two versions of his document. One was a conference room paper, and the other a working paper which took into consideration written and oral submissions by various delegations as well as proposals presented in writing by a number of delegations. Preliminary discussions on the Chairman’s document showed that there were differences of opinion regarding some substantive issues as well as on methods of work.

“Regarding Working Group II, on practical confidence-building measures in the field of

conventional weapons, member States showed flexibility and a willingness to work to reach agreement on this issue. The deliberations were focused on a document re-submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group. In the course of the session, the document was updated on the basis of consultations and substantive discussions in the course of which a number of written and oral proposals were submitted. It was decided that the Chairman's document would be a basis for the Group's work at the 2008 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

"Despite some visible progress in Working Group II, it was not possible to annex the documents submitted by the Chairmen of the Working Groups to the report of the Commission. Although the documents of the two Chairmen were under their sole responsibility and do not represent a negotiated position, I consider that these could serve as a good basis for discussion at the next substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, for both Working Group I and Working Group II. It is my hope that the documents, prepared on the basis of positive elements in the deliberations this year, will make it possible to begin the substantive sessions of the Disarmament Commission soon. The fact that both Working Groups are planning to continue informal consultations during the intersessional period will make it possible to contribute to that end. This is an element of particular importance since next year is the third year of the final cycle of our present discussions.

"An analysis of the outcome of the 2007 session of the Disarmament Commission shows that striking a balance between various positions on security questions is no easy matter. In spite of the Commission's inability to reach a consensus on the draft texts submitted by the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, I am pleased to note that during the deliberations, both Chairmen accepted the challenge and submitted documents that, in practice, energized our negotiations.

"Although I am satisfied with the general tenor of the debates, I would like at the same time to express my disappointment that we were not able to overcome the remaining obstacles and that we were unable to annex to the present report the two documents of the Chairmen of the two

Working Groups. It is my hope that delegations will keep these questions alive and that they will be able to make good use of the progress and agreements that have been reached thus far.

"In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and support. I would also like to thank the members of the Bureau and to the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou of Benin and Carlos Duarte of Brazil, for their valuable work. Additionally, I would like to express my appreciation to our dear friend Jandyr Santos of the delegation of Brazil for all his work.

"I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General Shaaban M. Shaaban and his staff, as well as to the team of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and, in particular, the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, our friend Timur Alasaniya and his colleagues, who served as secretaries of the Working Groups. On behalf of the Disarmament Commission, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the other members of the Secretariat who helped the Commission discharge its important work.

"Before completing these brief observations, allow me to remind delegations that the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission will be held early in November. I therefore request the regional groups to appoint their candidates for membership of the Bureau as soon as possible.

"I hope that draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.3 will enjoy consensus, as has been the case with similar texts in past years."

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded our thematic discussion on disarmament machinery.

I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

**Mr. Al-Ansari** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to express its gratitude as we approach the end of our substantive debate on all the disarmament and international security items before the First Committee. During our meetings, we have discussed issues of great importance to humankind and to the maintenance of international peace and security.



We hope that we have dealt with all of these issues in accordance with the dictates of our conscience. My delegation remains determined to work in conformity with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law in dealing with all issues relating to international peace and security, including disarmament, in the service of humankind.

We know that the next phase of our work will be no less difficult than the previous phase. Our agenda will be full of draft decisions and draft resolutions, some of which will be new and will demand the flexibility of all parties. We should all recognize that it will be difficult to reach total consensus on all issues of disarmament, especially on nuclear issues.

As members know, during the general debate, my delegation expressed its strong willingness to conduct consultations with our colleagues and partners on a draft resolution on solving disputes over nuclear issues by peaceful means. This effort stems from the challenges that international peace and security can face as a result of such disputes, especially if they escalate and are not contained in a timely manner.

Eager to achieve consensus, we circulated the text of the draft resolution to all delegations before issuing it as an official document. We also conducted consultations and made bilateral and multilateral contacts in order to explain the provisions of the draft resolution. We expressed our full readiness to remain flexible and to introduce improvements to the text that would not jeopardize its main objective.

As all members will have noted, the draft resolution encompasses ways and means to strengthen dialogue and understanding with a view to solving disputes over nuclear issues at an early stage, before they escalate and reach the point where involvement of other United Nations organs may be required. In other words, the draft resolution emphasizes prevention.

We thank all the colleagues and partners who helped us amend the text so that, in the end, it became acceptable to most delegations and could perhaps have been adopted. At the same time, we regretfully note with due respect the views and positions of some delegations which led them simply to reject the draft resolution, citing discomfort with it for what appear to us to be political reasons. Moreover, they refrained from making any concrete proposals.

We must take such reluctance into consideration lest we be obliged to put the draft resolution to a vote and cause embarrassment to those who would vote against a draft resolution that calls for the peaceful settlement of disputes. If that were to happen, it would have repercussions for the unity, integrity and reputation of this Committee, which is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security and which should not be politicized in any way.

In order to promote unity and solidarity, we have thus decided not to submit the draft resolution at this stage.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We shall now begin the informal part of our meeting, in order to hear statements by representatives of non-governmental organizations.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.50 a.m. and resumed at 12.35 p.m.*

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We shall now resume our thematic discussion on conventional weapons, for which, as members are aware, the list of speakers is long.

**Mr. Chidumo** (Mozambique): I am sure that you know, Sir, how pleased my delegation is to see you in the Chair. Therefore, for the sake of time, I shall not repeat what you already know. My remarks will focus on sub-items (l) and (x) of agenda item 98, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" and "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", respectively.

I shall begin by associating Mozambique with the statements made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

Landmines still represent a serious challenge to the efforts undertaken by my Government to combat absolute poverty and to promote social and economic development in rural areas. For that reason, mine clearance activities constitute a fundamental pillar of, and a cross-cutting issue in, our five-year programme for 2005-2009.

There has been some progress in that regard in past years. For instance, in 2006 alone, more than

10 million square metres were cleared and approximately 5 million square metres surveyed, allowing for an additional 83 villages, inhabited by a total of approximately 335,000 people, to be declared free of landmines.

Against that background, the National Demining Institute, in a survey taken in partnership with a number of operators, concluded that the threat of landmines will be reduced by only about 40,000 square metres by the end of this year; I will explain the reasons why. According to the available data, 442 areas in 57 districts of the six central and southern Mozambican provinces remain contaminated with these insidious devices. The overall estimated extent of landmine contamination is approximately 48.5 million square metres. A preliminary assessment, based on more accurate technical surveys, suggests that the number of mine-affected areas is likely to increase.

Since March this year, my Government, in collaboration with a number of operators, has been engaged in a confirmatory survey with a view to determining the extent of the remaining mine threat, as well as the cost of a mine clearance plan in the remaining six provinces, in order to allow for efficient allocation of resources and to guarantee compliance with the Ottawa Convention. Preliminary results are expected by the end of the current year.

There has also been progress in the area of mine victim assistance. In addition to physical assistance and the reintegration of landmine victims, a national plan for people with disabilities was approved by our parliament in April of last year. The plan was elaborated in conformity with the African Decade of People with Disabilities and reflects the commitment of the Government of Mozambique to people with disabilities, including landmine victims.

The plan includes a matrix that highlights the activities to be carried out by relevant Government institutions and civil society alike. To ensure its effective implementation, the Ministry of Women and Social Action, in its capacity as the coordinating entity for the plan, is in the process of creating a national disability council. The council will be entrusted with the responsibility to coordinate and monitor the plan's effective implementation and will be structured in commissions according to the category of disability. To ensure full participation, landmine victims will also be represented.

Moreover, on 30 March of this year, my Government joined many other Governments in signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We regard this action not just as the mere signing of a convention, but above all as vivid testimony of Mozambique's continued political will and commitment to assist mine victims, as well as its determination to implement its international commitments.

On the other hand, mine risk education continues to play an important role in preventing accidents and in the collection of information in areas where landmines have a significant impact. The activities conducted last year contributed to a significant decrease in the number of accidents. As a result, during the period under review, 18 landmine accidents were registered; these caused 35 victims, including 19 fatalities. These figures are far lower than those for 2005, when 35 accidents were recorded, in which 57 people were reported injured, 23 of whom lost their lives.

In this context, my Government has introduced a national mine action plan, the objective of which is to reduce victims to virtually zero by the year 2010. At the regional level and within the framework of regional cooperation, Mozambique and its neighbours Zambia and Malawi have designed a plan to undertake joint mine risk education and mine clearance activities along their borders in order to ensure the free and safe movement of people and goods.

In spite of these positive developments, Mozambique is unlikely to be able to meet the targets set within the framework of the Ottawa Convention, due to financial constraints. As many members may be aware, in recent years we have been witnessing considerable reductions in financial support for mine action activities. For instance, between 2006 and this year, funding dropped drastically, from an original \$15 million to approximately \$3 million this year. To compound this very negative trend, all major operators in Mozambique have ceased their operations since 2006.

After so much investment made during the years of positive partnership, and with the many positive accomplishments that have taken place so far, it would be a pity if the international community were to turn its back on the people of Mozambique at this critical juncture. Therefore, on behalf of my Government, I wish to launch a sincere appeal to all concerned for

their continued solidarity, without which many of the gains made will be in serious jeopardy, which would have a negative impact on the overall efforts for the sustainable economic and social development of the country. For example, the new national mine action plan for 2007-2010, prepared by the Government with the involvement of all stakeholders, including the donor community, remains pending while we await the conclusion of the ongoing survey to accurately determine the full scope of the mine threat.

On the other hand, Mozambique has just finalized its national survey of existing small arms, with a view to conceptualizing a national strategy and a national action plan to combat the illicit trade in small arms, which will be concluded by March 2008. Without proper and adequate funding, these plans cannot be implemented as desired.

I would like to conclude my statement by congratulating the Government of Indonesia on having ratified the Ottawa Convention. I would also congratulate the Governments of Iraq, Kuwait, Montenegro, Bhutan and Latvia on having acceded to that important instrument.

**Mr. Maema** (Lesotho): My delegation joins other speakers in commending you, Sir, for your able leadership in steering the work of the First Committee.

My delegation is deeply concerned by the widespread proliferation and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons. In some countries, particularly in Africa, that are emerging from or are still engulfed by internal armed conflicts, such weapons have been transferred to non-State actors and have thus fuelled the conflict and wreaked havoc. For the people of the countries concerned, these are indeed weapons of mass destruction.

The humanitarian suffering caused by conflicts, and their cost to Africa's development, which are exacerbated by the use of illicit small arms and light weapons, are well documented. My delegation therefore appeals to members of the international community to address the issue of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons with the urgency and seriousness that it deserves.

It is unfortunate that due to their easy availability, illicit small arms and light weapons, particularly firearms, from conflict-ridden countries usually find

their way into neighbouring countries, where they are used for criminal purposes. My country, Lesotho, is no exception in that regard.

In Lesotho, illegal firearms are used in urban areas to commit serious crimes such as robbery and murder. In rural areas, they are mainly used by organized criminal groups to perpetrate illegal acts such as cattle rustling across the common border of Lesotho and South Africa. Groups from Lesotho obtain arms through bartering cannabis or dagga. These activities take place in very remote or mountainous areas where roads are rugged or where there are no roads at all. As may be expected, there have been several reports of deaths involving Lesotho nationals on both sides of the common border between Lesotho and South Africa. The Government of Lesotho therefore continues to appeal for assistance to enable it to combat these menaces. The necessity of extending international assistance, including technical assistance, to the countries that need it is well stipulated in the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Hence, Lesotho remains concerned about the slow progress in implementing several provisions of the Programme of Action, including the provision on international assistance.

The Government of Lesotho recognizes the need for the assumption of national responsibility to tackle this problem. The Government has therefore adopted some legal and administrative measures in that regard. Indeed, new legislation was drafted in 2006 to replace the outdated Internal Security (Arms and Ammunition) Act of 1966. The Stock Theft (Amendment) Act of 2003 was also enacted, clearly reflecting the seriousness that the Government attaches to the link between stock theft and the use or threat of use of firearms. Furthermore, the Government has continued to encourage civilians who are in possession of unlicensed firearms and ammunition to hand them over without fear of prosecution.

Lesotho also attaches great importance to its cooperation with its sole neighbour, the Republic of South Africa. Hence, Lesotho continues to engage in bilateral operations with South Africa to combat the cross-border flow of, among other things, illicit firearms, ammunition and drugs. Indeed, illegal firearms have been confiscated through those operations, and in 2001 we received technical

assistance that made it possible to destroy some 4,240 confiscated and redundant State-owned small arms.

Lesotho is also committed to regional and global efforts aimed at combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Lesotho is a party to, inter alia, the 2001 Southern African Development Community Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementing Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. Lesotho also fully subscribes to the Organization of African Unity's 2000 Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Lesotho is committed to the full implementation of those instruments.

Lesotho is encouraged by the progress achieved so far in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/89, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty". In our view, it is the urgent responsibility of

the United Nations to facilitate the adoption of an effective international instrument for curbing the illicit trade in conventional weapons, which would make it harder for such weapons to end up in the hands of criminals.

In conclusion, Lesotho wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We call upon States that are not yet parties to consider joining the Convention.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

**Mr. Sareva** (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to inform members that document A/C.1/62/CRP.4/Rev.1 has been issued and has been distributed to delegations. Moreover, on Monday we will be issuing an information note for our first day of action, which, as the Chairman indicated at the beginning of this meeting, will be Tuesday, 30 October.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*