



General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

First Committee

9th meeting

Tuesday, 11 October 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: Today, the Committee will conclude the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it, in accordance with the programme of work and timetable.

Before opening the floor for the general debate, however, I intend to suspend the meeting in order to initiate informal discussions on my proposal regarding participation by non-governmental organizations in our work, as contained in my letter dated 29 September, as well as my proposal distributed on 6 October.

Unless I hear any objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

The meeting was suspended at 3.10 p.m. and resumed at 3.15 p.m.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. In the interests of brevity, I will read out an abridged version of our statement, while the full text will be circulated.

In the last two years, we have witnessed a growing debate on the need to revitalize the international disarmament machinery. This machinery, of which the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission are important parts, was

created by the General Assembly at its first special session on disarmament.

While both of those institutions may have, for some, performed less well than expected, it is interesting to note that only the Conference on Disarmament is being singled out for its inactivity. It is also interesting to note that the issue of nuclear disarmament, which is the reason for the existence of the Conference on Disarmament, still remains an unfulfilled goal, despite being on the Conference's agenda for 32 years. One cannot help wonder why the leading critics of the Conference do not find it important to break the three-decade-long deadlock on nuclear disarmament.

The reasons are self-evident. Those countries are themselves responsible for dragging their feet on the most important issue of nuclear disarmament, namely, the Conference on Disarmament's inactivity for decades and stalled discussions in the Disarmament Commission. Their concerns are limited to progress on a single issue in the Conference on Disarmament, with utter disregard for the three other core issues on the Conference's agenda. It therefore becomes apparent that the reasons for the lack of progress are multifarious, rooted in the continuing lack of political will of States, and are not related to the working methods of the Conference.

The Conference on Disarmament has negotiated landmark instruments like the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and thus there cannot be a problem with its

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rules of procedure. The fact is that the Conference's work or inactivity is nothing but a reflection of the prevailing political realities, as it does not operate in a vacuum. Moreover, no treaty contrary to the security interests of the members of the Conference can be negotiated there. This principle, endorsed by the first special session on disarmament, is the basis on which States agreed to respect the rule of consensus in the Conference.

Any solution to the current stalemate in the international disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament, should be comprehensive and applicable to all aspects of that machinery, not just the issues that are of priority to some delegations. It should also address the real underlying causes of the stalemate.

Pakistan strongly believes in the need to preserve this machinery that has been developed through consensus. Any effort to bypass this machinery would undermine consensus and legitimacy. Pakistan would never be part of any such efforts.

We should also not forget that the stalemate in the Conference in terms of its programme of work existed for more than a decade during which the major Powers did not allow any consideration of the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) or any other core agenda item of the Conference. Now, with sufficient stocks available, an FMCT has become cost-free for some of the major Powers, hence their mantra about it being the next logical step and a ripe issue for negotiations. This logic follows the dictates of convenience and not the needs of global peace and security.

If time is any measure of judgement for ripeness or importance, we must be aware that the issues of nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances have faced stalemates for over two decades. In any case, the Conference on Disarmament was not created to negotiate an FMCT only, as there are a number of issues of equal, if not greater, importance on its agenda. Moreover, if there is no consensus on one issue due to security concerns of States, other issues can and should be taken up.

Pakistan's opposition to negotiations on an FMCT is not out of choice but compulsion. No country can be expected to compromise on its fundamental security interests. In the past few years, the discriminatory policies of some major Powers regarding nuclear cooperation have accentuated the

asymmetry in fissile material stocks in our region. Those Powers have pursued those policies in utter disregard for international non-proliferation goals, and indeed their own non-proliferation commitments. Despite the loud voices of concern and grandstanding in the international media, and in full awareness of the impact of such policies on the regional security situation, they have continued their policies of exceptionalism in their pursuit of power and profit.

Given this, they have no moral authority to call for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime when they themselves are responsible for undermining it. We would also like to ask the members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group if they were not aware, when they endorsed these discriminatory policies, of the adverse consequences for our region and the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. If those members chose to abet the policies of discrimination, and thereby undermined international non-proliferation goals, why are they now so vociferous in bemoaning the lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament?

In Pakistan's view, any fissile material treaty should deal clearly and comprehensively with the issue of the asymmetry of existing fissile material stocks. Only then would it be a treaty that would contribute to nuclear disarmament, ensuring equal security for all States. In that regard, we must bear in mind one of the cardinal principles of disarmament negotiations, as enshrined in paragraph 29 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), which states:

"The adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage."

Pakistan, along with 120 other members of the Non-Aligned Movement, is ready to support the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament, an issue that has been a priority for the Non-Aligned Movement for decades. We also support the negotiation of a legal instrument on negative security assurances, which has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament for many years. It is worth asking why the Conference cannot negotiate a legally binding instrument on such assurances, since

that would not compromise the security of any State. Intransigence in that regard is tantamount to supporting a morally indefensible policy of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Another issue on the Conference agenda that merits urgent attention is the need to develop concrete steps towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Such steps are vital to ensure the peaceful uses of outer space, on which the international community relies heavily for economic and scientific development.

In view of the existing problems besetting global security and the need to revitalize the international disarmament machinery, it is imperative to develop a new consensus to deal with the current stalemate. Pakistan fully supports the call of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement to convene a fourth special session on disarmament. Such a session would contribute positively towards finding ways to achieve the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, keeping in view the security interests of all States.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We also believe in strict adherence to, and respect for, all the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are concerned 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. We urge them to intensify their efforts to comply with their obligations.

Pakistan supports the framework of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We share the international concern over the ill effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that the focus should be on strengthening the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is a consensus 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 singled out as the main justification, Pakistan is in favour of a step-by-step, inclusive and consensus approach with due regard for every State's right to self-

defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): At the outset, Sir, let me congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We look forward to a productive session under your leadership.

The main motivation for disarmament is to prevent armed conflict and the human suffering it causes, while at the same time safeguarding international stability. Accordingly, we must strike a balance between visionary goals and feasible long-term measures. Initiatives in that regard should be integrated within the context of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to ensure thorough compliance by all the actors concerned, whether State or non-State.

We cannot continue to disregard the decade-and-a-half-old deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. At the same time, we cannot simply put the Conference aside as an ineffective procedural tool that can begin to operate only once we have reached a world without conflict. We were therefore pleased to see some new momentum on this in 2010. We would like to stress our strong support for an early start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as a point of departure for a feasible path to disarmament.

Disarmament must be achieved in a lawful manner and needs to be embedded in a framework of international law. Like many other States, we had hoped that the General Assembly, at its last session, would have set a deadline for the Conference on Disarmament to achieve real progress. Twelve months have now passed and no further progress has been made. It is clear to us that the time has come to comprehensively reconsider the structure of the entire multilateral disarmament framework.

Last year, States were able to agree on an action plan on nuclear disarmament as part of the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The implementation of that ambitious plan, agreed on by consensus, should be a priority for all States, regardless of whether they possess nuclear weapons. In this context, we also call upon the remaining annex 2 States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as a necessary building block for increasing the level of confidence among States. In addition, we would like

to underline the obligation of nuclear-weapon States to consider the legitimate interests of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear-weapon systems.

The proposed arms trade treaty will fill an important gap in the non-proliferation of weapons, and is long overdue. We have seen time and again how illegally traded arms can intensify a conflict. Artificially enhanced social differences, in combination with illegally acquired arms, have led to the escalation of conflicts, especially in least developed countries (LDCs). Such human catastrophes have to be prevented by not adding fuel to the fire in the form of the undocumented distribution of weapons. We welcome the 7+1+1 formula, which includes munitions as well as small arms and light weapons. We are convinced that strong regulation would not hinder legitimate trade opportunities, especially for LDCs, but rather would strengthen their domestic stability.

Certainly, in negotiating an international instrument as important as the arms trade treaty, every effort should be made to reach consensus. At the same time, consensus must not be a barrier to progress. When we decide on the rules of procedure for the treaty conference later this year, let us not doom ourselves to failure by giving 193 States the right to veto.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the heavy burden that the various disarmament resolutions place on States that wish to report and submit their views to the Secretary-General. We encourage the United Nations to develop a consolidated reporting tool to align the various initiatives and make it easier, especially for smaller States, to be able to comply adequately and in a timely manner.

Disarmament is one of the most vital tasks of the United Nations. Stagnation can therefore not be in any party's interest anymore.

Mr. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We have confidence in your experience and in your ability to obtain excellent results. My delegation expresses its full support, so that together we can achieve success in this Committee. I also want to congratulate the rest of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made at the 3rd meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We reiterate that our main concern and goal is to achieve general and complete nuclear disarmament, because that is the single path to a world free of nuclear weapons and their constant threat to humankind and Mother Earth.

Nicaragua has expressed to the international community the urgency of moving towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, including not only nuclear weapons but also conventional weapons of mass destruction, the use of which violates the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. It is essential that we establish peace on Earth, providing the 7 billion human beings who live on it — and Mother Earth herself — a chance to survive the destructive tendencies driven by the prevailing economic model and to develop in an environment in which they can use their considerable material and spiritual capacities. Otherwise, we will not be able to achieve a better future.

Nicaragua has advocated examining, evaluating and analysing the resolutions and declarations on this matter so that we can move forward decisively in the limitation of the arms race and the search for measures that point the way to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and bring about general and complete disarmament under a transparent and effective system of international control.

Nicaragua respects the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without any discrimination. We underscore that the International Atomic Energy Agency must increase nuclear security and radiological protection, strengthening the norms for nuclear security and preparation for and response to emergencies. Above all, it must increase protection from radiation for people and the environment, providing appropriate responses, based on scientific knowledge and transparency, in the event of a nuclear accident.

Nicaragua believes that tests of all types of nuclear weapons must come to an immediate stop, forever. Populations in many parts of the world continue to suffer the horrific consequences for human beings and the environment that are the result of the more than 2,000 nuclear tests conducted since 1945. It is unjustifiable and unacceptable that in today's world

more and more is spent on developing and testing nuclear weapons and less on promoting the life and development of human beings. While millions of people suffer the effects of the economic and financial crisis, world military expenditures are increasing at a dizzying rate. Over the past 10 years these expenses have increased by 50 per cent, reaching more than \$1.5 trillion.

Each year more than 8 million small arms and light weapons and more than 16 billion munitions are produced. That is 2.5 munitions for every person on the planet. Calculating from direct evidence, half a million people die every year from small arms and light weapons. But the indirect damage is still greater. Social violence, forced displacement of people, interruptions in access to health and education, drops in economic activity, wasted Government economic and human resources and damage to the social structure — all these represent a disaster for the human, economic and social development of peoples.

In the interest of general and complete disarmament, Nicaragua has actively participated in conferences on the matter in the United Nations and other international forums. It is the political will of the Nicaraguan Government to continue to support bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives undertaken by States that has made it possible to adopt agreements that prohibit nuclear proliferation and nuclear tests, especially in outer space and on the sea floor, as well as the use of chemical, bacteriological and toxin weapons that have excessive or indiscriminate harmful effects, as well as cluster munitions and the illicit traffic in arms.

Nicaragua enjoys a regional leadership role in demining activities. In accordance with article 7 of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, and with the successful implementation of the national demining programme — which ended in June 2010 with the destruction and removal of 313,405 anti-personnel mines — we declared our territory free of anti-personnel mines and Central America a region free of mines.

Nicaragua participated actively in the negotiations that made it possible to achieve the consensus of the majority of States for the adoption and signing of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2008, and its later ratification and the deposit of instruments of ratification in 2009. Expressing the

political will of the Nicaraguan Government, in May 2011, we delivered to the United Nations and the Organization of American States the annual report called for in article 7 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We also share the vision whereby global, regional and subregional arms control and disarmament agreements are essential legal and political factors to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts.

New security threats have become a veritable scourge for most of our countries. Drug trafficking, human trafficking, the illicit arms trade and trafficking in migrants, among other things, are ethical, political and economic challenges for Central America. Our region is stigmatized by some international reports as one of the most violent areas on Earth. The International Conference in Support of the Central America Security Strategy, held in Guatemala last June, expressed the seriousness of the situation, which affects not only our region but all countries of the world. Therefore the principle of shared, differentiated and proportional responsibility must guide our mutual commitments. We must act urgently in the right direction before it is too late for everybody.

Nicaragua continues to serve as a wall against drug trafficking. During the past five years, we have conducted operations that have led to the detention of 21,847 people, 435 of whom were foreigners. We dismantled 63 cells and seized \$25 million in cash and C\$6.5 million. Other efforts seized 1,191 firearms, 1,351 vehicles, 174 aquatic vessels and 18 aircraft, as well as 128 buildings. The cost to the economic and logistical base of drug traffic is estimated at \$2.25 billion.

Still, this is an emergency, not just a Central American but an international emergency, and to face that emergency requires more resources than are now available. Our resources continue to be very limited to be able to fight the challenges in the Meso-American region efficiently and effectively. We must all consider the resources necessary to fight the battle against organized crime successfully, which all the developed countries should provide. We are certain that this will bring greater stability in the developed countries.

Nicaragua is convinced that with our limited resources and with our current bilateral support from organizations and countries and other support that

might develop, we will be able to deploy efforts that will enable us to win the battle against drug trafficking and organized crime. We will save our youth and future generations from this scourge.

Mr. Al Saad (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the delegation of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is pleased to offer its sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, as well as to the members of the Bureau. We reaffirm our support to you, and we are confident that your wisdom, experience and skills will enable you to bring the work of the First Committee to a new stage characterized by sincere determination to achieve the results aspired to by the members of the international community. Those aspirations include the hope of ridding the world of the spectre of the fear of the return of tensions in international relations as a result of dogged obsession with the development, production and possession of evermore destructive weapons and the resulting increased deterioration in the security of many societies, which endangers international peace and security.

My country's delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/66/PV.3).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that there are real challenges to international security and regional stability owing to the weakened credibility of previously adopted international treaties and conventions. The Kingdom is deeply concerned at the current status of disarmament and non-proliferation at both the international and regional levels, and in particular at the lack of respect for the core principles and priorities enshrined in international treaties, United Nations resolutions and internationally agreed decisions.

Despite the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the common belief of many of the parties concerned that the Treaty represents the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation system, international efforts in the multilateral framework remain insufficient. As a result, the current situation in this respect is fraught with ambiguity and uncertainty, requiring serious and constructive negotiations aimed at achieving consistency and

harmonization between the two pillars: prevention and disarmament of nuclear weapons, so as to enhance international security and stability; and realizing the human right to the peaceful use of nuclear power and technology for the purposes of advancing the development of many countries.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that prolonging the status quo would only make the situation worse. The lack of tangible progress in the implementation of the decision to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone could lead to a nuclear-arms race in the region. Such a race should not be allowed and should be averted by, *inter alia*, taking administrative and preventive measures and bold, strategic steps aimed at easing tensions in the region, such as Israel's accession to the NPT; dismantling and destroying any nuclear weapons produced outside the scope of the Treaty; and the placing of all nuclear facilities in the region under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition, the fact that Israel is still not a party to the NPT and its refusal to subject its nuclear facilities to international inspection represents an obstacle to achieving the goal of making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

While the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recognizes the right of States to the peaceful use of atomic energy, in keeping with the standards and procedures of the IAEA and under its supervision, it is seriously considering the Islamic Republic of Iran's commitment to and respect of its obligations concerning the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in the region, and hopes that that commitment will be backed by concrete action that will dissipate any doubts about its nuclear programme and contribute to resolving the current crisis between Iran and the international community by peaceful means.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to the realization of global peace and stability and thus welcomes the ongoing efforts to that end. It is a party to numerous international agreements, conventions and treaties. The Kingdom has submitted its official report to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) relative to the proliferation of WMDs and the prevention of their falling into irresponsible hands. In keeping with that resolution, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in December 2010 held a workshop to emphasize the role of the

Kingdom in combating the proliferation of WMDs and to elaborate on and explain those efforts at the national level. The Kingdom would like also to welcome the New START treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation aimed at reducing their nuclear arsenals.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia attaches great importance to the issue of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Saudi Arabia is among the countries that believe that the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects represents a solid foundation on which we can build. The Programme highlights issues that undermine the stability of countries and affect peace and security at the national and regional levels. Accordingly, the Kingdom adopted a series of precautionary measures and policies aimed at promoting confidence-building by enhancing cooperation mechanisms to address this devastating crisis at all levels.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is confident that the international community will be able to find concrete solutions to all the issues that the Committee is dealing with.

Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau, and to pledge our delegation's full support and cooperation.

The issues of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and the effective control of armaments remain vital topics on the international cooperation agenda that require a common understanding, political will and, more importantly, engaged efforts on the part of all States and international organizations in order to minimize the unpredictable damage that could be inflicted on global security and stability if those issues are not dealt with properly.

During this session, the First Committee can make a valuable contribution to the common goal of disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly to the revitalization and strengthening of the relevant international instruments dealing with disarmament issues, including the Conference on Disarmament, as the most appropriate body for the conduct of multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

Progress can be made by building on the positive examples of increased cooperation on the part of Member States. The conclusion of the New START treaty; the encouraging outcomes of the Nuclear Security Summit, the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty; and the prompt adoption and entry into force of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions should persuade the States Members of the United Nations to redouble their efforts to promote the disarmament agenda. The Republic of Moldova fully supports all efforts aimed at strengthening international security and stability through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament and has undertaken sustainable measures at the national level in that regard.

We welcomed the Secretary-General's initiatives in the field of disarmament, including the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament in order to move multilateral disarmament negotiations forward. Subsequently, we, along with 49 other countries, supported the proposals to convene the General Assembly plenary debate on the follow-up to that meeting. It is our belief that taking forward the multilateral disarmament negotiations in that forum at the earliest date is crucial for restoring the Conference's credibility and maintaining its primary role in substantive negotiations related to disarmament and non-proliferation.

In the same vein, we plead for the successful implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and for the achievement of the Treaty's universality, which should entail the concerted efforts of all Member States.

Moldova is finalizing its internal procedures to adhere to the additional protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards agreement. That step will reconfirm our commitment to combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and will enhance my country's ability to react effectively to any illegal transfers of nuclear and radioactive materials.

We also support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as an indispensable part of the nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation regimes. We welcome the commitments of the United States and Indonesia to ratify the Treaty, which further enhances the prospects for ratification of the CTBT by the remaining annex 2 States.

In order to ensure genuine security at the international, regional and national levels, the progress achieved in the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be complemented by veritable control and reduction of conventional arms. In that regard, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects constitutes an important framework for combating the illicit trade in such arms. The seamless implementation of the Programme of Action should be at the centre of the international community's efforts.

The Republic of Moldova is undertaking tangible steps to reach its priority goals in that field, including the adjustment of its legislative framework to agree with international standards on the regime for controlling arms and ammunition used for civilian purposes, and strengthening institutional capacities for managing stockpiles of small and light arms. A programme for establishing the State Register of Arms, which would systematically record data on weapons circulating in our national territory and which would form part of the integrated information resources of Moldovan law enforcement agencies, was developed and is to be implemented with the assistance of specialized United Nations agencies, regional organizations and bilateral partners.

My country supports the initiatives and actions on preventing trafficking in conventional arms and the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. We also support the advancement of negotiations on a legally binding arms trade treaty and advocate 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.

We welcome the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which the Republic of Moldova has ratified. We are in full compliance with our obligations in that regard, having destroyed all such munitions before 1 August 2010. We continue to call for the implementation and universalization of that Convention.

Furthermore, we support the ongoing negotiations on the protocol on cluster munitions to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We are committed to further and effectively contributing to the processes relating to arms regulation, arms reduction and disarmament, as well as addressing all of the issues related to the production, use, trade 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.

The United Nations role in advancing regional approaches to disarmament and arms limitations, including in the conventional field, is well known. Progress in regional disarmament, the equitable resolution of problems, the just settlement of disputes and the implementation of confidence-building measures could, at the regional level, create conditions conducive to promoting disarmament and abating tension at both the regional and global levels. United Nations coordination of efforts on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation policies and activities at the global, regional, subregional and national levels, as well as international efforts to achieve global disarmament through the support of regional disarmament should therefore be enhanced.

In order to ensure the security of all States, and thereby contribute to international peace and security, such efforts should take into consideration not only the specific characteristics of each region and the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, but should also include the promotion of disarmament and confidence-building measures, especially in the context of conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding activities.

It is worth mentioning in that connection that during the fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, held in Vienna on 29 September and chaired by the Republic of Moldova, both the progress made as well as the shortfalls in implementing the Treaty were appraised by the parties involved. Given the special importance of the Treaty for the general climate of confidence and security in Europe, our delegation underscored that Moldova was fully applying its provisions, observing the ceilings applicable to conventional arms established in the Treaty and participating in the exchanges of information, notifications and inspections.

Expressing its concern over the deficiencies in the Treaty's implementation, including the moratorium introduced in 2007 by one State party to the Treaty, the Republic of Moldova stated its readiness to continue the updating efforts, in line with the latest developments, while respecting the principles and values aimed at strengthening European security.

It is especially important to stress in that regard that during the Conference, the Republic of Moldova reconfirmed its obligations and commitments set by the Treaty and reiterated its official position on the need to complete the process of withdrawal from its territory of the Russian ammunition stored in Cobasna and of military forces to guard them. In the same vein, the imperative of transforming the current peacekeeping arrangement into a multinational civil mission with an appropriate international mandate was also emphasized.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm once again the Republic of Moldova's interest and willingness to further actively participate in all efforts aimed at revitalizing the control regime governing the conventional forces in Europe, based on the fundamental principles of international law, in particular on the principle of the consent of the host State for the stationing of foreign military forces.

Ms. Hailu (Eritrea): Allow me to join those representatives who spoke before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to steer the work of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

We are meeting once again in this Committee to address critical issues related to international security, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is encouraging to see, among other things, the start of the implementation of the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the movement towards transparency undertaken by some nuclear-weapon States and the entry into force of the New START treaty, on strategic offensive arms reduction, signed by the Russian Federation and the

United States. My delegation looks forward to its full implementation. However, such achievements have been offset by challenges such as the deadlock that has beset the Conference on Disarmament.

As the challenges of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation continue to pose the greatest threats to international peace and security, my delegation welcomes the renewed and growing efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, and hopes that concrete progress will be made towards nuclear disarmament.

It is true that one should be realistic. We should not expect overnight changes in the somewhat strained international climate. Yet, it is my delegation's conviction that there are certain actions that, if taken, will build international confidence, which is critical in advancing international disarmament and non-proliferation. In that context, the most important action is to reaffirm the collective commitment to maintain the sanctity of international treaties and agreements by recognizing collectively the need to make progress on both fronts, namely, disarmament and non-proliferation. It is therefore imperative that the international community come together and work to promote a world free from nuclear armaments.

The relationship between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, on the one hand, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, on the other, should be appropriately addressed. It is also important that the issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation be pursued in a balanced manner. Dialogue should be the central instrument in addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Sanctions, threats or use of force can hardly offer a sustainable solution to proliferation concerns.

My delegation strongly believes that it is the inalienable right of all States to develop all aspects of nuclear science and technology for peaceful use without discrimination, while respecting obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. My delegation reiterates its strong support for increased International Atomic Energy Agency input and assistance to developing countries in the fields of nuclear power, nuclear safety and security, and the application of nuclear technology. The free, unimpeded and non-discriminatory transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes must be fully respected.

Our concern with weapons of mass destruction is that we should not forget the predicament posed by conventional weapons. My delegation shares the concerns of many other delegations that spoke before me on the proliferation of conventional weapons, which have become the major instruments of destruction, especially in the developing world. The improvement in production technology and the sophistication and limitless availability of small arms and light weapons pose a great challenge to peace, security and development in most parts of the world. The danger of nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-State actors is another area of great concern.

My country reaffirms its strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and pledges its full cooperation in combating that phenomenon.

Let me add my delegation's voice, with respect to the ongoing negotiations on a future arms trade treaty, to underline that the international legally binding instrument must be balanced, take the concerns of all States into consideration and be consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with Article 51, which enshrines the right of States to self-defence.

Disarmament benefits humankind, not only because it eliminates threats to peace and security but because it helps to divert scarce material and financial resources to efforts that could improve the living standards of humankind. In that regard, suffice it to mention that the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved with only a fraction of the amount that is spent on military expenditures by nations big and small.

Let me conclude my statement by calling on all concerned parties to demonstrate the necessary political will and determination to move the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda forward.

Mr. Weisleder (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as well as to congratulate the new members of the Bureau. Please accept the explicit support of my delegation for your management and leadership efforts in the successful work of the Committee.

My delegation endorses the words of Ambassador Sergio Duarte in reiterating the importance of the First Committee. We also share his emphasis on this forum's contributions in the promotion of international peace and security. Costa Rica assumes the challenge of revitalizing the multilateral disarmament negotiations and, through those efforts, to meet the expectations that characterize this body.

Costa Rica believes that the principal tools in strengthening national and international security are not weapons, but two fundamental tasks. The first is to strengthen and improve democracy and the rule of law; the second is to reduce military spending and arms trafficking as a way to promote human development and security. For developing nations — and for middle-income countries in particular — the patient building of democratic institutions remains a crucial task. That is not the simplest alternative, yet it is the most just and the most sustainable in the long run.

In democracies with a strong civic and political culture, civil society trusts the State and actively participates in the decision-making process without fear that their demands will be silenced by violence. Such local practices can and should translate to the international stage so as to promote the resolution of disputes through dialogue and mediation. That is one of the matters proposed for discussion by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session and which the Chair's delegation, together with the delegation of Turkey, has promoted with the group of friends of mediation, to which Costa Rica is honoured to belong.

Allow me to refer to the second endeavour that we consider fundamental to promoting international peace and security, namely, the reduction in military spending and arms trafficking. While Costa Rica is a completely demilitarized nation, we have not failed to recognize the legitimate security and defence concerns of other States and the necessity of many of those countries to incur military expenditures that are deemed proportional and reasonable. What Costa Rica questions is excessive military expenditures, especially during an international economic and financial crisis, when Governments should ethically rearrange their spending and international cooperation priorities.

To give an idea of the distortion in priorities that the world is facing, suffice it to observe that over the past 10 years, global military expenditures rose 45 per

cent, to an exorbitant total of \$1.6 trillion in 2010. If only 10 per cent of those resources had been allocated towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals — in other words, if those resources had been efficiently and effectively allocated to promoting life — we would be very close to achieving the Goals by 2015. However, we are not even close to meeting them by the 2015 target. Costa Rica has therefore continued to insist on the need to advance from outdated security doctrines based on military paradigms towards those that lie essentially within human development paradigms.

The challenge of weapons and violence also transcends the classical aspects of national security. For example, although we are fortunate to face neither armed conflicts between countries nor internal civil wars, our region of Latin America and the Caribbean is the most violent in the world, as well as the most unequal. According to data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the majority of countries with homicide rates over 35 per 100,000 individuals are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Easy access to small arms and light weapons and munitions makes that problem even more complicated. It has become a serious threat to domestic security in many countries. Costa Rica laments, however, that the international community has not responded to that challenge with one voice. We also deplore the fact that, at the national level, certain countries frequently opt for repressive strategies instead of restructuring national priorities, promoting the rule of law and strengthening the connection between the governed and those who govern them.

That situation appears even more complex if we take into account the fact that many of the weapons that continue to kill and maim innocent people, foment violence and multiply conflicts are manufactured in developed countries, even in countries with long-standing democratic institutions and trustworthy Governments. Some of those countries are also the primary marketplace for drugs and centres for money laundering. Others have enacted immigration policies that frequently end up encouraging human trafficking.

In raising those issues, we are not seeking to transfer blame; the primary responsibility for our successes or failures rests with ourselves. Still, we are convinced that, in order for security to take root, we must encourage development, governance and a

coordinated response to conflict, all of which require greater global coordination, better legal instruments and multilateral action without ulterior motives.

In that context, the concept of human security must prevail, not only in the public policies of States but also in their foreign policies. Therefore, any action that aims to revitalize and restructure multilateral disarmament negotiations must be based on the concept of human security. That focus was critical in the negotiations for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It will also be decisive in the preparatory meetings for a robust treaty on the arms trade in 2012.

The best arms trade treaty will be one that can combine both hope and feasibility with a broad and powerful reach, and have legally binding criteria for the assessment of international arms transfers, and that can be applied in a transparent manner on a case-by-case basis. An instrument of that kind will not, in and of itself, suffice to eliminate armed conflict or violent situations around the world, but it will be able to bring about a significant reduction in the flow of the arms that feed such conflicts.

My delegation would like to stress that the goal of effectively regulating the flow of the international arms trade and thereby reducing human suffering requires a treaty that is simple, powerful and, even more important, universally implementable and verifiable.

The negotiations leading to such an arms trade treaty represent a golden opportunity to arrive at that goal. We must not lose that opportunity.

Mr. Oyarzun (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your new role as Chair of this Committee and to offer you our delegation's full support.

Spain regards peacebuilding as one of the cardinal features of its foreign policy, in which disarmament and non-proliferation play a fundamental role.

First of all, it is important to recognize that we have made progress in the nuclear field, such as the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the entry into force of the New START agreement, which

allow us to live in a safer world. There has also been progress in the realm of conventional weapons, such as the process that began with the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. I believe that we have taken steps in the right direction.

My delegation wishes to draw attention to the fact that effective multilateralism, prevention and international cooperation are the three key elements in the strategy of the European Union aimed at combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to which Spain fully adheres.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons continues to be the core component of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is important to continue working in favour of its universalization and to decisively implement the Action Plan adopted at the successful 2010 Review Conference.

In that framework, Spain insists on the implementation of resolution 51/41, adopted pursuant to the 1995 Review Conference, calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, we welcome the seminar hosted in Brussels in July under the auspices of the European Union, and we hope that the conference planned for 2012 will contribute positively to our common objective of a lasting peace in that part of the world.

The international community continues to face significant challenges in the field of nuclear proliferation, such as Iran's nuclear programme or that of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The failure of the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with its Safeguards Agreement is also a matter of concern.

Spain calls for the strengthening and revitalization of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. The recurrent deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the inability to start negotiations on a treaty to prohibit the further production of fissile material continue to paralyse the disarmament machinery of the United Nations.

The efficacy of multilateral disarmament institutions is the guarantor of our collective security, and the perceptions of individual States with regard to their own security should not be an excuse to stand in the way of an entire institution. The rule of consensus, as the guiding premise in negotiations in fields as

sensitive as disarmament and non-proliferation, was conceived in order to include all points of view in the decision-making process. However, to conflate it with a virtual right of veto is equivalent to subverting its very nature.

When it enters into force, which we trust will be soon, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will be another essential piece in the architecture of disarmament and non-proliferation. Spain calls on those States that have not yet done so, in particular the States included in annex 2 of the Treaty, to ratify it as soon as possible.

We must take the maximize precautions to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorist groups. In that regard, we wish to highlight the importance of complying with the obligations and commitments of Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009). Spain is fully committed to initiatives such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Washington Nuclear Security Summit, or the Group of Eight's Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

Spain wishes to express its support to those countries that seek to develop their peaceful nuclear capacities with responsibility, transparency and in strict compliance with international commitments. I would also like to draw attention to the important work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in that arena.

With respect to other weapons of mass destruction, Spain recognizes the importance of the Biological Weapons Convention and trusts that the upcoming seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which is to take place in Geneva this coming December, will provide conclusive results in the reinforcement of confidence-building measures, the development of a dynamic plan for the next intersessional workshop and strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit.

I would like also to emphasize the significance of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as well as its five Protocols. The Fourth Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention, which will take place in Geneva this coming November, will provide an excellent

opportunity to strengthen cooperation among States parties on that subject.

My delegation is firmly committed to the success of the upcoming United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which will take place in 2012. We believe it is necessary to have a two-level approach, aimed at both regulating legal commerce and combating illegal trade. The promising results of the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference give us reason for optimism.

To conclude, there are many issues for discussion in this First Committee of the General Assembly. The Spanish delegation trusts that, instead of merely updating previously adopted resolutions, the Committee will provide a forum for ambitious and realistic debates and at the same time undertake a review of its own working methods, in order to boost its effectiveness in the years ahead.

Ms. Dibaco (Ethiopia): Allow me first of all, Sir, to express my congratulations to you and the rest of the members of the Bureau on your election. I am confident that you will steer the deliberations of the Committee to a successful outcome. Let me also assure you of our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

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

Today, weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms still pose serious threats to global peace and international security. The threats are multifaceted and complex and require a fundamental and effective international response in order to curb the escalation of the nuclear arms race and reduce the stockpiles of other weapons of mass destruction, through the full implementation of existing conventions and treaties on a verifiable basis.

In that regard, States need to respect and implement the provisions of the international treaties and conventions that they are party to. We also wish to underscore the vital importance of multilateral agreements, as they represent internationally agreed solutions aimed at promoting disarmament and international security. Full and strict adherence to and implementation of those agreements, the non-proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction, the early entry

into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the conclusion of an arms trade treaty must remain the top priorities of the international disarmament agenda.

As regards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, we believe that they can make significant contributions not only to achieving regional and international security but also to strengthening the process of total nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty remains a fundamental legal basis for creating a zone of peace and cooperation on the continent, and it serves as an effective confidence-building measure for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts in general. We therefore call upon African States to push for more ratifications of the Pelindaba Treaty and for its universal application.

Ethiopia believes that the security of States is inextricably linked to the issue of disarmament and that, without significant progress in the area of disarmament, international peace and security cannot be fully maintained. Obviously, efforts to ensure sustainable socio-economic development cannot succeed in the absence of durable peace and security. The regulated and controlled production, spread and transfer of weapons is therefore an important component in the establishment of long-lasting peace and security and the promotion of sustainable development, as they are all closely interconnected. That is why we fully support the call to the international community to take urgent and concerted action to effectively address the threats to peace and security posed by weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms.

Ethiopia, like many other developing countries, has continued to suffer from the adverse effects of illicit conventional weapons, in particular from the spread and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Indeed, the proliferation of uncontrolled conventional weapons has exacerbated unstable and fragile peace situations in developing regions by fuelling armed conflict and civil strife.

The Horn of Africa is one of the regions that has witnessed skirmishes and numerous armed conflicts caused by that problem. In our subregion, the efforts of regional States to preserve regional peace and security — as we must try to ensure development and prosperity for the people of the region — have

constantly been undermined by such weapons. Groups and their sponsors who believe in the use of force and armed violence to achieve their objectives have deployed such weapons in order to kill innocent people indiscriminately and have caused humanitarian disasters. The current situation in Somalia is a case in point.

Ethiopia has been subjected to repeated terrorist attacks. We will, therefore, continue to support all efforts to hunt and destroy such weapons and combat terrorism in all its manifestations. That is why, in addition to national measures undertaken to combat the illicit arms trade, Ethiopia has been closely working with subregional States and institutions to set up and implement the Bamako Declaration and the Nairobi Declaration and its Protocol.

The need to take concrete action aimed at concluding a legally binding and effective treaty to curtail the illicit trade in and transfer of weapons to non-State actors is indeed urgent. We wish to underline in that connection the utmost importance of an early and full implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we are looking forward to making our own contribution by actively participating in the session of the Preparatory Committee for the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, and the Review Conference itself, scheduled to take place next year.

We also believe that the early conclusion of an arms trade treaty is a critical component in efforts to prevent and drastically halt the proliferation of the uncontrolled trade in conventional weapons. Ethiopia underlines the need for a balanced, non-discriminatory, universal, effective and equitable arms trade treaty. Likewise, we support the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, as such mines are a source of great concern in the area of conventional weapons.

Ethiopia remains concerned that, although nuclear weapons represent the greatest threat to the survival of humankind, the proliferation and unregulated spread of conventional weapons is no less a menace to both regional and international peace and security. We therefore strongly believe that the regulation and control of conventional weapons should

not be viewed in isolation from efforts to ensure global peace and international security. That reality requires us to address and pursue the issue of nuclear disarmament and conventional arms control simultaneously.

In conclusion, we call upon all concerned States to demonstrate in a concrete fashion the necessary political goodwill by fulfilling their commitments to working out an end to the nuclear-weapons arms race and a significant reduction in other weapons of mass destruction and dangerous conventional arms in order to achieve the desired goal of complete disarmament. Ethiopia, for its part, remains committed to continuing to participate fully and constructively in all issues of disarmament in order to realize a better, more secure and peaceful world.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): Allow me to express my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We assure you and other members of the Bureau of our full support in your efforts to guide the deliberations of the Committee. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Miloš Koterec of Slovakia for his skilful and effective stewardship of the First Committee during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We also thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, for his statement at the commencement of this general debate.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

Botswana recognizes the important role played by the Committee in the multilateral disarmament architecture. My delegation recognizes the nexus between security, disarmament and development on the basis that it is only the promotion of peace and security that ensures a firm footing for development activities at the national and international levels.

We reiterate the view that the ability of States to maintain safety and stability is a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable economic and social development. By extension, we also recognize the relationship between disarmament and development, and wish to echo the view of the High Representative that while billions of dollars are spent annually on

arms, funds for economic and social development remain inadequate.

Botswana is fully committed to the disarmament agenda of the United Nations. We subscribe to the view that disputes and conflicts should be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. To that end, Botswana supports the view that disarmament will result in reduced political tensions and the mitigation of conflicts.

Botswana recognizes the need for the international community to step up efforts to address the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which pose the gravest danger to peace and security in Africa. Botswana supports efforts towards the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Tracing Instrument. In that regard, Botswana's priorities include border control, marking and record-keeping in the fight against small arms proliferation and the need for international assistance and cooperation in those areas.

As reflected in the outcome document of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June 2010, my delegation concurs that cooperation and assistance measures remain critical to and primary in determining the success or failure of national efforts in implementing all aspects of the Programme of Action. In that respect, it would be useful for us to consider how the limited resources from various donors can be effectively utilized to attain concrete results.

My delegation recalls with pleasure and satisfaction the convening of the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action — the first of its kind — held in New York in May under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Jim McLay of New Zealand. We recognize the usefulness of the Meeting in bringing together senior law enforcement experts to exchange views on the implementation challenges and opportunities offered by the Programme of Action, and hope that similar meetings will be organized in the future.

My delegation remains fully committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as to measures mandated by regional and international legal instruments, including the Bamako Declaration

on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials adopted by the Southern African Development Community.

Botswana is of the view that one way of ensuring the efficient utilization of available resources is to place emphasis on regional approaches. It is important for States in different regions to harmonize their efforts in addressing critical issues such as border control, stockpile management, marking, tracing, specialized training, information-sharing and the development of legislation.

Botswana supports measures to enhance international assistance and cooperation in that area, in particular the encouragement of donors to provide technical and financial assistance to facilitate technology transfer, and assistance in the implementation of regional agreements to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Botswana also supports the development and enhancement of follow-up mechanisms to ensure effective coordination and instil a greater sense of urgency in addressing the problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Botswana is preparing to effectively participate in the 2012 Review Conference on the Programme of Action, whose success is of vital importance to my delegation. We fully support the designation of Her Excellency Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria as Chair of the Review Conference, and wish to express Botswana's confidence in her leadership of the review process.

Botswana places a high premium on the conclusion of an arms trade treaty in 2012 as an effective and balanced legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. We are pleased with the excellent manner in which Ambassador Roberto García Moritán has been steering the preparatory process towards the arms trade treaty.

Turning to other equally important items on the international disarmament agenda, Botswana takes note of the positive global political climate in the area of disarmament, in particular the spirit of cooperation among the nuclear Powers, as exemplified by the New START agreement, the deliberations and outcomes of

successive nuclear security summits and the consensus outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Botswana continues to abide by the requirements of international treaties and conventions relating to weapons of mass destruction and other types of weapons to which it is a party. Those include the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

However, we join other Member States in expressing concern at the continued deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to agreement on a programme of work containing all relevant agenda items, as well as the expeditious implementation of that programme. Botswana supports the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament, including proposals for improving the working methods of the Conference.

While Botswana supports the overall agenda of nuclear disarmament, we view the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as important catalysts for nuclear non-proliferation, and reiterate Botswana's commitment to implementing the tenets of the Pelindaba Treaty. To that end, we urge the Member States concerned to take the necessary steps towards signing the Protocols to the Pelindaba Treaty to ensure its full practical implementation.

In conclusion, my delegation is confident that, under your leadership, Sir, the Committee will conduct its work fully at this session in an efficient and productive manner based on the spirit of cooperation and compromise necessary to achieve consensus on as many resolutions as possible.

Mr. Lomaia (Georgia): As this is my first statement at this session, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First 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 affirm my delegation's full cooperation with you during the work of the First Committee.

Before starting to speak on disarmament issues, I should like to congratulate Australia, France, New Zealand and Wales on their brilliant victories in the quarter-finals of the Rugby World Cup 2011 and to wish them success in the remaining matches. I would also like to acknowledge the teams of Argentina, England, Ireland and South Africa for their extraordinary performance at that tournament, in a true spirit of fraternity, which is so distinctive in that beautiful game.

We share the position that nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential risk to humanity, and the regime set up to deal with those weapons remains incomplete. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) still lacks some significant elements to provide a comprehensive response to all challenges, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and negotiations on fissile materials and on negative security assurances.

Although we welcome the outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT as an important development, we realize that we still have significant work to do in order to allow the outcome of the 2010 Conference to materialize in concrete results. We believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a vital instrument that contributes to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, should enter into force in the nearest future. Renewed political commitments to pursue its ratification 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.

We are deeply concerned that the international community continues to be unable to start disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, as we witness yet another year of stalemate in this forum. Further prolongation of the already long-standing impasse is absolutely unacceptable, as time plays against us in this particular case. We are afraid that should this situation continue to remain unresolved, as it is now, for another year or two, the international community's confidence in the Conference on Disarmament would start to dwindle fast, thus deteriorating the whole process to a state beyond the possibility of bringing it back to life. Along with many other delegations, we also believe that this session of

the First Committee should take up serious consideration of how the work of the Conference on Disarmament should be pursued.

As many speakers before me have emphasized, the illicit manufacture, accumulation, transfer and flow of small arms and light weapons remains one of 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. It strongly supports the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We look forward to actively contributing to the 2012 Review Conference.

We have had a chance to express our full support for the international arms trade treaty initiative. Indeed, that mechanism must be considered an effective instrument in the non-proliferation of conventional arms. In that regard, we fully support the position expressed by many delegations that the measures to prevent trafficking in conventional weapons can be effective if they are coupled with rigorous transfer controls on the legal arms trade. Criteria such as international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights, as well as the risk of abuse and diversion, must be taken into account.

That is why Georgia is fully committed to the negotiation of the arms trade treaty. We consider the draft papers of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, to be a very useful starting point for negotiations.

Besides all those known and well-understood problems, new threats, such as cyberattacks, have emerged and are evolving rapidly. We doubt that we have sufficient understanding of their potential effects on our increasingly interdependent world. Thus, we lack the instruments to adequately respond to those challenges. We believe that it is the responsibility of the United Nations, and above all the First Committee, to contribute to scrutinizing the problem and raising awareness and understanding of that challenge in the international community. It provides an essential platform for drawing up mechanisms and instruments aimed at defusing that threat.

Preventing the risk of nuclear terrorism, the need for compliance with obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009), and improving security for highly radioactive sources is one of the main priorities of my country. Georgia joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. It 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 were several attempts of nuclear smuggling via the occupied Georgian territories of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia further amplify the sense of danger and anxiety. All attempts have been prevented by Georgian law enforcement authorities. Yet, in the absence of international presence, those occupied territories have become completely opaque, making it impossible to conduct verification activities there. Thus, the risk of nuclear smuggling through those territories has significantly increased.

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

The example of my country once again proves that, despite numerous initiatives, the world continues to face serious proliferation concerns. Georgia, along with other States, is also deeply troubled that some countries continue to stand in the way of any real progress on international non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament efforts. The only effective measure to counter that trend would be the strong and unequivocal response of the international community to eradicate such practices.

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

As participants are aware, the accumulation of a vast amount of armaments continues in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. Foreign military build-up has magnified exponentially in the aftermath of the 2008 invasion in

direct contravention of the six-point ceasefire agreement, mediated by France on behalf of the European Union, for the withdrawal of military forces to the positions held prior to the invasion.

Our neighbours from the North continue their illegal military build-up in the occupied territories. Instead of being closed down, the illegal military bases are being reinforced by additional personnel and equipment. Here are some of most appalling examples.

A battalion of heavy 300-millimetre multiple-launch rocket systems, or so-called Smerch units, was deployed to a military base close to the occupied city of Tskhinvali in December 2010. That weapon is considered to be among the most devastating conventional weapons, resembling the destructive ability of tactical nuclear weapons. In January, the very base was further reinforced with the tactical operational missile launch system Scarab B, also known as Tochka-U, which can be equipped with conventional or nuclear warheads. The operational range of the latter is 120 kilometres. As the base is located within 40 kilometres of the national capital, Tbilisi, those instalments have the potential to reach territories well beyond the occupation line and even the borders of the country.

Secondly, a multiple-launch rocket artillery battalion of Grad weapons, as well as S-300-type surface-to-air missile battalions, have been deployed in the occupied region of Abkhazia.

Thirdly, plans have been revealed on an additional deployment of offensive missile launch systems of the Iskander type and Mi-28 attack helicopters in the occupied regions of Georgia, clearly indicating the tendency towards increased militarization. Overall, more than 11,000 occupation troops are located in those two small regions, while six military bases, including one naval base, are being built.

In addition, as long as international control mechanisms are totally absent in those territories, there is no guarantee whatsoever that those arms — including the most dangerous, such as man-portable air defence systems — will not be transferred to various terrorists and criminal groups. That would pose a serious threat not only to one particular region but to the whole international community.

In conclusion, we are convinced that, in these circumstances, it is now an appropriate time for the international community to stand up for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Georgia considers the First Committee to be a fundamental body that can be seized not only with the elaboration of 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.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau.

Peace must be built through law, and law can be realized only if reason prevails on every individual issue. Reasoned dialogue is based on the recognition that in order to build lasting peace, the force of law must always prevail over the law of force. On that matter, the Holy See's message has always been loud and clear. Indeed, the Holy See is convinced of the need to build the foundations of peace by recognizing the value of dialogue and by strengthening friendly relations.

Peace is also the fruit of justice, solidarity and development. There is an intimate connection between development and disarmament. Within the framework of a society built on law, disarmament generates development, and integral human development has profound and beneficial repercussions on the building of peace and the resolution of security issues. From that perspective, the Holy See firmly maintains its critique of the arms race and intends to develop its analysis in the sphere of international relations, pursuant to the criterion that law ought to always prevail over violence.

Unfortunately, world military spending continues to increase every year. This state of affairs of increasing military spending clearly contradicts the Millennium Development Goals and, as we have repeated on many occasions, is in marked contrast to Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, which commits States to maintain "international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

The international community is therefore faced with the urgent need to put the brakes on this lamentable arms race and to promote a significant cut in military spending. True, such a cut can be achieved only in a climate of reduced fear and restored confidence. A cut in military spending could give greater credibility to the prohibition of the use of force in international relations, making it possible to guarantee greater respect for international law and to root peace in justice, both in international relations and within each nation. Moreover, such a cut would make it possible to guarantee security in better conditions and to allocate for peaceful purposes the enormous sums of money saved.

It is therefore both necessary and urgent that the international community focus its attention on those questions and that, in consequence, it act in accordance with the important and laudable objectives it has set for itself.

These reflections assume even greater importance if one notes that, in 2010 and 2011, little progress seems to have been achieved in the area of disarmament, arms control and reduction or redirection of military spending in favour of the peaceful development of peoples. Emblematic of that worrying situation is the fact that, for too many years, the Conference on Disarmament seems to have been undergoing a crisis that has hindered its activity and effectiveness.

The situation, however, is not altogether without a few glimmers of hope. One positive factor, recorded also in 2010, was a real strategic reduction in nuclear arms. Yet, in order to be fully effective, that step needs to be supported by a clear and positive political perspective. Recent disasters, especially the dramatic episode in Fukushima, Japan, oblige us to conduct a serious and wide-ranging reflection on the use of nuclear energy in both the civilian and military spheres. In that regard, work needs to recommence on the fissile material cut-off treaty, while the non-entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty needs to be remedied. The obligation to refrain from conducting tests, as well as nuclear disarmament itself, are the necessary conditions for persuading States that do not yet have nuclear weapons to respect the rules of non-proliferation.

There are also some positive aspects in the area of conventional weapons. I refer in particular to the

Convention on Cluster Munitions, firmly supported by the Holy See, as well as the idea, included in the same Convention, of the primary importance of assistance to victims. In that context, recognition should be given to the valuable work carried out alongside States by some non-governmental organizations. Such cooperation should be valued even more and may be regarded as an encouraging sign of the vitality of civil society's commitment to the values of justice and peace.

There is one further observation that my delegation wishes to make in connection with the arms trade treaty process, for which 2012 will be an important year, as the Conference scheduled to take place at that time should lead to the drafting of a text. In that context, small arms and light weapons should not be regarded as if they were any other kind of merchandise that is offered for sale in global, regional or national markets. Their production, trade and possession have ethical and social implications. They need to be regulated in accordance with specific principles of a moral and legal nature. Every effort is required to prevent the proliferation of all types of weapons that encourage local wars and urban violence and kill too many people in the world every day; hence the urgency for the adoption of a legal instrument, which the Holy See fully supports, with legally binding measures on trade control for conventional weapons and munitions at the global, regional and national levels.

The Holy See has often recognized the great importance of the current arms trade treaty process, as it addresses in particular the grave human cost resulting from the illicit trade in arms. Non-regulated and non-transparent arms trading and the absence of effective monitoring systems for arms trading at the international level have severe humanitarian consequences, slow down integral human development, undermine the rule of law, increase conflicts and instability around the globe, endanger peacebuilding processes in various countries, and spawn a culture of violence and impunity.

In that context, one should always bear in mind the grave repercussions of the illicit arms trade on peace, development, human rights and the humanitarian situation, especially its serious impact on women and children. Those issues can be effectively solved only through the common sharing of responsibilities by all members of the international community.

The outcome of the current arms trade treaty process will test the political will of States to assume their moral and legal responsibility to strengthen further the international regime on the existing unregulated arms trade. Focusing on the enormous number of those affected by and those suffering from the scourge of the illicit spread of arms and munitions should challenge the international community to achieve an effective and enforceable arms trade treaty. The principal objective of the treaty should not be merely regulating the trade in conventional weapons or curbing the related black market, but also and especially protecting human life and building a world more respectful of human dignity.

To conclude, the Holy See is convinced that an arms trade treaty can make an important contribution to the promotion of a truly global culture of peace through the responsible cooperation of States, in partnership with the arms industry and in solidarity with civil society. In that perspective, the current efforts to adopt an arms trade treaty could indeed become an auspicious sign of the much-needed political will of nations and Governments to ensure greater peace, justice, stability and prosperity in the world.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Füllemann (International Committee of the Red Cross): Since the late 1990s, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), whose mission is to protect and assist victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence, has highlighted the high human cost of the unregulated availability of weapons. We strongly support the adoption of a comprehensive and effective arms trade treaty next year. A very large proportion of the death, injury and pure cruelty inflicted upon civilians each year occurs simply because weapons are too easily available, including to those who will use them to violate international humanitarian law. An effective arms trade treaty would not only protect individual lives and livelihoods, but would also reduce the social and economic disruption that accompanies armed insecurity in large parts of the world and have important health benefits for entire populations.

In August, the ICRC launched a four-year initiative on the theme of "Health care in danger". This

initiative is based directly on the ICRC's field experience and a 16-country study of attacks on health-care entities in contexts in which we work. The study recorded 655 incidents over two and a half years, involving attacks on health workers, health facilities and medical transports. In those incidents, 1,834 people were killed or injured while giving or receiving health care.

The effect of those attacks and of armed violence in other contexts covered in the study was the denial of health care to thousands upon thousands of people in places where human health and health-care systems are already precarious. The broader implications of armed insecurity for the health of civilian populations, which the study highlights, include the denial of 150,000 medical consultations per year in one of the poorest countries on Earth, the denial of polio vaccines to several hundreds of thousands of children in another context, and tens of thousands of deaths per month in yet another. Those health-related impacts are just a small window into the horrendous human cost of easy access to weapons that a future arms trade treaty must contribute to preventing.

We urge all States represented here today to commit themselves to working intensely over the coming year to help ensure that next July's United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty is successful. In our view, a comprehensive and effective treaty will require careful scrutiny of all transfers of all conventional arms and their ammunition so as to prevent weapons from falling too easily into the hands of those who can be expected to use them to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law.

We commend the elements set out in the Chair's draft paper. It provides a solid basis for moving towards the type of treaty that is so desperately needed by individuals, families and communities in vast areas of the world where weapons are sometimes easier to obtain than food, health care or medicines.

Since last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, there has been little reported progress in the fulfilment of the Review Conference's many urgent commitments to reducing the role of nuclear weapons, further reducing their numbers and preventing their use. It is of crucial importance that the commitments undertaken at the Review Conference be fulfilled as a humanitarian, moral and political

imperative. It is also important to build on the recognition in the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and of the relevance of international humanitarian law in this regard. Far more needs to be done to inform policymakers, the media and the public of the catastrophic human costs of these weapons, of the imperative that they never again be used, and of the urgent need for a legally binding international instrument that will prohibit their use and lead to their elimination.

The ICRC, for its part, has worked throughout the past year to increase understanding of these realities within the worldwide International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. We will support increased work on this issue by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in the future.

One of the landmark advances in international humanitarian law in recent years was the adoption in 2008 and entry into force in 2010 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. After decades in which the inaccuracy and unreliability of these area weapons plagued the communities and countries in which they were used, the international community has realized that the human cost of such weapons is simply unacceptable. The recent Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in Beirut was an impressive demonstration of the effectiveness of the Convention in stimulating progress in clearance and stockpile destruction, attracting new States parties, and mobilizing resources to assist the victims of those weapons and their communities.

The ICRC appreciates the fact that a number of States that are not yet able to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions now recognize the humanitarian impacts of those weapons and are ready to take some steps to reduce those impacts. These States should take whatever actions they deem feasible at the national level. However, in the field of international humanitarian law we would consider it regrettable if new norms were adopted that would contradict rather than complement the Convention on Cluster Munitions and would allow the development and use of specific types of cluster munitions that are likely to perpetuate the humanitarian problem. It would be the first time that States would have adopted weaker protections for civilians in an international humanitarian law treaty than those contained in a treaty already in force.

We urge all States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and especially those also party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to carefully consider their responsibilities in this field as they prepare for the November Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the CCW.

In January, the General Assembly in resolution 65/41 endorsed the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/65/201). Among the Group's findings was that there is "increased reporting that States are developing information and communications technologies as instruments of warfare and intelligence" (A/65/201, p. 2).

In this respect, the ICRC draws the attention of States to the potential humanitarian consequence of cyberwarfare, that is, the resort to computer network attacks during armed conflict situations. Such consequences may include disastrous scenarios such as air traffic control systems being interfered with and causing airplanes to collide or crash, disruption of electricity or water supplies for civilian populations, or damage to chemical or nuclear facilities. The ICRC therefore recalls the obligation of all parties to conflicts to respect the rules of international humanitarian law if they resort to means and methods of cyberwarfare, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

Ms. Ubeda (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to lead the work of the First Committee. My delegation wishes you success in your tasks and their results.

We would also like to thank you for the opportunity to address the First Committee as the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). On this occasion, I wish to transmit the message that the 33 States of the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to send to the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly

in the form of a declaration, copies of which are available in this room.

The declaration was issued recently, in late September, a time when two relevant factors for the region came together. First, in February 2012, we will celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created our zone; secondly, on the same date, the Agency will renew its commitment to building a world free of nuclear weapons through an international seminar entitled “The experience of the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Latin America and the Caribbean and prospects for 2015 and beyond”.

We are convinced that the renewal of our commitment gives added meaning to the celebration of the forty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty, and that this commitment should be expressed in concrete actions that are linked above all to the improvement of our own nuclear-weapon-free zone, in which member States, as well as States that are linked through the Additional Protocols, have played an important role. I am referring to the permanent members of the Security Council, and to the Netherlands in the case of the First Protocol.

Secondly, our renewed commitment is also seen in concrete actions of cooperation and coordination with other nuclear-weapon-free zones and the support for the process of creating new zones, and of course, with concrete actions that contribute to the global processes towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Almost 50 years ago, in 1963, five Latin American States gathered at the initiative of Mexico to begin the work that gave rise to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. They met in a complex political moment for the region, when there was a risk of a nuclear confrontation between the Cold War Powers. In that context and at that time, the creation of our nuclear-weapon-free zone, the first in a highly populated territory, was without doubt a real and strong contribution to the peace and security of the region and the world. This contribution has been recognized in several General Assembly resolutions from 1967 to 2010.

Today, 45 years after the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the world has five nuclear-weapon-free zones — created by the Treaties of Rarotonga, Pelindaba, Bangkok and Central Asia — with 114 States participants, while Mongolia has unilaterally

declared itself a nuclear-weapon-free State. For this reason, one purpose of OPANAL is to move forward in consolidating the cooperation and coordination agenda among these zones. We also wish to collaborate in the creation of new zones free of nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction, which is another reason to participate in the forum convened by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna next month. At that meeting, representatives from the zones will share experiences that could be of interest for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

To implement this agenda with States members of other nuclear-weapon-free zones, we propose the creation of a joint coordination mechanism among representatives of the different regions, which could be an excellent goal for the Ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to be held in 2015. We will be able to undertake that task only if we promote mutual knowledge among the zones, seeking realistic and effective forms of working together.

At the global level, States members of the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Latin America and the Caribbean reiterate their call for nuclear-weapon States to give unequivocal, legally binding guarantees not to use or threaten to use such weapons, which is in the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States. We therefore urge the Conference on Disarmament to work towards the negotiation of a legally binding universal instrument in the area of negative security assurances.

In our declaration, the 33 States of our nuclear-weapon-free zone also express their conviction of the importance of initiating negotiations for a universal legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons. At the same time, we call upon States that have not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — especially the annex 2 countries — to do so.

For its part, OPANAL also commits to continuing to implement nuclear disarmament educational programmes, as we are convinced that this is an effective way to contribute to the consolidation of international peace and security.

Finally, the States of Latin America and the Caribbean are convinced that only through concrete initiatives and sustained actions will we be able to move towards a global, total, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Only through cooperation among

nuclear-weapon-free zones, States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations will be able to make progress towards our final goal: a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the list of speakers.

I shall now call on those representatives who have asked to speak in exercise the right of reply.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on my two colleagues, the representatives of Portugal and Spain, to review our national statement made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic (see A/C.1/66/PV.8). Similarly, I would ask that they reread the contents of the statements we made in right of reply to statements made by some delegations in this Hall.

Those statements provide my two colleagues from Portugal and Spain with a conclusive answer to their statements.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation took the floor during the general debate and presented our position on the issues at hand. Unfortunately, we are once again taking the floor to respond to certain statements made a short while ago by the representative of Georgia.

The Georgian representative began with soccer, but I really didn't hear any congratulations to the Russian team, which won 6-0 today and took first place in group F. So, I would like to express my condolences to the Georgian team, which lost 1-2 to Greece and took fifth place in its group. As I understand, they did not make it into the European soccer championship rounds. As it is in soccer, so it is in life: Someone wins, someone loses.

Perhaps the situation that my colleague from Georgia was referring to today was the one that arose after the Georgian leadership in the person of President Saakashvili embarked on a risky venture in August 2008 and waged war against its own people, as a result of which Abkhazia and South Ossetia declared their independence from Georgia. So, to say that there is today a military presence or that there are some sort of military groups on Georgian territory is not legally correct. There is not a single member of the Russian military on Georgian territory. There are Russian military contingents in the region, but they are in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, States recognized by

Russia as sovereign. Moreover, the Russian military sub-units, which are border units, are present in those States on the basis of inter-State agreements between the Russian Federation and those independent countries.

I imagine that the same legal rules apply to other foreign military forces that are in a great variety of areas of the world. I will not go into detail here with respect to the size of weapons stockpiles and the balances and imbalances in the region. I would simply note that the Russian Federation, for its part, has often appealed for a review of the legal regimes in force today, in particular the current Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

With respect to Georgia, it is very strange to say that Georgian troops are independent from Georgia and that they should be viewed as part of the Trans-Caucasus military region of the Soviet Union. I think that my Georgian colleagues will support me in saying that would be an inappropriate situation given today's realities.

As I began with soccer, I will unfortunately conclude with soccer. The drawings for the world championship in 2014 took place in Brazil on Saturday, and the Russian and Georgian teams ended up in the same group. Unfortunately and not because our team requested it, the organizers will have to separate the Russian and Georgian teams in the competition, given the current political situation. I will therefore not be able, unfortunately, to watch that match. When I was young, I was a fan of the Tiflis Dinamo team.

Mr. Lomaia (Georgia): I think the work of this important Committee, as well as that of other important committees of the United Nations, is all about being precise and legal in terms of international law. Let me quote the most venerable and authoritative source that had something to say about the legality of the decision of the Russian Federation in recognizing two occupied territories of Georgia.

“According to the overwhelmingly accepted *uti possidetis* principle, only former constituent republics such as Georgia, but not territorial sub-units, are granted independence in case of dismemberment of a larger entity such as the former Soviet Union”.

By the way, based apparently on that consideration, Russia voted for the accession of

Georgia within its internationally recognized borders, to the United Nations back in 1991. I continue.

“Hence, South Ossetia did not have a right to secede from Georgia, and the same holds true for Abkhazia for much of the same reasons. Recognition of breakaway entities such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia by a third country is consequently contrary to international law in terms of an unlawful interference in the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the affected country, which is Georgia”.

I have just quoted from the fundamental findings handed down by the independent international fact-finding mission on the conflict in Georgia, so I do not believe that I need to add anything.

In terms of precision, I would kindly ask my Russian colleagues to pay more attention to the speeches of others. I did not refer to soccer in my short statement. I was referring to the Rugby World Cup, in which the Russians were able to play for the very first time in their history. As veterans of that World Cup, we offer our sincere congratulations. We hope that next time they will do better at the Rugby World Cup and other sports events. It is all about being precise and legally objective.

The Chair: The Committee will now hear a statement by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, on the topic of “Follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past session and the presentation of reports”.

Mr. Duarte (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I welcome this opportunity to address the First Committee on the subject of the implementation of resolutions. This is the eighth consecutive year that the Secretariat has been asked to address that issue.

The members of this Committee devote much time and effort to the consideration and adoption of resolutions and given that such activities form the Committee’s primary function in the United Nations disarmament machinery, Member States are understandably interested in receiving some feedback on how those resolutions are being implemented. Of the 50 or so resolutions adopted annually by the Committee, typically more than half request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on their implementation.

Before I proceed with this year’s summary, I wish to underscore the potential usefulness of the reports as an indicator of the priority that Member States assign to the achievement of the goals associated with their resolutions. Some of the views provided by Member States help in identifying difficulties in implementation, while others point to possible solutions and alternative ways of overcoming such challenges.

I would also like to note that efforts have been under way since the adoption of resolution 59/95 in 2004 to improve the effectiveness of the work of this Committee, including efforts to reduce the number of resolutions and their required reports by consolidating resolutions or adopting them on a multi-year basis. The results of those efforts have, however, been mixed. Last year, for example, the Committee adopted 55 resolutions, which was six more than in 2009. Yet the 26 reports requested from the Secretary-General were fewer than there had been in several years, a change that reflects those consolidation-oriented reforms. It is, nevertheless, clear that Member States continue to view such reports as useful in producing some feedback on the implementation of the resolutions. I wish to emphasize that most of the reports submitted by the Secretary-General consist of compilations of views of Member States, rather than substantive text drafted by the Secretariat, which, by the way, the Secretariat was not asked to prepare.

In offering my summary today, I am pleased to circulate to the Committee four tables that provide a wealth of detail about the reports. For our purposes today, I will only offer a few general observations about what the reports are saying.

Table I provides a comparison of the response rates in the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions of the General Assembly to 13 annual resolutions requesting reports containing the views of Member States. For seven of the resolutions, there was an increase in Member State responses. There was, however, a decline in responses to three resolutions, specifically those dealing with measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and the two resolutions dealing with the primary transparency tools of the United Nations — the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. There was no change in the number of views received in response to the resolution on disarmament and development, and

there was a new resolution on the arms trade treaty for which no comparison is possible, at this stage at least.

In general, the response rate to the requests for views of Member States has remained low with respect to all the resolutions — in seven of these reports, only 10 or fewer Member States responded to the requests of the Secretary-General, a response rate of less than 5 per cent. In many cases, entire regions did not respond to his requests for views.

Table II takes a closer look at 11 reports containing the views of Member States submitted during the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions. It identifies the Member States that submitted views, records whether the submitted reports met the requisite deadline, identifies the participation of the main sponsors and summarizes the regional distribution of the responses. Country breakdowns for the two United Nations transparency instruments — the Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument — are available in the reports on those issues. They are omitted in table II owing to space constraints.

That table also shows some notable increases in the submission of views with regard to five resolutions spanning a wide range of subjects on the disarmament agenda. They concerned the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East; the follow-up to the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional contexts; conventional arms control; and the observance of environmental norms in disarmament and arms control. In addition, table II shows that Member States have generally been meeting their deadlines for submitting their views and that at least some of the main sponsors of all the resolutions provided their views.

Turning now to tables III and IV, I will be very brief. We have decided this year to split table III into two separate tables, because doing so makes a clearer distinction between the various sources of the reports.

Table III lists the reports submitted by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs pertaining largely to the activities of various institutions of the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

Table IV lists some additional reports submitted by other sources, namely, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It also includes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures.

I would like to note here that the Department has continued to do all it can to encourage a higher response rate to the requests from the Secretary-General for such views. For example, we deliver notes verbales at the beginning of each year seeking the views of Member States, and we post reminders of such requests and their deadlines in the *Journal of the United Nations*. If requested by Member States, we can also post their submissions on the Department website.

In addition, we remain actively engaged in many other activities to promote implementation of those resolutions, including through using our close working relationships with relevant intergovernmental and regional organizations, as well as with individual Governments. We continue to organize seminars and workshops to assist Member States in implementing the resolutions, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Our goal in all of that work remains the same — to be useful to Member States in advancing a robust multilateral disarmament agenda, and my summary today of the reports is provided very much with that same goal in mind.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.