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First Committee

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Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo (Honduras)

In the absence of the Chairperson, Mr. Graça (Portugal), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

and expresses its willingness to participate actively in this work.

The meeting was called to order 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 81 to 96 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Acting Chairperson: Once again, we have a long list of speakers for this morning. Therefore, I kindly request that delegations respect the agreed time limit for their statements.

The first speaker on the rolling list is the representative of Belarus, His Excellency Viktor Gaisenk, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Gaisenk (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of Belarus, I should like to congratulate the Chairman of the First Committee on his election to that post and to state that he can count on the full support and cooperation of our delegation.

The need to strengthen the system of international security and to fine-tune arms control mechanisms is obvious in the light of recent events. We are particularly concerned about the status of the European security system. The recent events in the Caucasus showed how fragile and ineffective that system is. It has become outdated. In this regard, Belarus welcomes the proposal of the Russian Federation regarding the need to create a new security architecture in Europe

Lowering the level of trust among individual participants in international relations — which is what we are seeing today — could call into question the prospects for the maintenance and further development of key agreements in the area of strategic offensive weapons. We call on the United States of America and the Russian Federation to develop a new agreement to replace the Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which expires soon. That would be an important practical step in implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We note positively the intention of the two largest nuclear Powers to reduce strategic offensive capabilities to the minimum level possible. The ratification of existing treaties — first and foremost of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — would send an important positive signal in support of the NPT.

Building mutual trust between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States would be of major significance. We believe that providing legally binding negative security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States is one of the most important confidence-building measures. We therefore call for implementation of the NPT Review Conference decisions.

In taking a comprehensive approach to considering the non-proliferation and disarmament processes, we must not forget that each State party has the integral right to pursue peaceful nuclear activity.

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Belarus is certain that the mechanisms established by the international community must help ensure equal, non-discriminatory access for all interested countries to the production of nuclear energy.

With the ongoing threat of international terrorism, the prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction remains an important challenge. Belarus has a responsible export control policy and is undertaking all necessary measures for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The current level of technological development makes it feasible not only to improve existing weapons but also to develop entirely new types of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. The lack of direct evidence of the development of new types of such weapons cannot serve as an excuse for ignoring this topic. In this regard, the delegation of Belarus intends to bring a draft resolution on prohibiting the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction before the First Committee for consideration. The draft resolution will have an element regarding political obligation on the part of States parties and will offer a mechanism for appropriate reaction through the Conference on Disarmament. We ask Member States to support this draft resolution.

The active advancement of space technologies and the growing number of States engaged in space exploration make it necessary to continue to develop additional legally binding norms aimed at preventing the deployment of arms in outer space. Belarus welcomes new initiatives in this field, such as the draft treaty on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space developed by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.

Belarus supports continued discussion within the United Nations on the question of control of small arms and light weapons. We believe it is important, first and foremost, to focus on the implementation of existing commitments under the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the international instrument on marking and tracing those weapons.

In our national efforts to meet our international commitments, Belarus has established an effective system of State control over the trade, use and destruction of small arms and light weapons. In

countering the illegal flow of such weapons, it might be very useful to draw on the experience of a number of regional organizations. In our European region in particular, there is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. In Belarus, the OSCE is successfully implementing a programme to improve the security of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons. We would like to thank the donor States for their assistance in carrying out this programme, and we hope for further cooperation in this area.

Belarus still faces the difficult task of destroying more than three million anti-personnel mines in order to meet its obligations under the Ottawa Convention. This task will be difficult for us to accomplish without international assistance.

In 2008, Belarus adopted Amended Article 1 of the Inhumane Weapons Convention and ratified Protocol V of the Convention. In doing so, we have now joined all Protocols of this Convention. Belarus shares the concern of the international community regarding the use of cluster munitions as well as the violation by a number of countries of the principles of international humanitarian law by using such weapons. We believe that the format of the Inhumane Weapons Convention provides a more appropriate forum for the negotiation of an international agreement on cluster munitions.

In improving arms control mechanisms and national systems of export control, it is necessary to support and develop confidence-building measures and transparency in this area. Since 1992, the Republic of Belarus has regularly provided data to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We also participate in the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, and we intend to continue this practice.

In concluding, our delegation would like to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the States of the Non-Aligned Movement at the second meeting and to wish all delegates successful and productive work.

The Acting Chairperson: It seems there is a problem with our traffic light alert system. Nevertheless, I request speakers to kindly respect the time limits on their statements.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): The Philippines congratulates the Chairperson on his well-deserved election to and assumption of the leadership of the First Committee, and also the other members of the Bureau for their equally well-deserved elections. At the outset, I should like to take this opportunity to assure them of the full support and cooperation of the Philippines in the work of the First Committee to ensure the success of this session.

The Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered at our second meeting by Indonesia on behalf of the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement delivered at the third meeting by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that we have the means and the capacity to deal with our problems, if only we can find the political will. He was correct, and his stirring words find more relevance today as the world faces a confluence of crises, some of which were never anticipated.

As to the issue at hand, the Member States of the United Nations do indeed have the capability to rid our planet of the weapons that we falsely believe protect us but whose very existence has threatened to lead to humankind's ruin and complete obliteration, and that threat will continue. Each and every Member State must have that political will so that together we can move forward in the complex field of disarmament and finally be able to rid our generation and those to follow of these weapons, whose potential to destroy our fellow humans and our ecosystem is as certain as the rising of the sun.

For the Philippines, the main concern remains the proliferation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons are easily acquired, transported and smuggled because of their size, and they are easily used with minimum training. Given their massive spread and proliferation, these weapons have killed and maimed a great number of combatants and innocent civilians alike. Small arms and light weapons are easily used by criminal elements of society to commit crimes against persons and property, which gravely affects peace and security. Small arms and light weapons worsen conflicts and thus stunt economic development and limit the prospects for sustained growth. Furthermore, conflicts in which small arms and light weapons are prevalent

can cause the displacement of entire populations, thereby leading to refugee crises.

Many developing countries are particularly vulnerable to and culpable for the illicit trafficking of these weapons, which have fuelled and prolonged various conflicts. Thus, the Philippines emphasizes the importance of the early and full implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Philippines welcomes the positive outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States, which considered the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

In view of the cross-border nature of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, States should make every effort to develop mechanisms to foster information-sharing. The Philippines, for instance, shares evidentiary information through official channels on the basis of agreements such as the Agreement on Information Exchange and Establishment of Communication Procedures signed with the Governments of Malaysia and Indonesia. The Philippines also believes that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific could play a significant role in promoting subregional and regional cooperation in the area of small arms and light weapons.

On another front, the Philippines recognizes the adverse humanitarian impact of landmines and cluster munitions on innocent civilians long after a conflict has ended. Therefore we voice our support for the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction and welcome the outcome of the Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which was held at the Dead Sea between 18 and 22 November 2007. The Philippines participated meaningfully in the Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, held in Dublin between 19 and 30 May 2008.

The world faces an even greater threat with the further development and improvement of certain types of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons must be eliminated for the survival of mankind. This should be done through multilaterally agreed solutions in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations. Nuclear-weapon States must lead by example and

remove these types of weapons from their respective arsenals. Eliminating nuclear stockpiles will deter those countries from acquiring those weapons. Furthermore, the dismantling of nuclear stockpiles would eliminate the possibility of an accidental nuclear launch. It would also prevent terrorists and other non-State actors from acquiring them.

The Philippines is gravely concerned over the lack of progress in the past several Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as reaffirmed through the decisions and resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and in accordance with the 13 practical steps agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference in order to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, as called for under article VI of the NPT. Like many other countries, the Philippines expresses disappointment at the failure of the last NPT Review Conference, in 2005. The Philippines hopes that States parties will show flexibility and political will to ensure the success of the 2010 Review Conference.

In relation to that Conference, which will set the course for the nuclear non-proliferation regime, it will be the turn of Asia, in particular South-East Asia, to assume and hold the presidency of the NPT Review Conference. The Philippines will field a qualified candidate for the presidency who will ably steer negotiations and lead the Review Conference to a favourable conclusion.

The Philippines believes in the necessity of universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and calls upon the remaining nine States whose ratifications are necessary for the Treaty to enter into force to delay no further. The Philippines is proud to be a contributor to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) by having three of the facilities that form part of the international monitoring system, namely, two seismological monitoring stations and one radionuclide station. Furthermore, the Philippines hosted a regional workshop in Manila in June 2007 to promote the efforts of the CTBTO to expand universal support for the Treaty.

The Constitution of the Philippines itself states, in section 8 of article II, that the Philippines “adopts

and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory”. In accordance with this policy, the Philippines, together with the ASEAN member States, established the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and recognizes the importance of other nuclear-weapon-free zones and their contributions to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and international peace and security. My delegation reiterates the invitation to nuclear-weapon States to adhere to these various zones, including, in particular, the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, by signing the Protocol of the Treaty establishing the Zone.

Biological and chemical weapons are just as lethal as nuclear weapons and if unleashed can cause untold suffering for their victims. The Philippines welcomes the successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. The Philippines recognizes the importance of strengthening this Convention through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol and universal adherence to the Convention. On chemical weapons, the Philippines recognizes the significance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and calls on States to meet the deadlines, as extended by the Conference of States Parties, on the destruction of these terrifying and horrific weapons. The Philippines also calls on those few remaining States not party to the Chemical Weapons Convention to sign and ratify the Convention without delay.

The Philippines supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and would also like to see the reconvening of the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session on disarmament and the possible establishment of a preparatory committee.

I should like to stress the urgency of achieving success in our work during our current session, success which can be attained if Member States exercise the necessary political will and continue to encourage and depend on multilateral processes.

Mr. Weissbrod (Israel): At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Chairperson of the First Committee on assuming his position and to assure him of my delegation’s full support and cooperation in his work guiding our deliberations forward and reaching a successful outcome.

Israel has consistently viewed the regional context as the primary and essential framework to advance critical arms control measures in the Middle East. Comprehensive and durable peace in the area is essential in this respect. The foundations of peace and stability in the region must be based on an historic reconciliation, which should embody such notions as compromise, mutual trust and respect, safe and recognized borders and good neighbourliness. Effective arms control measures can be achieved and sustained in a region only when wars, armed conflicts, terror, political hostility, incitement and non-recognition cease to be features of everyday life. Israel firmly believes that the political reality in our region mandates a practical, step-by-step approach.

The achievement of a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbours should be accompanied and followed by confidence-building measures and arrangements regarding conventional weapons, culminating in the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable zone free of ballistic missiles and of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. This zone should emanate from and encompass all the States in the region, by virtue of free and direct negotiations among them. We have a long and complicated journey ahead of us, and even modest steps forward can play a vital role towards progress.

The Middle East has become neither more peaceful nor safer since the 2007 deliberations of the First Committee. In particular, Iran's nuclear programme has not been halted despite compelling evidence as to its military nature and despite four United Nations Security Council resolutions. The claim that this programme is of a legitimate nature, in the pursuit of nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes, can no longer be put forward in a credible manner. Iran's nuclear activities are in contravention of Security Council resolutions, demands of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its own international legal obligations. This nuclear programme represents a clear threat to the stability and security of the region as a whole and presents an urgent challenge to global peace and stability.

Iran's hostile policies and statements, its aggressive pursuit of missile technology and its active involvement in and support of terrorism further exacerbate the situation in the region. Israel, in particular, has consistently been the target of calls by the Iranian President for its destruction. These have

been accompanied by vicious anti-Semitic remarks, as the United Nations witnessed only a short time ago at the General Assembly's general debate.

The international community should not overlook the fact that the vast majority of cases of non-compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — three out of four widely acknowledged cases — have taken place in the Middle East and that a fourth case is under investigation. In this regard, the renewal of interest in nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be accompanied by extensive efforts aimed at ensuring that such programmes will not be misused for proliferation purposes. Particular care should be taken in volatile regions such as the Middle East.

Iran's nuclear programme is by no means the only cause of concern in the Middle East. The situation in other areas of the region has not improved. The conflict that erupted in the summer of 2006 with the aggressive attacks of the Hizbullah terror organization has shown that man-portable air-defence systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, missiles of various types and ranges and very-short-range rockets are not outside the reach of terrorists. Hizbullah, which is supported first and foremost by Iran, has not ceased rearming itself since 2006, a course of action similar to that taken by the Hamas terror organization.

In the past year, Hizbullah has entrenched itself further, with regard to both its position vis-à-vis the Lebanese political sphere and the breadth and sophistication of its arsenals. The transfers of arms from Iran to Syria to Hizbullah have continued unabated, in contravention of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). The smuggling of arms plays into the hands of those who wish to ignite conflict in the region and has been facilitated by States turning a blind eye and sometimes even encouraging this phenomenon.

It is Israel's view that preventing the transfer of arms to terrorists should be addressed as a matter of high priority by the international community and that a clear norm banning such transfers should be created and concrete steps taken against the continuation of such transfers. In our view, nothing can justify the practice of some States condemning terrorism while at the same time condoning the transfer of arms to terrorist groups.

Despite the grim regional backdrop, Israel attaches great importance to the prevention of the proliferation of non-conventional weapons, as well as of the unauthorized transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use items. Israel has taken extensive efforts to fully achieve all of the non-proliferation regimes. On 31 December 2007, the new Export Control Law entered into force. This law regulates control over the munitions list of the Wassenaar Suppliers regime. It augments the Export Control Order of January 2007, which regulates control over dual-use items and technologies based on the dual-use list of the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Import and Export Control Order of 2004. Taken together, these laws and regulations ensure that the robust control over exports exercised by Israel meets the standards and criteria as established by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Wassenaar Suppliers Regimes.

The world today faces the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — weapons that pose a threat to all nations, large and small. Israel believes that it is critically important that the international community take all necessary measures to ensure that terrorists do not acquire the world's most deadly weapons, including nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological weapons, as well as their means of delivery. Accordingly, Israel welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the extension of the 1540 Committee mandate by the terms of resolution 1810 (2008).

Israel shares the concern of the international community pertaining to the need to strengthen the safety and security of nuclear materials and facilities and to prevent illicit trafficking. In this spirit, Israel has joined several conventions and codes of conduct in the field of nuclear safety and security. It has joined the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. It has also signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and is preparing for its ratification. In addition, Israel has joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Container Security Initiative, the United States Megaports Initiative and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. Israel also supports the Proliferation Security Initiative.

This year has seen significant developments with respect to the creation of a norm on the use of cluster munitions. The Convention on Certain Conventional

Weapons (CCW), which is widely acknowledged as the most relevant and professional forum to address issues in the field of conventional weapons, has conducted serious, in-depth negotiations in order to conclude a new protocol on cluster munitions. These negotiations aim to achieve an appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and military necessities that could be implemented by all relevant States. Further negotiations are scheduled for the month of November. It is our conviction that with continued seriousness on the part of all participants, an agreed protocol on cluster munitions could be achieved by the end of this year. Israel trusts and hopes that those CCW member States that were also involved in other negotiations on cluster munitions will continue to exert their best efforts in order to achieve an agreement on the CCW.

Significant developments have also occurred in the area of small arms and light weapons. A successful outcome has been achieved at the Biennial Meeting of States, which, hopefully, indicates that previous differences of opinion will no longer impede the important work undertaken in this field. Nevertheless, Israel regrets the inability to reach a consensus on the final document due to difficulties mounted by Iran on the last day of the Meeting. Ironically, Iran, the country that blocked the consensus, is the most heavily involved in the transfer of arms to terrorists in our region.

Israel will continue to play an active and responsible role in furthering non-proliferation goals and in the enhancement of norms aimed at the prevention of arms from reaching irresponsible and unauthorized parties.

Mrs. Halliyadde (Sri Lanka): My delegation wishes to congratulate the Chairperson on his election. We look forward to a productive session under his able leadership.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia, setting out the positions of the Non-Aligned Movement on the issues before the Committee.

Sri Lanka's advocacy of multilateral efforts for arms control and disarmament is as long-standing as our membership in the Organization. We believe that a progressively less-weaponized security regime will be the most cost-effective and civilized way forward for sustainable peace and security within and between States. As a country bearing the brunt of the scourge of

terrorism, we know only too well how costly it is to spend scarce resources on armaments to ensure security.

At this session, where we mark thirty years since the first special session on disarmament, we are discussing the holding of the next special session on disarmament. We are disappointed that we have yet to report any significant progress, or indeed any noteworthy movement, on the key issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in the multilateral arena. The Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral forum for such negotiations, has not done much substantive work, let alone initiate negotiations for a prolonged period. In fact, it has not yet been possible even to agree on a reasonable work schedule for that expensive forum. What is called for is the commencement of meaningful work, rather than the repetition of delegations' known positions.

Important treaties remain without having entered into force. The consensus resolutions on the fissile material cut-off treaty remain unimplemented, while negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament remain stalled. There is nothing institutionally wrong with the Conference on Disarmament, as it has in the past produced treaties as complex as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. What is lacking, of course, is not the ability but the willingness to negotiate on these critical issues of disarmament and security.

While dialogue and negotiations remain locked in procedural and other obstacles, tensions across continents and alliances seem to be rising, reminiscent of the cold war era, creating grounds for unnecessary expenditures on arms races driven by the new strategic divides emerging in the old battlegrounds and new nuclear tensions in different parts of the world. It is therefore necessary for the First Committee this year to pay attention to meaningful and practical resolutions facilitating a way forward for the multilateral work on several key disarmament and arms control issues.

On nuclear disarmament, it is time that all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, recognize that we can aspire to and realize a holistic concept of security only if there is serious commitment to and practical steps towards eventual nuclear disarmament while pursuing nuclear non-proliferation measures. It must be clear to everyone that non-proliferation has not

survived, and will not survive, in a disarmament vacuum.

The three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) cannot be sustained only through a denial regime, but rather through a regime of mutual support aimed at realizing all three objectives. The very necessity of non-proliferation arises from the fact of the existence of nuclear weapons. Therefore, addressing the root cause is essential to deal with the ailment. As we analyse the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, and while we prepare for the 2010 Review Conference, the NPT States parties, particularly the depositary States, would be well advised to reflect on the reality of the nexus between non-proliferation and global nuclear disarmament.

Sri Lanka, as a long-standing party to the NPT, has always argued that the NPT and the international security regime will be progressively undermined and eroded if more nuclear-weapon States continue to emerge, in violation of treaty obligations and the many recommendations contained in the numerous relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Increasingly, the public at large, and especially those statesmen who are well versed in security policies and doctrines associated with nuclear weapons, are voicing concerns about nuclear-weapon States' continued insistence on the utility of nuclear weapons without paying due regard to their treaty commitments towards the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals and from the international security equation. We hope that the First Committee resolutions this year and the deliberations of the forthcoming NPT Review Conference will benefit from the recent pronouncements by some leading statesmen regarding the desirability and indeed the practicality of eliminating nuclear weapons, paving the way for a credible disarmament and non-proliferation programme. Sri Lanka would support initiatives in the First Committee that are consistent with such a process, to be pursued in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums.

We would also like to highlight the threat posed by terrorist groups and other non-State actors who are seeking to acquire illegal military capability, including the materials associated with weapons of mass destruction as well as cyber-attack capabilities. We therefore extend our support and encouragement to

those initiatives that will support the goal of eliminating illicit small arms and light weapons. We ourselves have taken a range of national measures to implement various steps envisaged in the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and related resolutions coming out of this Committee that enjoy broad-based support.

In this regard, we would also like to stress the need for the appropriate United Nations mechanisms and organs, including the Security Council, to empower Member States and build their capacity to coordinate and implement Security Council resolutions, such as 1373 (2001), that envisage practical measures to observe, detect and interdict the smuggling of illicit arms across borders and on the high seas in violation of national and international laws.

As a country facing the threat of terrorism driven by transnational networks, Sri Lanka has learned from experience that more robust surveillance and implementation mechanisms are required to implement resolutions such as 1373 (2001). Currently, such regimes lack effectiveness at the supply end of the illicit arms operations, thus leaving the principal burden of implementation at the receiving end.

Sri Lanka and Egypt will work together this year to ensure the passage of the First Committee resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As noted by many delegations, this resolution seeks to prevent the introduction of an arms race into outer space and to ensure space security against hostile activity and the debris which is becoming an increasing threat to space use. Since the advent of the space age more than 50 years ago, space capabilities have spread to many regions and to many nations, demonstrating the spirit of human ingenuity and the mobility of new technologies for exploring new frontiers.

Sri Lanka supports regional approaches to peace, security and disarmament. We have consistently supported zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world. If there is a nuclear arms race in any other part of the world, such developments will continue to cause concerns to countries like Sri Lanka, which have not advocated such notions for security. We therefore call on existing nuclear countries and new nuclear countries to embark on a credible and multilateral nuclear disarmament programme that will progressively marginalize the

utility of nuclear weapons and eventually eliminate them from national arsenals. We also call upon those nuclear States that have undertaken large-scale nuclear programmes to ensure that there are adequate and internationally accepted safety measures built into those programmes so that potential radiation and other hazards emanating from accidents will be mitigated or minimized.

In an already unstable world in financial and economic turmoil, multilateral efforts for clearly visible results on disarmament and non-proliferation do not paint a pretty picture. At the same time, global military expenditure has increased to the huge figure of \$1.3 trillion. This is a phenomenal expenditure, compared to the relatively humble resource requirements of the Millennium Development Goals advocated by all of us.

The First Committee resolutions and the multilateral disarmament agenda leading to the next NPT Review Conference need to pave the way for some credible programme for arms control and disarmament, seeking to reduce this burden so that the committee community of nations can progressively de-weaponize security.

Mr. Jargalsaikhan (Mongolia): I wish at the outset to congratulate the Chairperson and the other members of the Bureau on their election to lead the work of this important Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement at our second meeting. I will therefore make a few additional remarks from the Mongolian national perspective.

My delegation shares the growing concerns about the difficulties that disarmament and international security are facing today. The disarmament machinery is both under strain and under-performing. This applies especially to the Committee on Disarmament. We commend the efforts of its six Presidents to break the so-called procedural deadlock, and we express the hope that their efforts may soon yield positive results.

Earlier speakers in this debate have rightly identified the international security environment and the lack of political will as the main underlying causes of blockages in these multilateral disarmament forums. We share this assessment and support the suggestion to review the Conference on Disarmament's procedural

mechanisms in 2009 so as to make it an important means of promoting common noble objectives rather than pursuing narrow national interests.

The nuclear issues related to Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remain concerns for the international community. They need to be addressed and resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. My Government consistently supports the multilateral efforts to resolve the issue of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We share the concerns regarding the current difficulties in the talks and the relations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We hope that they may be successfully addressed by the parties concerned and that the second phase of negotiations may be revived soon.

My country continues to place high importance on the early entry into force and the universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Deputy Foreign Minister of Mongolia took part in the ministerial meeting of the States parties to the Treaty held on the sidelines of the Assembly's general debate and supported its outcome.

In view of persistent disagreements on major issues at the two previous sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we believe that States need to redouble their efforts to address and overcome their differences prior to the work of the Committee's third session next year.

Mongolia highly commends the work of the IAEA aimed at making sure that nuclear technologies and know-how are used solely for peaceful purposes. The Agency's role will increase, since many countries are turning to nuclear power as an important source of energy and as an engine for their development and social progress. At present there are 439 nuclear power reactors in operation, and 36 new ones are under construction. Almost 50 countries have expressed interest in considering the possibility of introducing nuclear power. Under these circumstances, the role of safeguard agreements and especially of additional protocols is increasing. My delegation therefore calls on the States that have not yet done so to conclude additional protocols with the Agency as soon as possible.

Mongolia is one of the countries that is thinking of introducing nuclear power as an important means of ensuring energy security and promoting goals of national development. A draft State nuclear energy policy, including exploitation of the country's uranium reserves, an implementation plan and draft comprehensive nuclear legislation — all drawn up bearing in mind the IAEA's strict safety and security standards and requirements — will soon be considered for adoption by our parliament.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important role in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Hence, we support convening the second Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Conference in 2010, prior to the NPT Conference, as we see it as an important means to enhance cooperation of members of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which already make up almost two thirds of the United Nations membership. Following the decisions of the first Conference, held in 2005 in Mexico, Mongolia established its focal point to deal with issues related to nuclear-weapon-free zones, which has already established formal relations with the focal points of other nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty agencies. In order to contribute to the preparations for the second follow-up Conference, Mongolia expressed its readiness to host the meeting of the focal points in the spring of 2009.

More than three decades have passed since the General Assembly considered a comprehensive study on nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, and almost a decade has passed since it adopted guidelines for establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation believes that the changing political environment necessitates a fresh study to evaluate the role that nuclear-weapon-free zones have played and could play in the future in promoting the goals of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and conflict prevention.

Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status has become an essential element of the global non-proliferation regime. My Government is working to institutionalize that status and attaches particular importance to the conclusion of a treaty with its two immediate neighbours that clearly defines the terms of that status. As pointed out in the Secretary-General's report on this item (A/63/122), the draft trilateral treaty was presented in September 2007 to Mongolia's immediate neighbours for their consideration. In terms of content, its main provisions resemble those of other

international treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones and yet, at the same time, reflect its good-neighbourly relations with Russia and China. My delegation expects that the informal consultations regarding the draft trilateral treaty held on the margins of this Committee's meetings will be useful and productive.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the first General Assembly resolution on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status (resolution 53/77 D). The Mongolian delegation will be submitting for the consideration of this Committee a draft resolution on this item, based on the previous consensus resolutions. It is our hope that, as before, the draft will enjoy wide support and be adopted by consensus.

Though the reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction is important in ensuring international peace and security, the international community should not ignore the dangers posed by the small arms and light weapons that kill and maim thousands of people throughout the world every year. My delegation welcomes the progress achieved in this area, such as that achieved at the Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the United Nations Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It also welcomes the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which will help limit and bring to an end the use of those inhumane munitions.

Finally, my delegation encourages the Group of Governmental Experts on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters of an arms trade treaty to continue its efforts to draft a treaty that would firmly engage all of the stakeholders in the process. Mongolia favours a clear normative framework in this important area.

Mr. Tanalinov (Kazakhstan): It has been exactly one year since our last meeting, in which we referred to the stagnation in the nuclear disarmament process and the need to take specific measures to strengthen the international security system. Unfortunately, the world's conflicts and threats have not diminished. Due to the absence of consensus, the international community has failed to resolve the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In June of this year, we marked the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Despite

criticism of the NPT, it should be recognized that the Treaty has been and continues to be the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the basis for nuclear disarmament.

Our challenge today is to ensure the effectiveness of the NPT. As delegates may be aware, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, speaking at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, proposed to adapt this important component of the international security system to the new realities. In this context, we believe it necessary to develop effective leveraging measures with regard to nuclear-weapon States acting outside the framework of the NPT and to prevent any withdrawal from the Treaty. We call on States parties of the NPT to consolidate efforts for the success of the NPT Review Conference in 2010, a result of which should be to ensure the effectiveness and universality of the Treaty.

Kazakhstan does not simply call on the international community to disarm. It has made an historic contribution to the strengthening of international security. Renunciation of nuclear weapons, denial of possession of the fourth largest nuclear arsenal and adherence to fulfilling international commitments are an important reaffirmation of our desire to strengthen global collaboration in the sphere of security and disarmament.

Our country has joined almost all international instruments for the prevention of nuclear, biological, radiological and chemical weapons of mass destruction. In May 2008, Kazakhstan ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Kazakhstan is an active member of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). In order to strengthen and develop the inspection activities of the Treaty, Kazakhstan supported the initiative to hold an integrated field exercise at the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground in September of this year. Indeed, that event is another confirmation of our commitment to strengthen international security and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on 8 September 2006 was a clear indication of the commitment of the region's countries to the principles of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and has become their significant contribution to global security. Clearly, the signing of

the Treaty in the city of Semipalatinsk, the centre of the former nuclear test site, was deeply symbolic in terms of nuclear non-proliferation.

An important factor in the success of the initiative of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is that the initiative has been developed under the auspices of the United Nations and with the active assistance of its experts. At various times, a number of General Assembly resolutions in support of the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia were adopted. In December 2006, after the signing of the Semipalatinsk Treaty, the General Assembly adopted by majority vote a resolution in support of the Central Asian zone (resolution 61/88).

Currently, the parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan is completing the process of ratification of the Treaty. We are confident that its entry into force will enhance confidence and predictability in relations among countries and will further guarantee the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We hope that under the rules adopted to establish nuclear-free zones, nuclear Powers will in the near future sign the Protocol to the Treaty, which provides negative security assurances to countries of the region that the nuclear Powers will not use nuclear weapons against them. Kazakhstan is open to appropriate consultations with the countries of the five nuclear-weapon States.

States parties to the Treaty intend to table a traditional draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone during this session of the General Assembly, and we count on broad support for this document by the Member States.

While continuing to fight against the nuclear threat, Kazakhstan also recognizes the right of any nation to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under strict international control, in particular of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We believe that, as long as it meets all the conditions for transparency in accordance with agreements with the IAEA, including the Additional Protocol, each State has the right to develop peaceful nuclear technology and nuclear power plants. Kazakhstan, which has one of the largest reserves of natural uranium in the world, intends to pursue this path, providing for strict control over technology by the IAEA. This position is also borne out by our ratification of the Protocol Additional to the Agreement

between Kazakhstan and the IAEA on the Application of Safeguards.

In a crisis of non-proliferation regimes, the real danger is nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. Kazakhstan is an active participant in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Within that framework the “Atom-Antiterror” exercises and the International Conference on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials have been organized in our country this year.

Another issue that remains to be resolved is the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which has a negative impact on security, human rights and the socio-economic situation in many countries, particularly in crisis and post-conflict areas of the world. Today, no country is immune to disruptions in mechanisms for control over conventional weapons arsenals. We are aware of many cases in which thousands and even millions of weapons have disappeared and fallen into unknown hands.

Kazakhstan fully supports the provisions and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General’s latest report on small arms (S/2008/258) and believes that the United Nations should play a leading role in countering that threat. We believe that the adoption of the outcome document of the Third Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, held in July 2008, constitutes real progress in the process of countering the illicit trafficking of such weapons and may become an example for reaching consensus in other disarmament mechanisms.

Our State’s position supports the necessity for research and the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit and interest of all countries. The increase in the number of sponsors of the relevant resolution and the unanimous support for it may be an important step in preventing a real risk of an arms race in outer space. We appreciate the efforts made in drafting a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. This issue is particularly relevant in the context of the increasing number of countries involved in and dependent on space programmes.

One of the world’s largest spaceports — Baikonur — is located on our territory. Kazakhstan actively participates in international space cooperation and is dynamically developing its own space programme. We are convinced that security in outer space must remain a central issue on the international

community's agenda. Outer space should be a peaceful area of cooperation for all mankind.

In concluding my statement, I would like to express my sincere hope that our meeting will in fact help to address the issues related to general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): Allow me to join the previous speakers in congratulating Mr. Suazo on his election as the Chairperson of this Committee and to confirm my delegation's confidence that his stewardship, with the efficient assistance and facilitation of the Bureau, will lead the Committee's work to a successful conclusion as well as to the fulfilment of its mandates and objectives. I also wish to warmly greet the Bureau of the Committee, in particular its seasoned and able Secretary, Mr. Jarmo Sareva.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made at our second meeting by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation also wishes to express its satisfaction with the report of the Secretary-General regarding the various agenda items before the Committee and with its detailed consideration. It is our firm belief that the Committee will take sufficient time and make the effort needed for an in-depth look into, and carry out a realistic assessment of, the many critical issues and the stakes involved for the good of our lofty shared aim: the maintenance of international peace and security.

Multilateralism remains the most reliable means to deal effectively with important global issues such as disarmament. Ethiopia firmly believes that multilateral engagement and negotiations are vital instruments for dealing with the multifarious intricate problems associated with arms proliferation, which have increasingly become real threats to international peace and security.

Although the all-too-well-known dangers caused by the proliferation of both conventional and non-conventional weapons threaten peace and security in every part of the globe, their net adverse effects remain manifold for the developing world, particularly the least developed countries. Our continent, Africa, which consists of both developing and least developed

countries, has many development challenges. It cannot afford to be thwarted in its efforts to meet those challenges by the wanton production, distribution, transfer, use and trafficking of destructive weapons of any sort. That is particularly true at a time when the clock is ticking fast towards the year targeted for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, regarding which most of us are, as has been widely admitted, already behind schedule. The endeavour to achieve real social and economic development and thus improvements in the standard of living for the poor majority cannot go hand in hand with the amassing of armaments and blatant weaponization.

Our subregion, the Horn of Africa, is known as one of the most volatile and heavily affected regions of the world. It continues to suffer the multifarious negative effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as well as in other conventional weapons. Given the ambivalent political and security situation prevailing in many parts of the subregion, various internal and external actors — including non-State actors — are taking every opportunity to use the subregion as a dumping ground, a convenient trafficking route or a conduit for the illicit transfer and use of various weapons, further worsening and complicating some of the conflict situations plaguing the region.

The assorted weapons that continue to inundate the subregion and areas beyond it thus have deleterious harmful effects not only on the security of every State, by fanning old and new conflicts and emboldening organized crime, but also, and more importantly, on the progress made in the meagre social and economic development endeavours undertaken by each nation within the subregion. That is the main reason why the Government of Ethiopia attaches great importance to the issue of conventional arms control at the global level in general and the regional level in particular.

In the light of the foregoing, my country continues to do its level best to live up to its international and regional commitments and its treaty-based obligations, particularly with respect to combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. However, our concerns and efforts are by no means limited to those types of weaponry; we also remain concerned about other types of weapons, both conventional and non-conventional, depending on the magnitude of their spread and their effects in the subregion as a whole and within Ethiopia. For the time

being, the lion's share of our overall regional concerns relate to small arms and light weapons, as well as mines and various types of explosive ordnance.

Accordingly, Ethiopia has persistently tried to play its deserved — and at times pivotal — role in that regard, particularly at the subregional level, where States are coordinating their efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms in subregional institutions established to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and, at the subregional level, the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa and its Protocol.

In that connection, it is important to underscore that the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was established under the Nairobi Protocol and of which Ethiopia is a member, has enabled its member States to take a number of appropriate practical actions to prevent, combat and eradicate the trafficking in and proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, ammunition and other related destructive materials within their jurisdictions and to strengthen the necessary regional collaboration in that regard.

Given the situation at the national level, it is important to underline that in Ethiopia, the sole importer of firearms is the Government, as provided by law, and that the weaponry thus brought into the country is destined for use by law-enforcement agencies. The Government has all the appropriate legal mechanisms to prevent the illicit import or transfer of weapons by unauthorized entities to other illegal destinations. The Government has also conducted public-awareness and confidence-building programmes so as to properly expose and combat the various problems and adverse effects associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, surplus weapons confiscated from those holding them illegally have been destroyed in public, and their voluntary surrender, encouraged by the Government, has also taken place in an encouraging manner.

The Ethiopian Federal Police Commission, which has been designated by the Government as a

coordinating agency on small arms and light weapons, has carried out a number of activities in this area. From May 2006 to February 2007 alone, more than 20,000 small arms and light weapons were confiscated and destroyed. That national accomplishment, including the figure just cited, has been duly reported to the Regional Centre.

On the other hand, however, landmines continue to be a cause of serious concern in our subregion. Ethiopia is one of the most landmine-affected countries. That was the main reason why our country was one of the prime negotiators of and first parties to the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, which is indeed a matter of public record. For its part, the Government of Ethiopia has done its utmost to ensure that the commitments entered into under the Convention are translated into practical actions. To that end, we have taken successive measures at the national level, including the establishment by law of a separate Government agency to serve as a focal point for implementing and following up on our obligations under the Convention.

In more recent years, as was the case in the past, the Government's main focus has been on undertaking extensive mine-clearance activities. Accordingly, more than 5,673,000 square metres of land have already been cleared of landmines and unexploded ordnance. Thanks to the success of this campaign, a number of local communities that previously had to face the perilous risks of living in areas infested by landmines now have safe land that can be used for any development purpose. In terms of creating public awareness, mine risk education has been given to select local landmine-prone communities since 2003, and this crucial task is being continued to date in a sustainable manner.

The Chairperson took the Chair.

In this regard, it is indeed gratifying for my delegation to bring to the attention of this Committee that Ethiopia, in its commitment to the success of global and regional efforts to eradicate landmines, has duly submitted its initial — yet up-to-date — national report on the status of implementation of the Ottawa Convention to the relevant United Nations agency entrusted with the mandate and responsibility of following up on this particular matter.

My delegation welcomes the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established to pursue matters relating to the drafting of an international arms trade

treaty, envisaged a couple of years ago, which has now reached an encouraging level of development. We hope this session will make a positive contribution and add momentum to the ongoing progress in this regard.

Before winding up, my delegation wishes to seize this timely opportunity to state that Ethiopia once again solemnly reaffirms its unreserved commitment to discharge all its treaty obligations and uphold the pertinent United Nations resolutions covering various issues in the realm of disarmament.

As I conclude, allow me to thank our partners for their generous assistance in our ongoing efforts to combat and prevent the proliferation of arms, particularly the illicit trafficking and transfer of small arms and light weapons. At the same time, I would also like to call upon the international community to continue to assist our lofty endeavours, which demand many resources, with more concrete support, which could help to change words and promises into practical deeds and real actions on the ground.

The Chairperson: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to reiterate the request that delegations respect the time limits for their statements.

Ms. Kwek (Singapore): Mr. Chairman, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and members of the Bureau on their election. My delegation looks forward to working with you as we go through the next few weeks together.

We face increasingly complex challenges in our quest for peace and security. New fronts are emerging in the global fight against terrorism, even as we continue with ongoing multinational efforts in areas such as Afghanistan and Iraq. In today's interconnected world, terrorists are able to easily and effectively reach beyond national borders and are harder to confine to one geographical location. It is also more difficult to distinguish between what is and what is not a weapon. Technological advances have made the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related systems and materials much easier. The free flow of information, materials and personnel between countries compounds the difficulty of preventing proliferation in today's environment.

Faced with these challenges, it is imperative that the international community strengthen its efforts to address the issues of disarmament and

non-proliferation. Traditional initiatives and approaches to non-proliferation need to be supplemented with measures that not only adhere to international law but can also assist States in a practical and effective manner.

As a global trans-shipment hub and responsible member of the international community, Singapore has taken decisive measures to strengthen our exports control regime in order to implement coordinated and effective measures to disrupt the illicit transfer of materials related to weapons of mass destruction. This is our commitment to non-proliferation. Additionally, in support of these efforts, Singapore participates in both the Container Security Initiative and the Proliferation Security Initiative.

As a small country, Singapore remains deeply concerned about the continued existence of nuclear weapons. We urge all members of the international community to work together towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. To achieve this, global cooperation in disarmament and non-proliferation is crucial. This requires a multilateral approach based on the rule of law. Treaties and conventions, especially those related to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, must see concrete implementation of commitments in order to remain credible. To be fully effective, they must also be universal. Singapore has consistently supported multilateral non-proliferation instruments that serve the interests of international security and stability. We reiterate our support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Closer to home, we have the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Together with sustainable development and respect for human rights, the desire for peace and security is one of the fundamental pillars upon which the United Nations has been built. Thus the United Nations must remain ever vigilant and continue to play a lead role in finding solutions for the security issues on the agenda and pragmatic and practical ways for us to cooperate with one another. My delegation would like to express our hope and confidence that under your able leadership, Sir, this Committee will be able to work together towards effective disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

Mr. Salim (Kenya): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this Committee. I also congratulate members of the Bureau on their election. I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation.

We align ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation and I are delighted to contribute to this general debate on disarmament and international security. I would like, at the outset, to reaffirm Kenya's commitment to efforts aimed at strengthening disarmament. General and complete disarmament must be our ultimate goal. We must not give up on our efforts to rid the world of nuclear and biological weapons. Despite the pessimism that generally accompanies these discussions about disarmament, Kenya firmly believes that disarmament is a viable tool for reducing the likelihood and dangers of conflict. We support a multilateral approach to disarmament.

It is our conviction the three main provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy by all States — form the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. They must be given equal and balanced treatment on the basis of non-selectivity.

Disarmament and development are closely linked. Disarmament is an important ingredient in the construction of sustainable development, which is essential to promoting human security and human rights. Security cannot be guaranteed by individual States in isolation. It requires our collective efforts. It is for this reason that multilateralism must be given priority by the international community.

In this regard, Kenya underscores the important role of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva as the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament treaties. However, we are concerned at the lack of progress in the Conference for almost a decade. It is our hope that the tremendous efforts made by the Six Presidents at the 2007 session will soon bear fruit. It would give impetus to substantive negotiations on a programme of work based on the principle of balance and non-selectivity.

Kenya joins the calls for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament.

Conventional weapons continue to have devastating impacts, especially in developing countries. They fuel civil wars and other conflicts, causing harm to millions of people, particularly in Africa. Kenya reiterates her support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering.

The efforts by the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in harmonizing and coordinating the activities of member States in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region to reduce the number of small arms and light weapons are commendable. We appreciate the support provided by partner States to the Centre. Kenya will continue playing an active role in contributing towards addressing the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that an African regional conference on the theme "The Arms Trade Treaty, International Transfers and Development" was held in Nairobi on 3 and 4 September 2008. The outcome document will be presented shortly to this Committee.

My delegation welcomes the report submitted to the General Assembly by the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters of an arms trade treaty (A/63/334). Kenya is committed to an open process with the involvement of all States, which we hope will lead to a legally binding arms trade treaty. It is our conviction that an arms trade treaty would ensure responsible trade in small arms and light weapons.

Finally, I urge all delegations to work together in a spirit of cooperation so that we can achieve our collective objectives. The stakes are high, but together we can succeed. Kenya will lend its support.

Mr. Rao (India): The Indian delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We would like to assure you of our full cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The reference in that statement to universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) pertains to the views of NAM States parties to the NPT and does not reflect India's position.

The United Nations is the embodiment of our faith in the benefits of collective action and of multilateral approaches in resolving global issues concerning global peace, stability and development. India's approach to addressing issues relating to disarmament and international security — the mandate of the First Committee — is underlined by our conviction that global contemporary challenges are best addressed through collective efforts imbued with a spirit of genuine multilateralism. We must work together in cooperation and partnership to address threats to international security, both old and new, and to show a new spirit of unity of purpose and vision to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation goals and objectives.

India attaches the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament, as enshrined in the Final Document of the First Special Session Devoted to Disarmament. This year we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear-Weapon-Free and Non-Violent World Order, proposed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to the Assembly's third special session devoted to disarmament. India's commitment to universal, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons was reiterated by our Prime Minister on 9 June 2008 and by our External Affairs Minister on 5 September. Speaking at the 12th meeting of the Assembly's sixty-third session, on 26 September, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reiterated India's proposal for a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and providing for their complete elimination within a specified time frame.

While the end of the cold war created new space for action on global disarmament — with notable results such as the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention eliminating, on a universal and non-discriminatory basis, an entire category of weapons of mass destruction — the goal of nuclear disarmament has remained distant. We call upon the First Committee to reinforce the message, now being

echoed even by prominent statesmen and experts in the field, in favour of generating new momentum to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. No efforts must be spared in building consensus to this end.

India has put forward, both at the General Assembly and in the Conference on Disarmament, a set of practical measures to stimulate debate and promote consensus on the way forward. The measures we suggest include the reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear-weapon States to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons; the reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines; taking into account of the global reach and menace of nuclear weapons; adoption of measures by nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war, and the de-alerting of nuclear weapons to prevent their unintentional or accidental use; negotiation of a global agreement among nuclear-weapon States on "no first use" of nuclear-weapons; negotiation of a universal and legally binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; negotiation of a convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified time frame.

It is clear that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes and require concerted and cooperative international efforts. India supports efforts aimed at realizing global non-proliferation objectives. The expansion of international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by increasing the share of nuclear energy as a non-polluting energy source, in a manner that is safe, secure and consistent with non-proliferation objectives, will have a positive impact on global energy security and international efforts to combat climate change. We attach importance to carrying this process forward through dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation with our international partners.

India supports the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a fissile material cut-off treaty that is universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable. India

joined the consensus, as reflected in Assembly resolution 48/75 L, which envisaged a fissile material cut-off treaty as a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. We support efforts towards building the necessary international consensus so as to enable the Conference to move forward on this important issue. India has continued to observe a moratorium on nuclear explosive tests.

India supports negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. As part of its credible minimum nuclear deterrent, India has espoused a policy of “no first use” and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States and is prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements.

We support international efforts to strengthen the present international legal framework to ensure the safety and security of space assets and to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. While noting that there is no legal regime governing the possession and use of missiles, we believe that any initiative to address these concerns in a sustainable and comprehensive manner should be conducted through an inclusive process based on the principle of equal and legitimate security.

India has contributed actively to United Nations efforts to strengthen the regulation of small arms and light weapons, as we believe that it is necessary to break the nexus between small arms proliferation, terrorism and organized crime. We remain strongly committed to the Convention on Conventional Weapons process, which offers the only forum of a universal character that brings together all the main producers and users of major conventional weapons, thus ensuring that the instruments that emerge have a greater prospect of having a meaningful impact on the ground.

As in the previous year, India seeks the support of the First Committee for the following three resolutions: on the convention on the prohibition of use of nuclear weapons, on reducing nuclear danger, and on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. In order to save time during the plenary debate we will make our detailed presentation on these resolutions during the time allocated for that purpose.

In conclusion, allow me to assure you, Sir, of India’s strong commitment to working together to ensure a successful outcome to this Committee’s deliberations.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I now have the distinct honour and pleasure of calling upon Ambassador Paul Badji, my predecessor as Chairman of this Committee, to whom we owe a great deal of the successes we achieved in the previous session. I would like to express my own personal gratitude for all of the support and assistance he has given us. I would like to give him the floor in his capacity as Permanent Representative of Senegal and former Chairman of this Committee.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): As your immediate predecessor, Mr. Chairman, and as one who appreciates your great human qualities and your mastery of the issues before this Committee, I must at the outset take this opportunity to express to you my warmest congratulations and those of my delegation and to assure you of our full and complete cooperation. Our congratulations also go to the other colleagues of the Bureau.

Senegal associates itself with the statements made at our second meeting by Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

The global disarmament and non-proliferation regime for a few years now has been encountering a number of obstacles that are seriously impeding the progress that Member States are entitled to expect in this area. To overcome these obstacles, it is up to us to provide a collective response, which would be the product of multilateral diplomatic efforts and the strength of which would reside in our common will to identify impasses and deal with them together in order to resolve them. These constraints prevent us from making progress in negotiations for the conclusion of other treaties, such as those on nuclear weapons, weapons in space and fissile materials.

It seems that the following priority actions are necessary in order for us to make progress in the disarmament agenda: eliminating the mistrust and suspicion surrounding the question of disarmament, and strengthening the authority of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by taking the necessary measures for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and by

undertaking negotiations on a treaty banning fissile materials. In the meantime, nuclear weapon States must re-establish trust by providing security guarantees to those States that do not have nuclear weapons. They must promote greater adherence to treaties for nuclear-weapon-free zones and must reaffirm countries' rights to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

However, nuclear weapons are not the sole priority of the moment. Indeed, we must also get a better handle on weapons of mass destruction and on conventional weapons. In this regard, the Register of Conventional Arms is a very useful tool and should be maintained and improved.

We also need to work to universalize the conventions on biological and chemical weapons. Encouraging results were achieved during the Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in The Hague in April 2008. However, we need to effectively implement the provisions of this Convention relating to international cooperation if we wish to achieve greater mastery over chemical weapons.

With respect to missiles, Senegal is pleased to note the publication of the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts (A/63/176), discussed here, which proposes that international legal norms should be adopted.

We are pleased with the adoption, in Dublin on 30 May 2008, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. That constitutes decisive progress in protecting civilians and in strengthening international humanitarian law. We appeal to all States so that the signing ceremony, scheduled for 3 December 2008 in Oslo, will be a success and so that the 30 ratifications required for the entry into force will be achieved before May 2009.

My country is pleased that, this past July, the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms resulted in a substantial final document (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3) on the essential points, namely, international cooperation and assistance, illicit brokering, stockpile management and surplus disposal, and marking and tracing. Member States must now exhibit a genuine will to implement those recommendations. Indeed, seven years after the adoption of the Programme of Action, we see that the suffering caused by small arms and lights weapons has

increased, thereby compromising the efforts made in a number of regions to ensure peace and development.

We welcome the consensus within the Group of Governmental Experts on an arms trade treaty, and we hope that the draft resolution on this question will be unanimously approved in the First Committee this year. Our commitment on this matter must remain strong until the conclusion of a binding treaty. We must also exhibit the same determination so that the instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and lights weapons will become legally binding and a similar instrument on the illicit brokering of lights weapons will be adopted.

A world without anti-personnel mines will require universal acceptance of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines and the implementation of the full instrument called for in that document. The effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention must therefore remain a priority, and Senegal calls on all those States that have not yet done so to adhere thereto, with a view to making a contribution to the ongoing efforts.

My country stresses once again that only through multilateral cooperation based on the strong political will of Member States will we be able to overcome the current obstacles and to meet the security challenges facing the international community. In this regard, questioning the usefulness of certain bodies of the United Nations disarmament mechanism does not seem constructive to us, since the continuing impasse within those bodies only reflects Member States' lack of political will.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador Badji. I should like to express to you not only my personal gratitude but also that of all the members of the Committee for the excellent work that you carried out as Chair at the previous session of this Committee.

Ms. Luzongo Miamboh (Zambia): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee, and I extend my complements to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that you will preside over the work of the Committee successfully and I assure you of my delegation's full support.

Zambia fully associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria,

who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively.

We, the Member States of the United Nations, have adopted the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties such as the Pelindaba and Tlatelolco Treaties, the Chemical Weapons Convention and other treaties and conventions whose objective is disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In addition, resolutions on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, such as resolution 61/62, have been adopted, calling on both the non-nuclear and nuclear weapon States of the United Nations to fully cooperate in pursuing and achieving the common objectives in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Zambia notes with concern, however, that today the prospect of living in a world free of nuclear weapons is more elusive than it was four decades ago, with some nuclear States developing more sophisticated and even greater arsenals of such weapons. To arrest this situation, the nuclear weapon States must muster the political will and flexibility to come up with measures to ensure full compliance with and implementation of the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In addition, the remaining Annex 2 States must ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty for that Treaty to enter into force.

The illicit trade and transfer of small arms and light weapons continues to fuel internal and regional conflicts, thereby posing a serious threat to peace, stability and development, particularly for many regions of the developing world. In this connection, Zambia wishes to acknowledge the positive contribution that the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) is making towards controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We join other Member States and civil society organizations in calling for the full implementation of an ITI in order to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Furthermore, Zambia welcomes the progress made in July 2008 on implementing the 2001 Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms in All Its Aspects. Indeed, the 2008 outcome document (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3) represents significant progress in the efforts to regulate and

reduce the proliferation of these conventional weapons. In due course, Zambia will submit a list of its financial and technical assistance requirements and the projects to be undertaken to enable the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

We also welcome efforts to conclude an international arms trade treaty, as that will control the irresponsible and illicit transfer of conventional arms.

With regard to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Zambia coordinated, on behalf of Africa, the discussions on this very important Convention. Following the African Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which was held on 29 and 30 September 2008 in Kampala, and in keeping with the Kampala Action Plan adopted during the Conference, it is our expectation that all African States will sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo on 3 December 2008. We also appeal to all other States to do the same so that cluster munitions are eventually eradicated.

As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Zambia continues to demonstrate its commitment in implementing the provisions of that Convention. As of 2007, approximately \$250,000 had been spent on clearing 7 of the 41 known mined areas in our country, as well as on carrying out some preliminary nationwide surveys to determine other areas of possible mine contamination. We call upon our cooperating partners and the international community as a whole to support our national efforts in this regard, including mine risk education. Decontamination of the areas will enable the people to engage in meaningful economic activity and contribute to economic development.

In conclusion, I wish to state that in order to make further progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, all States should have the political will and flexibility to be party to the various relevant treaties and conventions and be committed to implementing their provisions and obligations. The \$1.3 trillion spent annually on armaments around the world would go a long way in addressing the developmental concerns of the developing countries and would contribute to the goal of attaining a more secure, peaceful and environmentally friendly world.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee at its 2008 session and wish to assure you of South Africa's full support and cooperation.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statements delivered at our second meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group and the New Agenda Coalition.

We are meeting at a time when disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control face serious challenges, due to the lack of significant progress in ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction. Despite this drawback, South Africa hopes that this year's First Committee session will strive for consensus on the important issues before us that have a direct bearing on international peace and security.

South Africa has repeatedly cautioned that as long as some countries have nuclear weapons, there will be others that will aspire to possess them. South Africa believes that the continued possession of nuclear weapons or the retention of the nuclear-weapons option by some States perpetuates the danger that these weapons will be used or will fall into the hands of non-State actors. South Africa believes that their possession does not enhance international peace and security.

While the primary responsibility for undertaking the steps necessary for the elimination of nuclear weapons lies with the nuclear-weapon States, it should also be emphasized that the obligation to work towards that goal lies with all States. Nuclear weapons are a threat not only to their possessors, but to all of humankind.

For South Africa, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and we will continue to promote universal adherence to the Treaty. However, the States parties to the NPT cannot choose to selectively apply the outcomes of the Treaty-based system that suit them in particular circumstances or at a given time. The Treaty, as well as the outcomes of its Review Conferences, remains as valid as ever.

Concern also remains at the lack of the expected progress following the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear

disarmament, agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States remains incompatible with the provisions of the NPT, as well as with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Heeding your call for brevity, Mr. Chairperson, I will skip some parts of my written statement, which will be distributed in full to delegations.

South Africa welcomes the final outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in April this year. The Review Conference reiterated the fundamental importance of completely destroying all chemical weapons by the extended 2012 deadline. It also underscored the need to preserve the integrity of the Convention and to maximize its contribution to international peace and security. South Africa notes with appreciation the intentions of those chemical-weapon possessor States that have indicated that they will destroy their stockpiles within the agreed deadlines, and we call on those possessor States that seem to cast doubt regarding their ability to live up to the extended deadline to fulfil their obligations as agreed.

We welcome the fact that the right of States parties to use chemicals for purposes not prohibited by the Convention was reaffirmed by the Second Review Conference, as was the importance of strengthening international cooperation with and assistance to developing States parties. The challenge now facing States parties is to ensure that the decisions and recommendations of the Conference are implemented in order to achieve the full implementation of the Convention.

The Third Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms resumed the formal international consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, following the failure of the 2006 Review Conference to agree on either a substantive outcome or a procedural one that would have set out a timetable for future meetings. South Africa had the honour, along with Colombia and Japan, to introduce the omnibus small-arms resolution following that Review Conference, which mandated the Third Biennial Meeting. As a result of the adoption of a substantive report at the end of the Third Biennial Meeting, the United Nations

small-arms process is now widely considered to be back on track.

States parties to the Ottawa Convention on Landmines will face an important task when they meet next month at the Ninth Meeting of States Parties, as they will need to decide on requests for deadline extensions to complete the destruction of emplaced anti-personnel mines in accordance with article 5 of the Convention. That is particularly challenging, as there is no precedent for such decisions, and will require thorough analysis of the situation in each requesting State. During the Eighth Meeting of States Parties, held in Jordan last year, South Africa was disappointed to hear how long many mine-affected States parties had delayed their national assessments and their related clearance implementation plans. While that is indeed the major challenge ahead of the Ninth Meeting, let us use the Conference to reaffirm our commitment to assisting the survivors and remind ourselves that assistance to victims and their socio-economic reintegration remain lasting responsibilities.

I now turn to developments in the disarmament machinery. South Africa appreciates the efforts undertaken by the six 2008 Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in order to move forward on a programme of work, which culminated in the presidential proposal contained in document CD/1840. In that regard, South Africa cautioned that the perfect should not become the enemy of the good and that if the Conference waits for a perfect programme of work to be adopted, it will probably wait for a very long time. My delegation acknowledges that all States members of the Conference have priorities, but we believe that different priorities need not necessarily be mutually exclusive. South Africa will therefore continue to promote the view that, with a little ingenuity and a lot of flexibility and compromise, it should be possible for Conference member States to work with, not against, one other.

While South Africa is disappointed that the Disarmament Commission failed to reach any substantive conclusions during its three-year cycle of meetings that was completed this year, we wish to reiterate that we attach great importance to the role of the Commission as the sole deliberative body in the United Nations disarmament machinery. South Africa hopes that the General Assembly will soon be able to reach agreement on an agenda for the Commission's next three-year cycle of meetings.

The peaceful applications of nuclear energy are of particular importance to developing countries, given the urgent need for sustainable and accelerated economic growth. Therefore, the technical cooperation projects of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are more than just political commitments; they constitute important building blocks in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We very much appreciate the contributions of the Agency's projects in support of the MDGs, especially in the areas of water security; environmental sustainability; combating disease, hunger and poverty; and maternal and child health.

Over the years, developing countries have repeatedly stressed that the funding of the technical cooperation projects needs to be sufficient, predictable and assured. They have also stressed that the technical cooperation budget needs to be increased, as it is clearly not sufficient. South Africa believes that the time has come to conclusively correct the mistake made over the past 50 years by incorporating the funding of technical cooperation projects into the regular budget of the IAEA.

On 5 September, the IAEA announced that Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei would not serve for another term as Director General. South Africa believes that the Agency will need to address the challenges of ensuring the safe and secure use of nuclear energy and to enhance its crucial contributions to the improvement of living standards and the combating of poverty, which will strengthen international peace and security. The Agency's central role in our common endeavours to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons by preventing their proliferation — a mutually reinforcing role in the nuclear disarmament process — will also need to be strengthened.

For those reasons, and as a founding member of the Agency, South Africa took the decision — endorsed by the African Union Summit, which we warmly thank — to nominate Ambassador Abdul Samad Minty, a seasoned diplomat with decades of experience and dedication to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to their elimination, for the position of Director General of the IAEA. South Africa and many other countries throughout the world believe that our experience with and knowledge of nuclear matters enable us to share the perspectives of developed and developing countries and that Ambassador Minty is therefore eminently qualified for the post of Director General.

Mr. Boumba (Congo) (*spoke in French*): As the last to speak at this morning meeting, Congo of course associates itself with the other States in congratulating you, Mr. Chairperson, and the other members of the Bureau, on your brilliant election. It is also an opportunity to salute Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal for the remarkable work he did in the previous session.

There is no doubt that international security is still threatened and impaired by the combined effects of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, as well as by the illicit trafficking of conventional weapons. Indeed, with every day that goes by, a greater number of people become victims of these weapons, which are the source of tension in many parts of the world.

While military budgets are steadily rising, the question of disarmament is still the one that prompts the great divisions, but, it is also the one that justifies the greater concern on the part of the international community.

This year, the anxiety is even greater, beyond some progress that we have seen in certain disarmament forums. The danger is still threatening, and the world seems to be moving away from the significant progress that was made in the 1990s and particularly in the year 2000 at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), where promising commitments were undertaken in order to reach the Treaty's objectives.

That is why Congo gives particular importance to strict adherence to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the global system for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. We launch an urgent appeal to nuclear-weapon States to effectively implement article VI of the Treaty and to refrain from any measures that would violate it.

Congo is pleased with the wise conclusion of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which took place in Geneva from 28 April to 9 May. We also desire that this Conference will consider ways to strengthen international cooperation in combating the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

Twelve years after the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, it has still not

entered into force. The current international situation on this crucial matter requires that it be accelerated and that we maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing. Therefore we ask States that have not yet signed the Treaty to do so quickly.

However, we should also note some progress when it comes to multilateral disarmament, including the successes we have seen within the framework of the universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. My country ratified that Convention on 4 December 2007, and we intend to harness all of the necessary means to implement it. Therefore we call for the support of all partners to assist us in achieving the objectives of that Convention.

The Third 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, which took place here in New York last July, led to an historic consensus that now makes it possible to look towards the future. Congo calls upon all States to mobilize strongly and to work together in a spirit of solidarity in order to devote the necessary attention to the problem of small arms and light weapons, which fuels many pockets of tension around the world, particularly in Africa. Those weapons are truly weapons of mass destruction on our continent.

In this context we reiterate our commitment to the adoption of a legally binding international instrument on the trafficking of these weapons. The work done by the Group of Governmental Experts is important and reassures us, because the Group is in charge of reviewing the viability, scope of application and general parameters of this instrument.

We also welcome the adoption, on 30 May 2008 in Dublin, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is an encouraging sign, because the Convention makes it possible to reinforce the existing provisions in the area of combating the use of these weapons during armed conflicts, particularly against civilian populations. Congo invites all States to participate in the signing of this Convention on 3 December 2008 in Oslo.

Congo would also like to renew its full commitment to achieving the universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and

on Their Destruction. Congo has been a State party to this Convention since 4 May 2001. Within the framework of its obligations under the Convention, my Government spares no effort to achieve its objectives, particularly with respect to articles 5, 7 and 9, which concern the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas, transparency measures and national implementation measures. However, we call for multifaceted support from bilateral and multilateral partners so that we can quickly achieve the objectives of the Convention in our country.

Thus it is the responsibility of us all, before history and future generations, to promote and strengthen the different multilateral instruments in order to reduce the threat that weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons pose for all of humankind.

Questions of peace and security are the heart of Congo's regional and subregional policies, in application of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, particularly those concerning conflict prevention and management.

Although my country is pleased with the strategic partnership established between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations in the area of conflict prevention and settlement, we also support multilateralism in the search for solutions to crises that are afflicting many countries in the Central African region. That is why we play an active role in the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

We renew our appeal to all of our partners to continue to support that Committee's activities so that our subregion can strengthen cooperation and effective implementation of confidence-building measures at the subregional level, with disarmament, arms limitation, non-proliferation and, consequently, development as the main objective. Those confidence-building measures, which are reflected in the signing of different agreements, contribute effectively to promoting peace, security and mutual assistance in the subregion.

Congo reaffirms the importance of the Committee for our subregion, where some States are gradually emerging from internal crises. In order to fully fulfil its missions, the Committee needs the necessary resources. That is why we are launching an appeal for voluntary contributions to the special Trust Fund for

the Standing Advisory Committee to fund its extrabudgetary activities.

Lastly, we would like to see the necessary support from donors and different partners for the decision taken at the twenty-seventh ministerial meeting of the Committee, which took place from 13 to 15 May 2008 in Luanda, on the finalization of the drafting of the code of conduct for defence and security forces with a view to possible adoption at the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting.

My Government fully appreciates the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations office in Central Africa, thus positively responding to the request made a few years ago by the member countries of the Economic Community of Central African States, and reaffirms our desire to host this office if the other States of the subregion agree.

Only dialogue and cooperation will allow us to face the threats that are posed to humankind by the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as their systems of delivery. Congo would like the Committee's present work to provide us with opportunities to explore new means to move towards consensus on the issues for our consideration.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): That was the last speaker on this morning's list.

We have requests to speak in right of reply. I would like to remind participants of the procedure: ten minutes for the first statement and five minutes for the second statement.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today the Committee heard a number of absurd and baseless allegations against my country by the representative of the Zionist regime, a regime that is based on violence, aggression, occupation, State terrorism and bloodshed. It is evident that no amount of slander, deception or smear campaigns by the Zionist regime can cloud its dark history, which demonstrates that that regime poses the greatest threat to regional peace and security in the Middle East.

I would like to put on the record that the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I will not dignify the rest of the remarks made by the Israeli representative with a response other than to reject them.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): In his statement, the representative of Israel has introduced matters that are not relevant to questions of disarmament and weapons of mass destruction. He did that in order to draw attention away from the dangers posed by Israeli nuclear weapons and the fact that Israel has not joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has not placed its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Nevertheless, a careful observer cannot miss the fact that the allegations of the Israeli representative before the Committee this morning were meant to cover up Israel's continued violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon and of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which were officially documented by the United Nations, after that resolution was adopted, on the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General, the reports of the command of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and Lebanon's periodic letters to the Security Council.

The sixth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), dated 28 February 2008 (S/2008/135), emphasized that the Lebanese Common Border Force, which has brought together the four main Lebanese security agencies, "has not discovered any case of smuggling of weapons in its area of operations" (*ibid.*, para. 43). This important information is consistent with the statements of major former Lebanese politicians in which they denied any weapons smuggling into Lebanon through the borders with Syria. It is also in line with the two assessments by the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team set up to monitor the Lebanese borders — LIBAT I and LIBAT II.

These allegations and claims by Israel seek grounds for justifying its well-documented continued daily violations of resolution 1701 (2006). In the first place, these claims and allegations cannot be taken seriously, because Israel is hostile to Syria and occupies part of Syrian territory in violation of international law and hundreds of relevant resolutions by legitimate international bodies. In addition, Israel's aggression against Lebanon in July 2006 provided the grounds for the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006).

Israel has relied for decades on what it calls the diplomacy of weapons. That was clearly expressed by

the chief economic coordinator in the Israeli cabinet, Yacov Meridor, in 1981, when he proposed,

"We are going to say to the Americans, 'Don't compete with us in South Africa, don't compete with us in the Caribbean or in any other country where you can't operate in the open.' Let us do it. I even use the expression, 'You sell the ammunition and equipment by proxy. Israel will be your proxy.'"

Israeli weapons very clearly played a role in escalating the crisis in the Caucuses, leading those countries to further confrontations. The statement of the Israeli representative in the Committee this morning is not consistent with Israel's established role in the illegal global arms trade, which supports the work of organized crime and separatist movements throughout the world and which prevents the success of international efforts to curb them.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers on my list. We have heard the final speaker for this morning.

Before adjourning, I would like to inform delegates of the next steps to be taken in the Committee's work with respect to the preparation of the second segment of the work, that is, the development of thematic clusters. As delegates know, early this week, when we organized our work, we spoke about document A/C.1/63/CRP.2, which contains an indicative timetable. To a large degree, that document was prepared in accordance with the established practice in this Committee's work.

Depending on how our work progresses, it is possible that we can conclude the general debate early next week, specifically early in the afternoon of Tuesday, 14 October. If that is the case, in order to make optimal use of the time available to us and in accordance with what is set out in CRP.2, I propose that we begin the thematic segment that same afternoon by considering the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee.

That afternoon, 14 October, we will hear a report from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We will then have a discussion on that report. This change will, of course, have to be reflected in CRP.2, since on that same day we have an exchange with the High Representative on the nuclear weapons cluster, which would continue on Wednesday, 15 October.

As for the rest of the thematic segment, I would like to suggest that we complete the second segment of our work in the following way.

First, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 15 October, we could have an exchange with the High Representative and other Secretariat officials on arms control and disarmament and the role of the respective organizations, as indicated in CRP.2. We will have the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, a representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Following that exchange, the remainder of the meeting on Wednesday afternoon and the meeting on Thursday, 16 October will be used to listen to remaining statements on the nuclear weapons cluster as a whole.

On Friday, 17 October the meeting will be devoted to other weapons of mass destruction. We will have an exchange with the Chairman of the Panel of Governmental Experts established to explore further the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

On Monday, 20 October the Committee can begin to consider all aspects related to disarmament in outer space. Then we will continue on 20 October and in two meetings on Tuesday, 21 October, when we will hear the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts established to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, the Chairman of the Third 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, and the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts established to consider further steps to enhance cooperation with regard to the issue of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

Following that discussion on conventional weapons on 21 October, we will discuss other disarmament measures and international security.

Turning now to the second week of the thematic discussions, on Wednesday, 22 October we will discuss regional disarmament and security. The Committee will

have an interactive exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Directors of the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. This exchange will of course be held in an informal mode, as is the practice.

On Thursday, 23 October the Committee will begin to consider disarmament machinery. There will be a panel involving the President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, the Chairman of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the Deputy Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). This exchange will also be informal, as delegates know.

Friday, 24 October has been reserved in case we need to conclude the discussion of any of the items in the thematic debate.

On Monday, 27 October representatives of a number of non-governmental organizations will make presentations on nuclear issues, outer space and conventional weapons. That is also a practice within the Committee.

As delegates know, all of this information is contained in document A/C.1/63/CRP.2. We could divide the meetings into two parts so that the Committee can make the best use of the time allocated to it by engaging in productive and interactive discussions and by introducing all the draft resolutions in a more efficient and timely manner.

On the topic of resolutions, we spoke at the beginning about the organization of our work, and delegates are familiar with the dates that have been established for submitting draft resolutions. They also know the QuickFirst website that was established by the Secretariat in order to allow for electronic submission of draft resolutions.

As stated in document CRP.2, after the opening statement by a panel or speaker, we can have an informal question-and-answer session with either the members of the panel or the guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall resume the formal meeting, consisting of interventions by delegations on the specific subject under consideration.

As I mentioned before, in accordance with past practice that delegates have established, the follow-up

of resolutions adopted by the Committee at its past session, the presentation of reports by the High Representative on Disarmament Affairs and the exchanges on regional disarmament and security and disarmament machinery, as well as the meeting with non-governmental organizations — all of these will be informal.

The last meeting of this second segment of our work will take place on Monday, 27 October, and delegations will still be able to introduce remaining draft resolutions, if necessary. Therefore, I strongly urge all delegations to take advantage of the time available before the deadline for the presentation of draft resolutions so that, in the second phase of the Committee's work, these can be delivered and recorded by the Committee secretariat and also be reflected on the QuickFirst website.

The foregoing represents simply a few adjustments or minor changes that we would include in A/C.1/63/CRP.2, which I now submit for the Committee's consideration, so that, if we agree to it, it can be put on QuickFirst this afternoon and so that on Monday it will be distributed once again to all delegates with a view to providing more direction to our work in the coming weeks.

May I take it that the Committee would approve these recommendations?

It was so decided.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): Now that we have adopted the amendments to document A/C.1/63/CRP.2, I would like to remind delegates that,

regarding the list of speakers for the upcoming phase of our work, they are cordially invited to inscribe their names on the list for a given cluster that they wish to speak on. The Committee's secretariat is maintaining preliminary lists for the thematic clusters.

All that remains to be done is to ask that we continue with the discipline that we have shown thus far in the thematic clusters regarding statements and the established time limits. That is all that I would like to say with respect to the organization of work.

I ask the Secretary of the Committee if he has any announcements.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): I have just two announcements. First, there is an announcement in today's Journal on informal consultations on the draft resolution entitled "Towards the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", scheduled from 3.30 to 4.30 p.m. and organized by the delegation of Ukraine. I have been asked to announce that these informal consultations have been cancelled.

Secondly, I would like to announce a side event entitled "A fissile material cut-off treaty and its verification", which will be held today, Friday, 10 October from 1.15 to 2.30 p.m. in this conference room, Conference Room 4. Sandwiches and drinks will be provided starting at 12.45 p.m. This event is for the international panel on fissile materials to present for discussion a draft of the scope and verification sections of the fissile material cut-off treaty.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.