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Sixty-fifth session

First Committee

8th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Miloš Koterec (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 87 to 104 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We are confident that under your able guidance the Committee will achieve optimum results. We assure you of our cooperation. I also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for your predecessor's excellent work last year.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we approach the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the future of global peace and security hangs precariously in the balance. The hopes for a peace dividend and a just international order have failed to materialize, even after 20 years since the end of the Cold War. Multiple disputes and conflicts have festered, enlarging in their deadly scope and intensity and providing a crucible for extremism and terrorism, involving a wide spectrum of State and non-State actors. The quest for hegemony, the unbridled use of force and the pursuit of dubious concepts of containment, unilateralism and pre-emption by global and regional Powers have combined to make the world a much more dangerous and unstable place than ever before.

This grim situation has also undermined the efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Instead of nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has become the only goal. And even that goal is pursued selectively. Some States have been denied the right to peaceful nuclear cooperation while others are helped to promote safeguard-free nuclear programmes, to build and upgrade strategic weapon systems, including anti-ballistic missiles, and to pursue accelerating vertical nuclear proliferation.

A growing asymmetry in military capabilities between major Powers and medium and small States has further increased insecurity among States. In crucial regions, the pursuit of great Power politics has destabilized the tenuous regional balance. Similarly, the supply and development of a new generation of weapons at the tactical, theatre and strategic levels pose a major threat to both regional and global security. Yet another alarming trend is the incremental militarization of outer space, the consequences of which we are yet to fully grasp.

In view of this dismal state of global security, it is important for the international community to search for a new consensus that can address and halt these trends. Attempts to forge a new consensus on arms control and disarmament require the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament — SSOD-IV. That alone could ensure genuine and complete ownership of the outcome by all States. In discussing this issue, we are puzzled when some powerful nations argue that the first such special

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session, SSOD-I, has been overtaken by events and yet oppose the convening of a fourth such special session.

We are also dismayed by the arguments made by some States that the United Nations disarmament machinery has become dysfunctional, in particular the Conference on Disarmament because of its rules of procedure. In reality, the decade-old stalemate in the Conference and the overall international disarmament machinery has nothing to do with rules of procedure. It has to do with the lack of political will on the part of some major Powers to pursue disarmament negotiations on the basis of the equal security of all States as accepted in the first special session on disarmament.

The United Nations disarmament machinery, and the Conference on Disarmament in particular, is not a handmaiden to the whims of the major Powers or a device to confer legitimacy on their pursuit of discriminatory policies. We also need to recognize that the Conference on Disarmament does not work in a political vacuum; it reflects the dynamics in the real world. The current hiatus in the Conference is not unprecedented. The Conference has not undertaken negotiations on any multilateral instrument since it concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1995.

Yet it is only now, after more than a decade, that certain countries have questioned the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament, seeking ways to revitalize its functioning and even proposing to seek alternative venues. Why were they silent for more than 10 years? Do they realize that by undermining the Conference on Disarmament to pursue elsewhere the negotiations on one item on the Conference's agenda, they are opening up the possibility of negotiating other agenda items in alternative venues as well?

The international community established the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament agreements on the basis of the equal security of States. Among the core issues on the Conference's agenda, as enunciated by the first special session on disarmament, are nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Pakistan, along with a majority of States, has always advocated that negotiations on these three issues should begin in the Conference on Disarmament at the earliest opportunity.

It was only in 1994, after several years, that a new agenda item — that of a fissile material cut-off treaty — was introduced in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Since that time, Pakistan has called attention to the fact that a treaty to cut off only the future production of fissile material would freeze the existing asymmetries in fissile material stockpiles, which would be detrimental for our national security. Accordingly, we have been advocating a treaty that not only bans future production but also aims at reducing existing stocks of fissile material.

Over the past few years, some powerful countries, in pursuit of their commercial interests and dubious notions of the balance of power, have embarked upon an unfettered and discriminatory nuclear cooperation arrangement, in gross violation of their international commitments. That has accentuated our security concerns, as such nuclear cooperation will further widen the asymmetry in stockpiles in our region. Meanwhile, our suggestion that stockpiles be reduced has been rejected by some of the major nuclear-weapon States.

In view of these circumstances, the National Command Authority of Pakistan — the highest decision-making body on strategic issues — in a meeting on 13 January 2010 concluded that Pakistan will not support any approach or measure that is prejudicial to its legitimate national security interests. Thus, a fissile material cut-off treaty that purports only to ban future production of fissile material will permanently freeze a strategic disadvantage for Pakistan and is therefore unacceptable to us.

Clearly, it is not through choice but necessity that Pakistan is opposed to negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The responsibility for this lies with those countries which have, for their own interests, brought about a qualitative change in the strategic environment in our region by entering into discriminatory nuclear cooperation agreements and, in the process, have drastically undermined the international non-proliferation and disarmament framework.

The Conference on Disarmament was not created only to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty. Those attempting to present the negotiations on such a treaty as the touchstone of the Conference on Disarmament's success are in fact seeking to divert the international community's attention from nuclear disarmament, which remains the key priority of the Conference.

Pakistan remains ready to begin negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament at the earliest opportunity.

The Conference on Disarmament could make quick progress and advance the nuclear disarmament agenda by concluding legally binding and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. The demand for security assurances has been a pending issue on the international arms control and disarmament agenda since the 1960s.

Similarly, the Conference on Disarmament needs to move ahead with concrete steps towards addressing the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The growing dependence of the international community on space for economic development and security underscores the importance of the peaceful uses of outer space. It is in the common interests of humanity to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes.

Those States which oppose negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space should come forward and explain their positions. Unfortunately, such forthrightness is sorely missing, and all we hear instead is a litany of complaints about the lack of progress and paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament, or members resort to a blame game.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Its strengthening and universalization remain an important priority for Pakistan. Pakistan's commitment to the BWC is evidenced by our deep involvement in the efforts to bolster its implementation. We believe that the forthcoming seventh Review Conference must positively address the issue of a verification protocol, seek enhanced implementation of the Convention, particularly article X, and promote its universalization.

Pakistan wishes every success to the new Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey, and will extend to him our full support. It is vitally important to preserve the viability of the Chemical Weapons Convention by strict adherence to and respect for its provisions. It is a matter of considerable concern that two major possessor States have declared their inability to comply

with their obligations to completely destroy their chemical weapons by the final deadline of April 2012.

Pakistan supports dealing with the issue of cluster munitions within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, with a due balance between military and humanitarian considerations.

We share the international concern over the ill effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that focus should be on strengthening the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is a consensual framework, rather than trying to supplant it with other mechanisms or creating parallel instruments.

With regard to a potential arms trade treaty, for which the small arms and light weapons problem is highlighted as the main justification, Pakistan favours a gradual, step-by-step, inclusive, universal and consensual approach, with due regard to every State's right to self-defence as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Jomaa (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Tunisian delegation, I should like to convey to you, Sir, my most sincere congratulations for your election as Chair of the First Committee. I should also like to assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation as you carry out your mission, so that our work may lead to tangible results. I should also like to commend the efforts of Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made at the 2nd meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

At the last session, I stressed before this body the critical nature of the dynamic in which we all found ourselves in the previous year, especially with respect to the progress achieved in the field of disarmament. However, while on the one hand we welcome the holding of a number of meetings having the goal of relaunching the disarmament process at the multilateral level, on the other hand it is important to note that that reflects a certain slowness in our Organization, which stirred us to take it upon ourselves to move forward and make some long-desired tangible progress. Thus, the side meetings held during the general debate of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-

Ban Treaty, clearly showed that much effort is still needed to overcome the stalemate on those two issues, which alone are preventing any real progress on disarmament.

The year 2010 has seen a great number of multilateral milestones in the field of disarmament. It is now up to us to keep up that momentum so that our efforts are not lost and the frameworks in which we have committed to working together do not sink in a process of enfeeblement, the consequences of which would be felt by the whole of the international community. That is why we must not only respect the existing frameworks but also strengthen them and show once and for all that there is a collective political will to achieve our goals.

The stakes are high, but there is always hope. We believe it is now time to redouble our efforts by overcoming our differences and showing the necessary flexibility to reach solutions that take into account the concerns of all parties as well as the security and stability needs of all States and regions. Tunisia reaffirms its willingness to work together with all interested parties in considering ways and means to strengthen this approach and renew confidence in efforts undertaken in our multilateral forums, in particular the multilateral disarmament machinery.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of freely concluded arrangements among the States of a given region and the creation of areas free of all weapons of mass destruction are important steps for promoting non-proliferation and disarmament at both the regional and international levels. However, the Middle East remains one of the most troubling regions, due above all to the refusal by some countries to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and submit their nuclear installations to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, this despite the numerous appeals from other States in the region and the adoption by the General Assembly of a number of relevant resolutions. We call on the international community, especially the influential Powers, to take urgent, practical steps for the creation of such a zone.

In this respect, and with a view to seeing the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, Tunisia welcomes the recommendation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference that calls on the

United Nations Secretary-General and the sponsors of that resolution to organize, in consultation with States in the region, a conference in 2012 and to appoint a facilitator to undertake the relevant preparations.

My delegation welcomes the increasing number of States parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and believes that the universalization of that Treaty can make a considerable positive contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament with a view to establishing peace and security in the world. The installation on our national territory of two stations of the international monitoring system, which have now been operational for some time, is further proof of this commitment.

Aware of the importance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and its clear impact on international peace and security, my country — which ratified the Convention and has now completely destroyed its stockpile of anti-personnel mines — expresses its hope that all States parties will participate in this process so as to meet the goals of that Convention.

Likewise, with regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we call for its provisions to be implemented so as to meet its objectives, in particular in terms of international cooperation and in the field of the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Here, with a view to reiterating the steadfast commitment of Tunisia to the Chemical Weapons Convention, I have the honour to inform the Committee that, under the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Third Exercise on the Delivery of Assistance — ASSISTEX 3 — pursuant to article X of the Convention, is being held in Tunis as we speak and will continue until 15 October. It is being attended by no fewer than 30 States parties and 70 observer States.

We also welcome the positive outcome of the fourth 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.

Here, my delegation endorses the recommendations designed to reinvigorate the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit

Small Arms and Light Weapons. But we also express our concern about the rise in the number of light weapons in circulation in the world since 2001, due, *inter alia*, to the persistence of armed conflicts, organized crime and violations of arms embargoes decreed by the Security Council.

With respect to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, on the occasion of the ceremony of treaties organized at the margins of the general debate of the current session, Tunisia submitted the ratification instruments for this text, wishing thus to draw the attention of the international community to the danger posed by this type of munitions and to encourage all Member States no longer to resort to them.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to stress to the Committee that Tunisia will continue to play its role in favour of the course of peace and disarmament. We reiterate our willingness to cooperate fully with you, Mr. Chair, and with the members of the Bureau, while wishing the Committee every success in its work.

Mr. Truelsen (Denmark): I shall try to be brief as I make the following six points.

First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of this important Committee, and the rest of the members of the Bureau as well. I can pledge full Danish support and cooperation to you and your colleagues in order to obtain good results from the discussion here in this important Committee.

Secondly, we also have noted the momentum in the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control area in the last year or year and a half, starting with an important speech by President Obama in Prague in 2009 containing, among other things, his vision of a world free of atomic weapons. We have also seen the United States Nuclear Posture Review. We have noted the bilateral agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States on the New START treaty. We have seen a good first meeting on an arms trade treaty. And last but not least, the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Final Document that came out of it also represent a very good start on a new era.

Thirdly, these developments have been discussed thoroughly in the Danish Government, and the Government has decided to give the issue a much higher priority on its political agenda. To do that,

among other things, the Government decided to have a special personal adviser to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the position of Under-Secretary, and I am very pleased to have taken up that function as of 1 September this year.

Fourthly, I would have hoped that I could mention also the Conference on Disarmament among the issues where I could see some momentum, but I think that would be quite out of order. On the other hand, on 24 September, here in New York, we saw a meeting with around 50 ministers present and with around 70 statements that gave a very clear signal to all in the Conference on Disarmament area to start up negotiations. I hope that call is really going to pave the way for that to happen.

I have heard that it is not the procedures but the lack of political will that hinders any progress in this area. I will say that if we cannot see that people or countries from the Conference are starting to discuss issues, then we will not be able to assess whether or not there is a lack of political will. I thus hope that we will not have any more vetoes on procedure.

Fifthly, another hope I do have is that Denmark will be able to be more than observer, in fact, to be a full member of the Conference, together with the 65 members there are today. I certainly hope that the other 24 observers will have the same opportunity to sit together. I noted at the High-level Meeting on 24 September that not only the European Union but also the Non-Aligned Movement said that now was the time to appoint a special coordinator on the question of enlargement. I hope that that question will be decided at a forthcoming meeting of the Conference in 2011.

My sixth and final point is that on 4 October the Ambassador of Belgium, speaking on behalf of the European Union, made a statement on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. I think it was a very comprehensive and forward-looking statement, dealing as it did with all of the specifics and important issues. As representative of a member of the European Union, I am very happy that I am able to support this vision fully. I am not going to use my time here to repeat elements from that statement either in full or in part, because I do not think that is necessary.

I will stop here and wish you, Mr. Chair, all the best in your work in chairing the Committee.

Mr. Gheghechkori (Georgia): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of this Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your competent leadership we will be able to achieve significant results in our work. Let me assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the work of the First Committee.

Georgia welcomes the positive developments that have taken place this year, including the outcome of the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Washington Nuclear Security Summit and the signing of the Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, as well as the arms trade treaty process. We hope that by these events the momentum in global arms control and disarmament will regain its continuity and appropriately meet the needs for general disarmament. We hope that the major challenges still present in the fields of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control will be dealt with comprehensively, through the combined efforts by the international community.

The NPT represents the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, nuclear disarmament and the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Georgia welcomes the adoption by consensus of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference and assures the international community of its full readiness to support the implementation of the action plan it contains.

Another vital instrument that contributes to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We believe that the Treaty should enter into force in the nearest future. Renewed political commitments to pursuing its ratification, in particular by the CTBT annex 2 States Indonesia and the United States, give us solid grounds for optimism. For its part, Georgia continues to actively cooperate with the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to strengthen the monitoring and verification system.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Biological and Toxin Weapons is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological

weapons. Georgia stands ready to fully cooperate with Member States in order to ensure the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in 2011.

The Chemical Weapons Convention — *sui generis* among disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, as it completely bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction in a verifiable manner — has an essential role to play in preventing the risks posed by chemical weapons. Georgia supports the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and is ready to actively contribute to efforts to meet the goals. Georgia wishes every success to the OPCW's new Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey, and will give him its full support.

Last year, we commended the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which, after a decade of stalemate, agreed on a programme of work. We considered that a positive development. As it turned out, 2010 was still too early to celebrate the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament. Like other delegations, Georgia strongly believes that, to regain its credibility, the Conference should resume its negotiating role as soon as possible. In that regard, we welcome the recent High-level Meeting aimed at giving new momentum to the multilateral disarmament negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament. Georgia supports the Secretary-General in his call for action (see A/65/496, annex).

As many speakers in this room have emphasized, the illicit manufacture, accumulation, transfer and flow of small arms and light weapons continue to be among the most challenging items on the international security agenda. Georgia reaffirms its commitment to play its role in the prevention and combating of the illicit trade in and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and strongly supports full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on the illicit trade in such weapons. We are looking forward to actively contributing to the 2012 Small Arms Review Conference.

On a number of occasions we have had the opportunity to express our full support for the international arms trade treaty initiative. Indeed, that mechanism must be considered an effective instrument in the field of the non-proliferation of conventional arms. We fully support the position expressed by many delegations that measures to prevent the trafficking of

conventional weapons can be effective if they are coupled with rigorous transfer controls on the legal arms trade. That is why Georgia is fully committed to the negotiation of an arms trade treaty. The July session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty was an encouraging start to the arms trade treaty negotiating process that will eventually lead to a legally binding international instrument.

Preventing the risk of nuclear terrorism, ensuring compliance with the obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009) and improving security for highly radioactive sources form one of Georgia's main priorities. My country joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and continues to support consolidating the efforts of the international community to combat the illicit acquisition, use or transportation of nuclear materials and radioactive substances.

The fact that in recent years there have been several attempts at nuclear smuggling via Georgian territories not controlled by the central authorities further amplifies the sense of danger. Those attempts were prevented by the Georgian law enforcement authorities. However, it should be noted that those smuggling attempts occurred at a time when there were some international control mechanisms in those territories. In the absence of an international presence in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, due to the foreign occupation, it has become impossible to conduct any type of verification activities there, and thus the risk of those regions of Georgia becoming a paradise for smugglers of nuclear materials has tremendously increased.

The existence of the so-called white spots and occupied territories, where international control mechanisms are either very weak or non-existent, creates fertile ground for the illicit transfer and/or sale of conventional arms and their accumulation, as well as the illegal transit of weapons of mass destruction and their materials, including nuclear materials.

Since I mentioned the failed attempts to use the occupied territories of Georgia for the smuggling of radioactive and nuclear materials, allow me to say a few words about the risk of conventional arms proliferation through those territories.

As delegations are aware, a huge amount of armaments is being accumulated in the Georgian

regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. As long as international control mechanisms are totally absent in those territories because of the foreign occupation, there are no guarantees whatsoever that those arms — including the most dangerous ones, such as man-portable air-defence systems, for example — will not be transferred to various terrorist and criminal groups. That would pose a serious threat not only to one particular region but to the whole international community.

At the beginning of this session of the First Committee, we heard statements on the comprehensive nature of modern security doctrines. We heard statements on its indivisibility and its universal application to all States, irrespective of their size. Those statements are encouraging. We believe that such an approach is in the right direction, since it corresponds to the future of mankind and its aspiration for a peaceful and prosperous life within one's own recognized borders, without the fear of being the object of the threat of force and illegal occupation.

In that context, I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the security situation in my country. Currently, our northern neighbour continues its illegal military build-up in two occupied regions of my country. Instead of being closed down, the illegal military bases are being reinforced with additional personnel and equipment, such as S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems, to cite just one example of many. Overall, there are up to 10,000 occupation troops located in those two regions, and six military bases, including one naval base, are currently under construction. While we are talking of construction, let me also inform the Committee that the occupying country has just completed the concrete wall along the whole dividing line between the two occupied territories and the rest of Georgia.

At the same time, we have heard of the need to establish a new security architecture from the representatives of that occupying country — a country that still challenges the existing universal security arrangements, that fails to implement the obligations it has undertaken vis-à-vis the international community and that continues to grossly violate the United Nations Charter, the norms and principles of international law and the six-point agreement brokered by the European Union.

We believe that implementation of the existing obligations must be a necessary precondition for proposing a new European security architecture or any meaningful discussion thereof — unless, that is, under the new security architecture the authors mean building new dividing walls. However, let me remind everybody that one wall in Europe was already resolutely and unequivocally rejected by the civilized world.

We are convinced that in such circumstances, it is an appropriate time for the international community to stand up for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Georgia considers the First Committee a fundamental body that should be seized not only with elaborating initiatives and ideas for addressing existing problems in the fields of non-proliferation and disarmament, but also with the most critical issues related to international and national security.

Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova): I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee, and the members of the Bureau on their election.

The delegation of the Republic of Moldova associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union in the 2nd meeting, at the beginning of our debate. I will add the following considerations in my national capacity.

The majority of delegations addressing this Committee have taken note of the increased multilateral efforts in promoting disarmament and preventing the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, highlighting the New United States-Russia START agreement, the outcome of the nuclear summit in Washington and the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. These are all encouraging examples of the increased cooperation of our Member States.

We welcome the Secretary-General's initiatives in the field of disarmament, including the recently convened High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations. We support his call to invigorate multilateral discussions in this Committee that would lead to action-oriented follow-up steps in the specialized disarmament bodies and, in particular, bring a valuable contribution to the revival and strengthening of the Conference on

Disarmament as the most appropriate body for conducting multilateral negotiations on disarmament (see A/65/496, annex).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the most important multilateral instrument for the promotion of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear proliferation, while allowing for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Perceived by many countries as a core instrument for achieving total and complete disarmament, it requires comprehensive implementation.

We welcome the results of the 2010 Review Conference and believe that the successful realization of the adopted action plan is achievable only through the concerted efforts of all Member States for the implementation of the Treaty and its objectives. We attach great importance to the strict compliance with the NPT and plead for its universality.

Confident that nuclear-weapon-free zones essentially facilitate the maintenance of peace and security at both the international and regional levels, we express satisfaction with the progress achieved in that regard at the NPT Review Conference, particularly by the endorsement of the convening in 2012 of a conference to address the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an indispensable part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and its early entry into force will constitute a top priority for all States parties. We welcome the commitments of the United States and Indonesia towards its ratification, which further enhance the prospects for ratifications of the CTBT by the remaining annex 2 States.

In the same line, we regard the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as a critical step towards the fulfilment of the obligations and final objectives enshrined in article VI of the NPT.

The Republic of Moldova recognizes the central role that the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has played in providing assurances with regard to the peaceful nature of the nuclear programmes of the States parties. Our participation in the NPT and CTBT, as well as the conclusion of a safeguards agreement with the IAEA, signifies the steady commitment of my country to

strengthening the international non-proliferation treaty framework.

Our cooperation with the IAEA during the last 15 years was focused on the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology for critical needs, such as the improvement of the radiation security infrastructure, the security of radiological sources and efficient response in case of emergency situations, and the transfer and implementation of nuclear technologies in medicine and environmental science.

Last February, my country deposited the instrument of ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We support the IAEA Safeguards Additional Protocol in connection with the NPT, as well as United Nations and IAEA actions in the area of nuclear security and verification, including the safeguards system, export control regimes and the protection of nuclear materials.

The significance of cooperation for the enhancement of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation and counteracting international terrorism has been emphasized by many delegations. In our view, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) plays a critical role in the common efforts to prevent the acquisition of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, and therefore we back the calls for its all-inclusive implementation.

Being party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, we call for actions to ensure compliance with and promotion of non-proliferation obligations in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including by developing adequate capacity for prevention of and response to challenges posed by States or entities that are non-compliant with non-proliferation regimes.

At the national level, we take all necessary measures to prevent possible transfers through our territory of any components, materials and technology related to weapons of mass destruction.

To achieve genuine security at the international, regional and national levels, progress in disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be complemented by the control and reduction of conventional arms. In parallel with the processes of arms regulation and of reduction and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, the international

community should address issues related to the production, use, trade in and stockpiling of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, which fuel conflicts in different parts of the world and threaten international peace and security.

For almost two decades, since the Republic of Moldova became an independent State, the constitutional authorities of my country have been striving to reduce and eliminate the enormous amounts of weapons and ammunition accumulated on our territory. In that endeavour we have been assisted by and receive ongoing support from many bilateral and multilateral partners. Regrettably, due to the secessionist regime in its eastern part, the Republic of Moldova cannot ensure efficient control of those obsolete stockpiles and, consequently, of the flow of dual-use goods and materials that enter or transit the Transdnistrian region of Moldova.

For that reason, while we greatly appreciate the efforts undertaken by the European Union Border Assistance Mission in cooperation with Ukrainian authorities to jointly monitor the Transdnistrian segment of the Moldovan border, we reiterate our call for an international fact-finding mission in Transdnistria in order to have a clear picture of the stockpiled weapons and ammunition and to resume their withdrawal and destruction, thus ensuring security in our region.

For its part, the Republic of Moldova supports the initiatives and actions to prevent trafficking in conventional arms and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We call for the continuation of negotiations on an arms trade treaty — a legally binding international instrument establishing the highest common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons — and for the full implementation and universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Similarly, we welcome the recent entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to which the Republic of Moldova contributed. We are pleased to note that before its entering into force, a project to destroy all such munitions in our country was launched, in cooperation with the non-governmental organization Norwegian People's Aid, and we are determined to report on its successful implementation

at the first Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, to be held in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, in November 2010.

Mr. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your experience and good work will lead to excellent results. My delegation would like to express to you its full support for the success of the Committee. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Our delegation supports the statement made at the 2nd meeting by Indonesia on behalf of the non-aligned countries. We agree that the greatest concern and challenge we as Member States have is the achievement of total and complete nuclear disarmament, as that is the only path to the establishment of a world free of the nuclear arms that present a constant threat to humankind and Mother Earth.

We believe we can achieve that goal only through multilateralism and through solutions reached through multilateral agreements, in conformity with the United Nations Charter. This is why we gratefully welcome the initiative presented by Brazil and Turkey, in the case of Iran, to find a peaceful solution and thus avoid a nuclear holocaust.

The delegation of Nicaragua calls on nuclear-weapon States to comply with the responsibilities they assumed in 2000 with regard to pursuing total elimination of nuclear arms. We oppose any form of nuclear testing and applaud General Assembly resolution 64/35, on the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

We would like to highlight the important work of the Conference on Disarmament, which is at the heart of all disarmament negotiations.

We believe it is a priority that we countries that do not possess nuclear weapons should receive effective assurances from nuclear-weapon States concerning the use or threat of nuclear arms. Therefore it has been suggested that a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument concerning security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States should be formalized.

Nicaragua applauds the agreement on strategic arms reduction signed by the United States and the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, we call on both countries to respect the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability in order to continue to reduce their nuclear arsenals.

We request the International Atomic Energy Agency to work impartially and to maintain the professionalism that has characterized it in the past. We strongly reject attempts by any State to politicize the Agency's work. We endorse the initiative of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that envisages an action plan that includes the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East. We support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, and Mongolia's condition as a nuclear-weapon-free country. Such are the steps that must be taken to avoid a possible nuclear catastrophe.

We reaffirm the inalienable right of developing countries to participate in the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, as required by developing countries in order to pursue their development.

Regarding anti-personnel landmines, Nicaragua is a regional leader in comprehensive anti-mine action. That leadership is based on intensive diplomatic efforts directed towards adoption of the Ottawa Convention and the successful implementation of the national demining programme, which was finalized in 2010 and has made it possible to be a mine-free territory today. We invite all States that have not done so to consider the possibility of adhering to the Convention.

We urge States that have been responsible for planting and abandoning mines and explosives outside their own territories in past conflicts to cooperate with the affected countries and give them help in eliminating mines by exchanging information, providing maps showing the location of mines and explosives, providing technical assistance for eliminating mines, financing the costs of their elimination and indemnifying those countries for any losses resulting from the mines.

Our delegation underscores the importance of the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development and the role of security. In that context, we applaud the adoption by consensus of Assembly

resolution 64/52. We would also like to express our concern over the growth in international military spending, financing that could have been spent on meeting development needs. We urge States to dedicate the resources thus freed up to social and economic development, particularly to combating poverty.

In the area of small arms and light weapons, Nicaragua has reiterated in various international forums that the illicit trafficking of small arms is a universal problem whose solution requires universal commitments and the participation of national and international actors and of every sector of society. Nicaragua is neither a producer nor a consumer of any form of weapon, but due to our geographic position we have become a transit country for arms headed north. The meagre resources we should be spending on our development are being spent on defending our territory from this phenomenon, which undermines our security and development. We call on the United States to increase the aid for more energetic combat against this regional problem.

Mr. Hijazi (Palestine): At the outset, allow me to convey my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. We extend our best wishes to the Bureau, and we express our confidence that the Committee will successfully conclude its important work under your able stewardship. We also offer our appreciation to the previous Chair for his efforts.

I wish to say that Palestine aligns itself with the important statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 2nd meeting.

Palestine believes that disarmament efforts must be carried out in a manner that upholds the principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. That is why any serious international disarmament effort must be carried out comprehensively and in line with the instruments of relevant international law, particularly international humanitarian law. In effect, any discourse or effort outside this context would not only be counterproductive but would also allow those States that violate the rules of war while illicitly stockpiling weapons of mass destruction to escape accountability and remain intransigent in the face of the international will.

In that regard, we believe that all Member States have a duty to stop the transfer of arms to States that

seriously violate international humanitarian law, including by committing the grave breaches identified in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. This is particularly relevant to belligerent occupying Powers that do not respect their obligations under international law and whose use of indiscriminate and excessive force against civilian populations has been proven.

Combating and preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is another important issue that the international community needs to address responsibly. Member States should also pay due attention to the official arming and forming by States of militias that are residing unlawfully in an occupied land and committing acts of aggression that terrorize the civilian population. Such militias have State-sanctioned and State-funded small arms, which feed conflicts and perpetuate human rights violations. The continued violence by illegal settlers against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory is a clear example of such a situation.

We must also address the indiscriminate effects of certain conventional weapons, especially when used illegally against civilians — weapons such as cluster munitions, anti-personnel landmines, fléchette missiles, so-called dense inert metal explosive munitions and ammunition containing depleted uranium. Moreover, we must seriously consider the illegal use of weapons that are not proscribed under international law, such as white phosphorus. States that are proven to continually violate the laws of war should not be allowed to own such weapons or use them against innocent civilians.

The long-term and devastating effects of such weapons on civilian populations have been demonstrated beyond any doubt. Recently, several international and United Nations reports — including the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48), headed by Judge Richard Goldstone — have documented Israel's use of such weapons against civilians in Gaza and their devastating consequences.

South Lebanon is another example. There, the civilian population, particularly children, continues to suffer from Israeli cluster munitions. That is why we support all conventions, protocols and efforts that seek to prohibit such munitions and to address the unnecessary humanitarian risk to civilians resulting from the use of such indiscriminate weapons.

Finally, in this context, we wish to reiterate that States responsible for laying mines and similar weapons outside their territories must be made to bear full responsibility for clearing them, including by cooperation with the affected countries. Moreover, those States should shoulder their legal responsibility to compensate the affected States and victims of such mines and explosive remnants.

The proliferation of nuclear and non-conventional weapons represents the most serious threat to humanity's survival. That is why it is placed — and rightly so — high on the international agenda, but that renewed international commitment must be accompanied by concrete and consistent actions.

In that regard, we regret that the Middle East has yet to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone and that Israel remains the only party — I repeat, the only party — in the region that has neither become, nor stated its intention to become, a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In fact, we have been alarmed by its worrying declaration, stating a clear intent not to comply with any future arrangements, including the practical steps adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We believe that that is an undeniable expression of the true obstacle that stands in the way of ridding the region of those weapons of mass destruction.

Israel has clearly and repeatedly declared that it is a nuclear-weapon State. Such a declaration must be particularly alarming to all concerned, especially in the light of the reality that Israel, as an occupying Power, is a State proven to act with utter disdain towards international law. Unfortunately, it has also brazenly boasted of international immunity from accountability or oversight in relation to that and other breaches.

That is why efforts to rid the Middle East of nuclear arms must be comprehensive, rather than selective. We maintain that turning a blind eye to a State that is stockpiling and developing nuclear weapons while refusing to submit to international inspection is gravely dangerous and alarming. Otherwise, the goodwill that we agree on will be wasted and the credibility of our aims will be damaged. More dangerously, the credibility of the very system that regulates our relations will also be severely undermined.

In that regard, we believe international efforts in the region must start with serious measures and

concerted pressure on Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State without delay, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the outcomes of the NPT Review Conferences, including the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the 13 practical steps adopted in 2000 and the practical steps of the 2010 Conference.

Finally on this issue, we wish to underscore that cooperation between States cannot possibly be achieved by twisting the will of the vast majority of States to suit the preference of and appease a single Member that has committed violations. In fact, the exact opposite is true.

Moreover, we believe that it serves this assembly well to make absolutely clear that repeating fallacies and hollow accusations does not achieve results but increases tensions. A single State in the Middle East has violated the rules of war and has used weapons indiscriminately and illegally more times than one can count. Such a consistent policy of belligerence should be countered not because of a rejectionist attitude, but rather in the interests of regional and world peace.

We believe that the devastating and long-term effects of human rights violations, impunity, foreign occupation, underdevelopment and poverty are directly linked to our disarmament efforts. Such conditions induce violence, extremism and hopelessness, providing fertile ground for a host of illicit trades that this Committee must address responsibly. It is our responsibility to endorse the reality that deadly conflicts and the illicit arms trade will continue as long as the root causes of those conflicts remain unresolved. Equally important is our necessary commitment to unanimously combat the cynical exploitation by some States of ongoing conflicts in exchange for blood money through illicit or illegal arms funding. Such actions perpetuate conflicts and increase suffering, thus hampering our efforts.

Finally, at a time when the world community is cooperating to overcome economic and environmental dangers, we must show equal determination to work collectively to stop the scourges of needless and senseless wars. Millions of defenceless, innocent civilians, who have long suffered senseless violence and grinding poverty, count on us to do that. Only then do our future generations stand a chance of living a prosperous life, free of the worst nightmare that

humanity can face: a nuclear arms race and unchecked violations of human rights.

The Chair: I give the floor to the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Motter (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I will be speaking on behalf of Ambassador Anda Filip, whose heart and mind have been on this issue for a long time now.

I would like to take this opportunity to refer to the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation from the perspective of recent efforts undertaken in this field by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and its member parliaments.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is an area where, in general, parliaments have not played a very prominent role. However, this situation is changing, and more parliaments now exercise more thorough examination and oversight of national policies in the areas of defence, security and disarmament. Moreover, there is growing recognition of the fact that, in order to build the political will and commitment needed to advance nuclear disarmament, it is crucial to engage with legislators and to integrate their perspectives into national and international processes.

Parliamentarians around the world are keeping up with that challenge. One tool that is serving us well is the IPU political resolution on advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and securing the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was adopted by consensus in April 2009. That resolution includes some practical recommendations on what parliaments can do to ensure the universal ratification of the CTBT, promote the United Nations Secretary-General's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament and support a number of concurrent steps, such as reductions in nuclear stockpiles, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the start of negotiations on a fissile materials treaty.

We are in the process of taking stock and assessing the various parliamentary initiatives in support of some of the resolution's main recommendations. Our report is in its preliminary stages. However, some very interesting information has already been shared by a number of member parliaments.

For example, the parliaments of Angola, China and Pakistan have adopted national laws regulating the use, transport and transfer of nuclear technologies and materials according to international standards. The parliaments of Mongolia and New Zealand have enacted legislation that criminalizes nuclear-weapon activities. The parliament of Norway has developed legislation that diverts Government pension funds from corporations involved in the production of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The examples continue.

During the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons here in New York in May, several dozen legislators joined their national delegations to follow the proceedings. During the first week of high-level debates, the IPU organized two parliamentary events, in close cooperation with the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, a partner whose work we greatly value. The lawmakers who attended those events reported that parliamentary resolutions supporting the Secretary-General's five-point plan or the start of negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention had been adopted in a number of parliaments, including those of Austria, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Germany, Italy, New Zealand and Norway and by the European Parliament, and had been introduced in other parliaments, such as those of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Key messages that emerged from those parliamentary events include, first, that politicians and diplomats should not underestimate the growing momentum towards nuclear disarmament and should not hesitate to reach for an historic breakthrough. Secondly, non-proliferation steps, such as nuclear-weapon-free zones, can play a key role in developing the institutional and technical components for a nuclear-weapon-free world. Thirdly, parliamentarians from countries in extended nuclear deterrence relationships can support nuclear disarmament through phasing out the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. Fourthly, disarmament and peace education are vital to build political constituencies to support action by parliaments and Governments for nuclear disarmament. Fifthly and lastly, stronger collaboration among legislators, Governments and civil society is required to ensure success.

The urgent need for action towards nuclear disarmament was stressed most recently, and at a very high level, on the occasion of the Third World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, held in July in Geneva. In the resulting declaration, parliamentary leaders from all over the world pledged their commitment to and support for the efforts under way towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. At the 123rd IPU Assembly in Geneva last week, consultations were held with multiparty parliamentary delegations from several countries that have signed the CTBT and where ratification should not be terribly problematic. We are hopeful that enhanced awareness about the importance of the CTBT will help prompt further progress towards the entry into force of this key international instrument.

As far as the IPU is concerned, then, we are committed to continuing to work closely with member parliaments and partners in helping to advance the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The Chair: I give the floor to the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Young (International Committee of the Red Cross): In April this year, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) addressed the issue of nuclear weapons in a speech by its President, Jakob Kellenberger, to the Geneva diplomatic corps. Mr. Kellenberger recalled the ICRC's first-hand experience with the effects of the Hiroshima bombing. He also highlighted the implications of nuclear destruction for health infrastructure and recent ICRC studies demonstrating a lack of any coordinated international assistance capacity for the victims of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. He welcomed the finding of the International Court of Justice that the use of nuclear weapons is generally contrary to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. In light of the Court's finding that the destructive powers of nuclear weapons could not be contained in either space or time, he declared that the ICRC found it difficult to envisage how any use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with the rules of international humanitarian law.

The ICRC President appealed to all States to ensure that such weapons are never used again, regardless of their views on the legality of such use. He also called on States to fulfil their existing obligations to pursue negotiations to prohibit and eliminate such weapons through a legally binding international treaty.

States have begun to give nuclear weapons the attention merited by their implications for human suffering, for the future of the human species and for international humanitarian law. Both the Security Council Summit in September and the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) committed States to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. The five NPT States possessing nuclear weapons have provided an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In addition, in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), NPT States parties collectively recognized, for the first time, the "catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and their responsibility "at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law".

The recognition of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the commitments just mentioned have profound implications. They must now be translated into a wide range of actions that will progressively end the role of nuclear weapons in State security policies, and into a negotiating process, or processes, within agreed forums and time frames. If the historic commitments by States to advance towards nuclear disarmament are to be realized, it is also essential that negotiations not be based only on military doctrines and power politics. The debate must equally be informed by the implications of these weapons for human beings, for the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law and for the collective future of humanity.

The ICRC has consistently appealed for stricter national and international control of access to all types of conventional weapons and ammunition. Far too often it is civilians who are victimized when these weapons are used, frequently in violation of international humanitarian law. The ICRC is mandated to protect and assist those affected by armed conflict, in particular civilians, but the challenges of doing that are overwhelming when access to conventional arms and ammunition is unrestrained.

An essential element in addressing this problem at the international level is the adoption of an effective, legally binding arms trade treaty containing the highest international standards for responsible transfers of conventional weapons. To be effective, the treaty must

have a broad scope, covering all conventional weapons and ammunition. Its provisions must also be robust, ensuring that arms are not transferred when there is a clear risk of serious violations of the law.

We are encouraged that the Chairman's paper from the July meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty recognizes the humanitarian imperative behind an arms trade treaty and that one of its objectives must be to prevent serious violations of international humanitarian law. We urge States to ensure that work in the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee in 2011 results in a strong and comprehensive draft for finalization at the diplomatic conference in 2012.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions, now signed by 108 States and ratified by 42, is the latest proof that States can respond firmly and comprehensively to the human suffering caused by specific weapons. The Convention's entry into force on 1 August 2010 was a milestone. To implement its provisions, States parties are now working to end the use and proliferation of cluster munitions and, through the Convention's clearance and victim assistance obligations, are addressing the horrible legacy of their use in past decades.

The first meeting of States parties to that treaty, to be held next month in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, should be the starting point for rapidly increasing clearance capacity and victim assistance efforts in Laos and other affected States parties. We urge States parties to attend the meeting with concrete commitments to increase clearance and victim assistance work in 2011 while also establishing the long-term mechanisms needed for universalizing, implementing and monitoring this important Convention.

We again urge all States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to ensure that any protocol on cluster munitions developed in the Convention's framework effectively addresses the humanitarian problems caused by such weapons on the basis of clear legal rules that are complementary to the obligations of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Any result should preclude the continued use of types of cluster munitions known to cause harm to civilians because of their unreliability and inaccuracy.

Of all of the international humanitarian law treaties on specific weapons, the Anti-Personnel Mine

Ban Convention has the strongest implementation mechanism and an impressive record of achievements in the 11 years since its entry into force. Those achievements include the destruction of over 42 million anti-personnel mines, the clearance of vast areas of land and increased assistance to victims in some contexts.

However, the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which took place last December in Cartagena, Colombia, also recognized the serious challenges facing the Convention. They include the failure of several States to meet stockpile destruction deadlines, the numerous requests to extend clearance deadlines and inadequate progress in assisting victims. Meeting each of these challenges will entail more proactive political and practical efforts and greater resources, both national and international. The ICRC urges all States parties to continue to invest the time and resources needed to ensure that this unique Convention delivers on its promises to victims and spares future generations the scourge of these insidious weapons.

In the past 15 years, States have negotiated five new international humanitarian law treaties aimed at mitigating or ending preventable suffering caused by the use of specific weapons. These achievements demonstrate that States can and must set the limits at which "the necessities of war ought to yield to the requirements of humanity", in the words of the 1868 Saint Petersburg Declaration. They demonstrate that humanity is not powerless in the face of the harmful effects of the technologies it creates. These recent successes can inspire and guide us together in pursuing the objective of a world without nuclear weapons and with standards for the responsible transfer of conventional arms.

The Chair: The Committee has just heard the last speaker in the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

One delegation has requested to take the floor to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would kindly request the delegation of the Russian Federation for the following indulgence. We had planned to open the new debate with the speech of High Representative Duarte, who, however, has to meet with the Secretary-General at 5 p.m. I would therefore kindly request that delegation to allow the High Representative to speak

first and then to exercise the right of reply at the end of this meeting.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have taken note of your request, Sir. However, I wish to take this opportunity to exercise the right to reply. Moreover, I recall that — and, unfortunately, this is not the first time that this has happened — the representative of the Secretariat said that the exercise of the right of reply by States should take place before statements are given by non-governmental organizations and international organizations. In any case, I will not take up a great deal of time.

I wish to remind the representative of Georgia, who has just complained about violations of the Charter of the United Nations, that such violations were in fact committed by Georgia when it attacked Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as it has on many occasions in history. And history has shown that aggressors always bear responsibility. The present situation in the Caucasus is the result of the Georgian aggression.

If the representative of Georgia wishes to continue the discussion on the essence of this matter, I would like to draw his attention to the fact that the day after tomorrow, 14 October, the thirteenth round of the Geneva discussions on the Caucasus will begin, where all issues related to this matter can be addressed.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Georgia in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Gheghechkori (Georgia): I apologize for taking the floor, Sir, but I am obliged to give a quick response to my Russian colleague.

First of all, I should like to note one positive development here, and I want to thank him, since I cannot take his response to my statement as anything other than indirect recognition of everything that I said in my statement. If one noticed, I tried to focus on the security-related problems that Georgia is facing. It seems that whoever felt responsible for those problems just responded to my statement.

Secondly, I want to emphasize that I totally agree with the representative of the Russian Federation that the events of 2008 can only be categorized as an aggression, but an aggression of one sovereign State

against another — the first sovereign State was the Russian Federation and the second one was Georgia.

I do not want to prolong this meeting by going into details, especially at this moment so close to the forthcoming Geneva discussions; that was, of course, another point I made in my earlier statement — that I did not want to get into bilateral polemics here, since the place for such discussions is in Geneva and not our Committee.

The Chair: During the course of the general debate, which spanned seven meetings, we listened to over 100 statements highlighting the main concerns and priorities in the area of disarmament and international security. This high number of speakers clearly illustrates the level of importance which Member States attach to matters of disarmament and international security.

Organization of work

The Chair: The Committee has thus concluded the first phase of its work, and will next embark upon the second phase, namely the thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items.

In accordance with the indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1, we will begin the thematic segment of our work by taking up the matter of the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous session and the presentation of reports by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte. This exchange will be held in informal mode.

Before giving the floor to High Representative Duarte, I will suspend the meeting in order to continue our discussion in an informal setting.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

The Chair: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to remind delegations once again that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions is Thursday, 14 October, at 12 noon. Delegations are urged to adhere to this deadline so that the Secretariat may process the documents in a timely manner.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.