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First Committee

6th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen (Finland)

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

Programme of work

The Chair: Before we resume the general debate, allow me to draw attention to the Chair's informal proposal on the format of the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Committee's work. The proposal being circulated in the Conference Room today is a more detailed version of the previous one outlined in my communication dated 29 September. As members will recall, we briefly touched on this issue during our organizational meeting on 30 September (see A/C.1/66/PV.2).

In their comments on the matter, delegations suggested that the Committee discuss it at a later date, preferably at an informal meeting. I propose to have such a discussion on Tuesday, 11 October, at the beginning of our meeting scheduled for that afternoon. My proposal is intended to serve as a basis for that planned discussion. I do not intend to have a discussion on it today. However, I would like to make a few comments on my proposal. It is aimed at facilitating and streamlining NGO participation in our work. With members' cooperation and kind support, I hope to achieve that goal.

I would like to stress that the proposed arrangement would not in any way change the intergovernmental nature of the First Committee; nor would it in any way alter the role of NGOs from what it has been thus far. The aim is simply to facilitate and streamline the work of the Committee by allowing the

relevant NGOs to speak informally after each thematic section. We will thereby get more focused and useful statements from them. I hope that delegations will use the five days before Tuesday to consult with their respective capitals and among themselves on this issue, so that we can deliberate effectively on the matter on Tuesday.

Agenda items 87 to 106 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Mammadaliyev (Azerbaijan): Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the Committee.

Azerbaijan fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

As a country suffering from the scourge of war and situated in proximity to conflicts affecting other countries in the region, Azerbaijan is determined to establish lasting peace and stability in the region of the South Caucasus and beyond, on the basis of the generally accepted standards and principles of international law and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as appropriate documents and decisions adopted by other international organizations. Azerbaijan is fully committed to working in a sustained way to maintain international

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peace, security and stability, including by contributing to peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

We consider the issues pertaining to small arms and light weapons (SALWs) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition very important. Azerbaijan has been actively engaged in addressing the small arms proliferation problem at the international level, including through efforts aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in combating illicit trafficking of any kind. In that regard, States' fulfilment in good faith of the obligations they assume acquires particular importance. Azerbaijan fully supports the 2000 Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and considers it a major achievement.

We believe that more efforts are needed to increase transparency in SALW sales and effectively address the challenges caused by their illegal circulation. It is particularly important to ensure that small arms and light weapons are not transferred to separatist and terrorist groups, and that unreported procurements are revealed and prosecuted. Vital measures designed to achieve such results, among them enhanced information exchange and the development of appropriate verification regimes and techniques, could significantly contribute to security and stability in the OSCE area, including the South Caucasus region. Success in counteracting the illegal proliferation and storage of SALWs in the South Caucasus will only be possible with the creation of a stable and secure region, the establishment of respect for international law, the abandonment of territorial claims on neighbouring nations, and an end to support for separatists and terrorists.

Azerbaijan also supports the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and takes appropriate measures at the national, regional and global levels to ensure its proper implementation.

It will surprise no one when we repeat, once again, that the territories of Azerbaijan that have been occupied through armed aggression by its neighbour Armenia have become a black hole in the zone of application of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The international community has tolerated and lived with a situation in which hundreds of pieces of treaty-limited equipment

belonging to one State party have been illegally deployed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, in gross violation of the CFE Treaty provisions. The occupied territories of Azerbaijan have given the occupying Power the opportunity to use those areas as repair facilities, and, moreover, to transfer and hide treaty-limited equipment from the international control regimes.

The off-budget expenses for the needs of the armed forces deployed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan are yet more evidence of militaristic and annexationist aspirations. The uncontrolled treaty-limited equipment problem, which adversely affects the operation of the CFE Treaty, should continue to be addressed in a consistent manner, in order to promote the efficiency and integrity of the Treaty's regime. Otherwise, as we have repeatedly stated in the past, the CFE community will run the risk of exporting old and unsettled problems into the new negotiations.

We believe that those violations are substantive. They affect the foundations of the Treaty relationship between the parties, and call into question the future value and possibility of that relationship in an area governed by the Treaty. In effect, these violations are tantamount to a repudiation of a Treaty commitment.

Azerbaijan fully supports the goals, purposes and principles of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and a comprehensive ban on the use, storage and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Azerbaijan considers that a complete ban and the destruction of anti-personnel landmines is an important humanitarian goal of the world community for the twenty-first century. Azerbaijan is not a party to the Convention; this is due in part to the continuing occupation of our territories and our unfortunate need to use landmines as a measure of preventing a possible resumption of hostilities.

At the same time, Azerbaijan abides by most of the Convention's provisions by not producing or transferring anti-personnel mines. In addition, we have voted in favour of the annual General Assembly resolution on this issue, which, inter alia, calls for universalization of the Ottawa Convention, thereby demonstrating its support for the global attempt so as to make the world free of the menace of mines. Moreover, as a sign of our support for the Ottawa

process, Azerbaijan has since 2008 voluntarily submitted reports, in compliance with article 7 of the Convention.

Mr. Khazae (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me begin, Sir, by offering you and the other members of the Bureau my sincere congratulations on your election. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and wish you every success.

I would also like to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

After almost seven decades of constant calls from all nations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, certain nuclear-weapon States have, regrettably, disregarded those calls, and have stubbornly continued to develop, modernize and accumulate various types of nuclear weapons in their arsenals. Today, the threat posed to international peace and security and the very survival of humankind by the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons and their possible deliberate or accidental use still persists.

It is also regrettable that NATO, through the adoption of its new Strategic Concept in 2010, has maintained its rationale for the use of nuclear weapons, which is a clear setback to nuclear disarmament and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

A country that was the first to use nuclear bombs and possesses the world's largest nuclear-weapons arsenal is still allocating billions of dollars for modernizing and developing new types of nuclear weapons, in flagrant violation of article VI of the NPT. Furthermore, in contradiction of the undertakings of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, that country is also expanding its missile defence shield so as to get the strategic upper hand over other nuclear-weapon States in Europe, neighbouring regions and the Far East. Hosting this missile system will definitely not add to the security of the host country or of the country operating such a system.

The limited bilateral or unilateral decommissioning of some deployed nuclear warheads is far below the expectations of the international community in terms of real and effective steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Such measures can never be a substitute for the explicit legal obligations of nuclear-weapon States for the complete

elimination of all their nuclear weapons. Moreover, the principles of irreversibility, transparency and international verifiability shall be fully applied in the undertaking of all measures related to a reduction in nuclear warheads as well as nuclear disarmament.

My delegation, along with the overwhelming majority of Member States, stresses that nuclear disarmament is of the highest priority and that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the continued calls for the adoption of a legal framework for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeline, including a nuclear-weapons convention with a deadline of 2025, as well as a universal and unconditional legally binding instrument on negative security assurances as an intermediate step.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the best way to guarantee the vertical and horizontal non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is the full and non-selective implementation of the NPT and assuring its universality, in particular in the Middle East, where the clandestine nuclear-weapons programme of the only non-NPT party in the region, which has been assisted mostly by France, seriously threatens regional and international peace and security.

To overcome the threat of nuclear weapons in the region, Iran proposed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in 1974, but efforts to establish such a zone have not yet succeeded owing to the persistent refusal of the Zionist regime to join the NPT and to place its clandestine nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. That regime has since its inception repeatedly attacked and openly threatened to attack other countries in the region. Those reckless actions show the grave threat posed by such an irresponsible regime and prove the extent to which nuclear weapons in the hands of such a regime could endanger regional as well as international peace and security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran underscores the importance of implementing the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East. In this context, Iran is of the firm belief that there should be international pressure on the Zionist regime, particularly at the upcoming 2012 Conference, to force it to immediately accede to the NPT, without conditions, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and place all its unwarranted nuclear facilities

under IAEA safeguards, in order to remove the only impediment in the way of the long-sought-after goal of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The fragile consensus reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference on the adoption of its recommendations illustrated the fact that 40 years of non-compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty by its nuclear-weapon-States parties, including through the development of new types of nuclear weapons, as well as cooperation with non-NPT parties, remains the major challenge of the Treaty.

With regard to the implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations agreed at successive NPT Review Conferences, I would like to inform the Assembly that the Islamic Republic of Iran once again will submit, in the coming days, an updated draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons".

In line with the common position of the Non-Aligned Movement on addressing the issue of missiles within the framework of the United Nations, Iran has already initiated work on the draft resolution on missiles which is regularly adopted by the General Assembly — an initiative that we will continue. Given that 2012 will be a busy year for disarmament, we have opted to introduce only a draft decision on missiles at this session and hope that it will be adopted once again by consensus.

As a contribution towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, the Islamic Republic of Iran convened, for the second time, the International Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in June 2011, with the participation of experts from many countries as well as regional and international organizations. It was a successful disarmament meeting.

Concerning the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, we underline its comprehensive and effective implementation. While stressing the significance of the establishment of its verification mechanism and recognizing the particular importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol and universal adherence to the Convention,

we urge the only State party rejecting the resumption of the negotiations for such a protocol to reconsider its policy towards the Convention in the light of the persistent requests of all the other parties.

As a victim of chemical weapons during the eight-year imposed war waged by Saddam with the support of certain Western countries, Iran underlines that the failure of major possessor States parties to comply with the 2012 final extended deadline of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction for the total destruction of their chemical weapons would constitute a clear and serious case of non-compliance.

In conclusion, I reiterate that, like other States parties to the NPT, my country has an inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. Iran is determined to exercise that right, and, in doing so, it takes its responsibilities seriously. Contrary to the baseless allegations made by a few countries in this room, Iran's nuclear activities are, and have always been, exclusively for peaceful purposes. Despite all external political pressure on the International Atomic Energy Agency, it has repeatedly confirmed the non-diversion and peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always demonstrated its readiness for negotiations without preconditions and reiterates its willingness to engage in serious and constructive negotiations based on justice and mutual respect. It is up to the other parties to change their failed policy of coercion and to demonstrate their goodwill by coming back to the real negotiations and cooperation.

Ms. Mehta (India): Mr. Chair, may I begin by congratulating you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that under your leadership we will accomplish our tasks efficiently and smoothly.

India aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

India has been steadfast in its support for global, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. The Rajiv Gandhi action plan for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order was submitted to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted

to disarmament, in 1988 (see A/S-15/PV.14). As India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said in his recent address to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session (see A/66/PV.22), that action plan sets out a concrete road map for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner.

The goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons, to build trust and confidence, and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. The progressive delegitimization of nuclear weapons is essential to the goal of their complete elimination. India's working paper on nuclear disarmament of 2006 contains specific proposals for the consideration of the international community.

Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that meets India's national security interests. India is a nuclear-weapon State and a responsible member of the world community and would approach such negotiations as such.

While we share the disappointment among Member States at the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, we believe that it is not the result of the Conference itself or its rules of procedure. The Conference has the mandate, the membership and the rules of procedure to discharge its responsibilities. We believe that the First Committee should send a strong and clear signal of support to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and provide political impetus to the multilateral agenda, which includes early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the agreed mandate. As an essential stakeholder in the process, India is prepared to work with other like-minded countries towards that end.

India subscribes to a policy of a credible minimum nuclear deterrent. We do not subscribe to any arms race, including a nuclear arms race. India has espoused a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and of non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States and is prepared to convert those policies into multilateral legal arrangements. We support negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. We also support a global no-first-use treaty. India remains committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

There is a strong development rationale for the expansion of nuclear energy, which is also indispensable for energy security and for addressing climate change concerns. The expansion of nuclear energy can and must be ensured in a manner that does not enhance proliferation risks and is based on enhanced nuclear safety or security standards evolved under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency. India has participated in the nuclear security summit process and related activities.

This is an important year for the Biological Weapons Convention, one of only two treaties banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We view the upcoming seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention as a valuable opportunity for States parties to review and strengthen the Convention and improve its effective implementation, particularly in view of the new challenges facing the international community in the twenty-first century, including addressing the threat posed by bioterrorism.

India is an original signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention and has discharged faithfully all its obligations. As a responsible State party, we have demonstrated our commitment by destroying all our chemical weapon stockpiles under the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons verification within the time frame prescribed by the Convention. It is important to ensure the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention by all States parties to it. India believes that it is important to maintain the credibility and integrity of the Convention as a whole.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space, including the safety of assets in space, continues to be

a priority, in the light of the expanding uses of outer space and the spread and evolution of space technologies. India supports efforts to strengthen the international legal framework on the security of space assets, to enhance space security for all space users and specifically to prevent the weaponization of outer space. While universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can be useful complementary measures, they cannot substitute for legally binding instruments in this field.

While we have participated actively in the preparatory meetings with regard to the proposed United Nations conference on the arms trade treaty in 2012, we believe that prospects for a viable and effective treaty of universal acceptance will be enhanced only if the interests of all the stakeholders are addressed in a consensus-based process and outcome, without artificial deadlines.

As a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CCW) and all its protocols, India looks forward to a successful fourth Review Conference of the Convention next month. The CCW has proved to be a dynamic instrument in the field of international humanitarian law. India has participated actively in negotiations in the Group of Governmental Experts on a protocol that seeks to address the humanitarian impact arising from the use of cluster munitions, while striking a balance between humanitarian and legitimate security concerns.

As in previous years, India will be presenting three draft resolutions for action by the First Committee. They will include a draft resolution on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and a draft resolution on reducing nuclear danger. We will also be presenting a draft resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

The First Committee has a vital responsibility to help the international community forge renewed consensus on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Our work is also important in building public awareness and support for the international disarmament agenda, especially the cherished goal of a world without nuclear weapons. I assure you, Sir, of the full cooperation of the Indian delegation in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of

the Bureau on your election. We hope that your guidance and expertise will allow us to substantively and efficiently contribute to revitalizing the so-called disarmament machinery.

The delegation of Colombia fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My country, reiterating the importance of multilateralism for the discussions and negotiations of disarmament and international security issues, gives high priority to the efficient functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery, made up primarily of the Disarmament Commission, the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, the only negotiation forum for these important issues.

One of the basic guidelines of Colombia's foreign policy — one that is even enshrined in our national Constitution — is our commitment to the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. My country is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear State; as well as to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first ever nuclear-weapon-free zone in a highly populated area. We have also signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we have participated in and contributed to the establishment and strengthening of that regime. Colombia is also a party to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, which Colombia presided over between 30 May and 24 June, my country expresses once again its frustration with the stalemate there, which has been ongoing now for 13 years, and we reiterate that this is an unsustainable situation that warrants immediate correction.

During our presidency, Colombia sought views from various sources on the status of the Conference on Disarmament and on possible courses of action for its reactivation.

In our national capacity, we drafted document CD/1913, which sets out the various views of countries on the problems facing the Conference on Disarmament and possible solutions. We again call on the members of the Conference on Disarmament to combine their creativity and political will so as to reach an agreement on implementing a programme of

work that meets the security aspirations and needs of the international community.

My delegation stresses the need to universalize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regimes, and to ensure compliance with each of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In the spirit of supporting initiatives on non-proliferation, my country calls for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a contribution to global peace and security.

We are committed to the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, in the understanding that this phenomenon has a serious impact on the security and stability of our countries and fuels other types of criminal behaviour. We therefore actively participate in legally binding international instruments on the subject. At the subregional level, we abide by decision 552 of the Andean Community and, at the regional level, by the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

Colombia has also been a leader in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, an instrument that has become a standard international benchmark for progress in the fight against the illicit trade in such weapons. Its effective implementation by States and the strengthening of national capacities and follow-up mechanisms continue to be priorities. We advocate the establishment of a comprehensive regime with international and national standards under which States would undertake to criminalize the illegal possession and smuggling of small arms and light weapons. This would include the marking and registration of weapons, inter-agency and international cooperation, exchanges of information and the prohibition of arms transfers to non-State actors. We acknowledge efforts made by some countries to create a process that facilitates the exchange of experience and the identification of challenges and opportunities.

Colombia has set up a national coordinating committee to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The committee works to promote the national implementation of the

country's international commitments in three areas: strengthening institutions, promoting a culture of disarmament and international cooperation.

At the preceding session of the General Assembly, Colombia coordinated work on the resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (resolution 65/64), which it traditionally introduces along with Japan and South Africa. The resolution was adopted by consensus and had many sponsors. We look forward to continued support from all States for this session's draft resolution, which will be coordinated by Japan.

We are committed to the ban on weapons with a humanitarian impact, such as anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. We are also a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its first four protocols and to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We are also a State signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

My country has a serious problem with landmine contamination owing to the indiscriminate use of such devices by illegal armed groups, which cause terror and pain in families and communities. Consequently, during the tenth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, we requested a 10-year extension of the demining deadline, which was subsequently granted for a term expiring in March 2021.

Colombia calls attention to the continuing problems with anti-personnel mines, as evidenced by the hundreds of victims worldwide every year and the large tracts of arable land contaminated with such devices. For that reason, Colombia urges more active condemnation of the persistent use by illegal armed actors of these weapons, which have already been banned by the international community.

Comprehensive mine action requires the efforts of States affected by this problem and international cooperation and assistance in comprehensive action against anti-personnel mines, aimed at building the capacities of States to address this humanitarian problem. We believe that it is important to pursue efforts to fully implement the Ottawa Convention and to continue working towards the fulfilment of the commitments assumed under the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014. We also recognize the importance of

the eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, to be held in Cambodia later this year.

We also want to emphasize the fact that Colombia, even before the international entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, destroyed all such weapons existing in its arsenals. Our commitment has led us, despite our being only a signatory, to participate as observers in the two meetings of States parties to that instrument, which took place in Laos in 2010 and in Lebanon in 2011.

Colombia, with its traditional commitment to peace and respect for international law, favours multilateralism as the framework under which the main legal instruments constituting the disarmament regime have been agreed, and will continue to actively participate in the search for commitments to safeguard the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Shalgham (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to join other speakers here today in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this Committee. We are confident that your competence and wisdom will guide the work of the Committee to the best results. I also wish to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election and to assure you of our full cooperation and support.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered at the Committee's 3rd meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as the statement to be delivered by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Allow me to assure you, Sir, that the new Libyan Government will adhere to all previously concluded agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation. Libya supports a multilateral approach to the disarmament and international security agendas. We affirm our full commitment to maintain and strengthen the current disarmament mechanism, notably in the First Committee and in the Conference on Disarmament.

The proliferation of conventional weapons is one of the causes of instability in the world. The uprising of the Libyan people against the Al-Qadhafi dictatorship and the regime's use of live ammunition against them have caused arms to spread throughout Libya for the purpose of self-defence and in order to

topple the regime. We understand the dangers associated with the spread of, and ease of access to, weapons. On that basis, collecting those weapons and putting an end to all types of armament will be one of the priorities of the National Transitional Council and the transitional Government in Libya, as a first step in restoring order and security throughout the country.

The international community faces threats stemming from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their systems of delivery. In a global security situation that is changing daily, strengthening disarmament criteria and national and international legal instruments on nuclear disarmament remains a priority. For our part, the National Transitional Council, in cooperation with friendly countries, has secured all the material that had been stockpiled for use in making chemical weapons; it is all stored in safe areas and cannot be accessed except through the official authorities.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 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 and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction are important instruments in the international Organization's system for ending the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Non-compliance with those instruments represents a serious threat to international peace. We renew our appeal to all countries, without exception, to become signatories to the two Treaties and strive to fully implement them.

Libya considers the NPT to be the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation system. We are fully committed to implementing all three of its interlinked pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the promotion of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We also seek to promote efforts to achieve worldwide adherence to the NPT and its universalization. We call on those countries that have not yet done so, especially in the Middle East, to become signatories.

Libya emphasizes the indisputable right of parties to the Treaty to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without

discrimination, as specified in articles I and II of the Treaty. Nonetheless, maintaining a balance between rights and obligations as they are set out in the Treaty remains a basic issue. Libya recognizes that the special role of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its safeguards system remains an important one and should be strengthened. We also wish to insist on the vital importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). There can be no doubt that the implementation of the NPT and the CTBT will help in a concrete way towards achieving a safe world free of nuclear weapons. It is extremely important that we respect the criteria defined by the CTBT for maintaining a moratorium on any future nuclear activities until the Treaty goes into effect. We call on all countries to refrain from any action that violates the CTBT, to adhere to its provisions and criteria and to fulfil their commitments to it as soon as it enters into force.

With regard to regional nuclear disarmament efforts, Libya believes that confidence-building measures, including the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, contribute greatly to effective disarmament. We welcome the nuclear-weapon-free zones that have already been created, and we call for the establishment of similar zones in the Middle East and elsewhere. We also call for full implementation of the plan of action endorsed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, notably as concerns the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Committee is no doubt aware that my country is one of those most affected by landmines left over from the Second World War, some of which was fought on Libyan soil in the first half of the twentieth century. We therefore understand and appreciate the devastating effects of those weapons, which killed and maimed many innocent people, in addition to destroying hundreds of thousands of hectares of arable and pasture land, making them desolate and unusable. Demining those areas is not easy, and removing one landmine costs more than buying 100 mines.

This problem was exacerbated by the previous Libyan regime, which planted a huge number of mines in various areas and cities of the country, including Brega, Zlitan and Jabal Nafusa. The previous regime went so far as to plant mines even in schools. Most of those are plastic and difficult to detect, which led to the death of one child and injury to another on the first day of school.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all those States that have helped to treat our wounded. We look forward to receiving support from countries that can give it, and to launching concerted and helpful cooperation with all the regional and international organizations working in the field of demining on financial and technical assistance with our national demining programme. We also need help in assessing damage and losses, human and material alike; with rehabilitating cleared land; and with treating, rehabilitating and reintegrating those affected so that they can continue to play an effective role in developing their communities and societies.

With regard to the conventional arms trade treaty, Libya supports in principle the initiative for establishing an international arms trade treaty as a comprehensive instrument for setting common standards that will enable us to halt the spread of such weapons, and thereby end their ability to exacerbate conflicts, particularly in Africa. Libya emphasizes that we should take into account every country's particular situation and its security and defence needs, and the need of all countries to be able to defend themselves and to resist occupation, bearing in mind the principles of sovereignty of all Member States and of non-interference in their internal affairs.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the importance of harnessing international efforts in order to make progress in disarmament and non-proliferation in the United Nations and other forums.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): On behalf of the Malaysian delegation, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, and to the members of the Bureau on your assumption of the Chair and Bureau functions of the First Committee at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

As we speak, thousands of nuclear weapons, posing inherent risks to humankind and all life on Earth, continue to exist. It is also disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament ended its thirteenth consecutive year without any substantive work. Against such a backdrop, my delegation feels compelled to call on all relevant parties to bring to bear the much-needed political will and ability to

compromise that can result in further efforts to attain general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

In this connection, my delegation looks forward to the discussions on the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that will take place in Vienna next year at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We wish to highlight that a balanced implementation between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is crucial in ensuring the NPT as the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Malaysia calls upon all States to work together towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), particularly the annex 2 States, whose signature and ratification of the CTBT are necessary for the Treaty's entry into force.

At the regional level, Malaysia is a party to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. Malaysia welcomes the ongoing consultations between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States on the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and looks forward to the timely conclusion of these consultations and subsequent signing of the protocol by the nuclear-weapon States.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status are positive steps towards the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that regard, Malaysia also supports the convening of the 2012 conference, which could provide the necessary impetus to the creation of such a zone in the Middle East.

All States parties to the NPT have the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as stipulated in article IV of the Treaty. In order to ensure that the underlying principles in that article are adhered to, States need to exercise full transparency in their nuclear development programmes, subject those programmes to the full scope of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, adhere to the provisions of the NPT and gain the confidence of the international community concerning the peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes. We encourage all States to subscribe to these principles, which are the necessary foundations for the development and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This would ensure a safe and secure environment for all.

In line with the relevant United Nations resolutions, Malaysia has enacted the Strategic Trade Act 2010, which provides State control over the export, trans-shipment, transit and brokering of strategic items, including arms and related material, and other activities that will or may facilitate the design, development and production of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, consistent with Malaysia's national security and international obligations.

Malaysia will again submit its traditional draft resolution on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (A/51/218, annex). Malaysia is submitting that draft resolution as a reminder of our obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control. Malaysia calls on all States to fulfil this obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to the conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention at the earliest possible date.

Malaysia fully supports the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as it is the first multilateral instrument that is non-discriminatory and provides for comprehensive and verifiable prohibition of the whole category of chemical weapons. Malaysia also appreciates the support it was afforded by the States parties to the CWC leading to its election as a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the term 2011-2013. Malaysia reaffirms its full cooperation in strengthening the work of the Executive Council.

Malaysia also supports the efforts by the international community to press for universal adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and compliance with its provisions. To that end, Malaysia believes that effective verification measures should be put in place to further strengthen the BWC. In addition, Malaysia undertakes to facilitate, and will participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, as provided for under article X of the Convention.

In line with article IV of the Convention, Malaysia is currently finalizing a biological weapons

bill, which will be part of Malaysia's legislative framework to ensure effective implementation of the BWC. Currently, there is an ongoing process of engagement with relevant stakeholders to finalize the bill, which is expected to be tabled in the Malaysian Parliament next year.

With regard to conventional arms, Malaysia is supportive of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which aims to prevent and reduce the misuse and proliferation of small arms. Malaysia has put in place adequate and stringent laws for effective control over the circulation of conventional arms from being diverted into the illicit market.

Malaysia also strongly supports international and humanitarian efforts to ban anti-personnel mines and calls on other States to accede to and ratify the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's commitment to the attainment of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. My delegation remains ready to work with you, Sir, and other Member States towards achieving a positive and successful outcome of this session of the First Committee.

Mr. Van den IJssel (Netherlands): As other speakers have done, let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on taking up the Chair of the First Committee and to assure you of the support of the delegation of the Netherlands.

Last year, we saw significant progress on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. At the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), consensus was reached among the NPT parties, for the first time in many years. The result was a bold new action plan, which will be a road map towards the next Review Conference in 2015.

Positive developments with regard to conventional weapons issues, such as the arms trade treaty process, give further reason for optimism. At the same time, however, we remain deeply concerned at the persistent stalemate for over a decade in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which prevents it from fulfilling its mandate, and in particular at its failure to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

These continue to be challenging times for the non-proliferation regime. The ongoing defiance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea towards the international community regarding its nuclear-weapons programme, Iran's lack of cooperation in allowing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme, outstanding questions about Syria's nuclear programme and the danger of nuclear material falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-State actors are all matters of grave concern.

Likewise, the unregulated trade in conventional arms and the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons adversely affect regional and international security and stability, fuel conflicts and armed violence, and threaten the lives of individuals. Those challenges call for a global approach, in addition to actions at the national and regional levels.

Today the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is more important than ever. It remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the Treaty and for the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Netherlands calls on States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Netherlands will continue to make innovative, practical proposals to implement the 2010 action plan. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control have always been and will remain cornerstones of Dutch foreign policy, with the Treaty as our basis and the action plan as our road map. This is an essential part of our commitment to strengthening international law and security. For us, non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control are all facets of the same diamond.

To support the implementation of the NPT action plan, a group of 10 countries, including the Netherlands, joined hands and formed the multi-country non-proliferation and disarmament initiative. At the initiative's ministerial meetings in Berlin on 30 April and New York on 21 September, we decided to, among other measures, focus our efforts on greater transparency in the way nuclear-weapon States report their disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation efforts. At the same time, we have

stepped up our efforts to reach universal accession to the IAEA additional protocol. This is vital in order to ensure that nuclear activities remain peaceful.

One of the crucial points in the NPT action plan is the agreement on practical steps, including an international conference towards establishing a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. In the run-up to this conference, we stand ready to play an active role wherever useful.

The Netherlands considers the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament to be unacceptable. We deem the launching of substantive negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty more important and urgent than ever. The start of those negotiations is long overdue. We need to move forward, preferably within the CD, but we are prepared to pursue alternative routes. We consider the blockage of the whole CD forum by the refusal by one Member State even to start negotiations to be unacceptable and urge that Member State to join the consensus. The blockage seriously undermines the principle of multilateral cooperation: with membership in the CD come rights, but also responsibilities.

The effective functioning of multilateral disarmament institutions is vital for our security. The Netherlands deeply regrets that, despite clear manifestations of strong political will on the part of the overwhelming majority of CD members and firm support for negotiations and clear calls from both the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, the CD has not yet been able to build upon the momentum in global disarmament and non-proliferation. We acknowledge the security concerns of all States, but the consensus rule in the CD must not be subject to abuse. The world cannot afford to stand still on the crucial issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, and to allow procedural issues to stymie real political progress.

The Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with the mandate it received from the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, should be the place to forge multilateral treaties. However, given the continuing stalemate in the CD, the international community needs to reflect on all options in order to ensure progress. We are ready during this session to engage with you, Sir, and with all Member States on proposals to overcome the deadlock

in the CD in order to take multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations forward.

The Biological Weapons Convention is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons. The Seventh Review Conference on the Convention in December 2011 will be of vital importance for further work on the part of States parties to improve the implementation of and strengthen the Convention during the next intersessional period.

Let me add that as president-designate, I look forward to working with all States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention during this session and in the remaining weeks until the Review Conference in order to ensure for it the most productive outcome. Furthermore, during this session of the First Committee, I will take the opportunity to reach out to those Member States that have not yet joined the Convention.

The Netherlands is firmly committed to the success of the 2012 United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. We continue to be seriously concerned by the effects of the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market. Our action in that respect should be twofold, aiming both at regulating the legal trade and at preventing the illegal one. Our aim is a legally binding international instrument, setting the highest common international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons, with precise transparency measures. We were encouraged by the promising results of the negotiating process, notably at the July session of the Preparatory Committee. We call on all States to maintain the spirit of genuine engagement that characterised this summer session.

The Netherlands is honoured to host the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Chemical Weapons Convention has an essential role to play in preventing the risks posed by chemical weapons. With the destruction of stockpiles well under way, now is also the time to start thinking about how to make sure that chemical weapons never reappear. In that context, we welcome the ongoing discussion on the future direction of the OPCW.

Finally, the Netherlands is committed to universalizing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and promoting its early entry into force. We recognize the security and civil benefits of the

CTBT verification system, including the International Monitoring System, and feel that the scope for expanding civilian use of the Monitoring System in other areas of early warning and emergency response should be explored. We will continue to utilize diplomatic opportunities to urge States to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan): At the outset allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this Committee, as well as the newly elected Bureau.

The Republic of Tajikistan attaches great importance to further strengthening of disarmament and the non-proliferation regimes, the revitalization of the negotiating process for the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban-Treaty, and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We welcome the entry into force of the New START Treaty and the ongoing implementation of that Treaty by the Russian Federation and the United States.

My delegation supports the outcomes of the Second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to the Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia and the 2010 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which laid the foundation for the further strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, disarmament and the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

We are convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is essential for promoting nuclear disarmament, preventing proliferation and contributes to peace and security at the regional and global levels. In that regard, we believe that the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which is fully consistent with the efforts of countries in the region to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, contributes to regional security, cooperation between States and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also believe that further consultations on the practical implementation of the provisions of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which came into force on 21 March 2009, will be held.

We note the need for further work on the rapprochement of positions of countries of the region and nuclear-weapon States with regard to receiving negative security assurances. We urge nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm their commitment to granting negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon

States and to sign the Protocol on guarantees not to use nuclear weapons or threaten to use them against such States.

We recognize that the further strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes remains a priority, and in that regard we would like to underscore the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not exist, especially in the Middle East. We therefore express our support to the coming conference on the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

My country also recognizes the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in strengthening nuclear safety and security, including enhanced cooperation among international organizations. I would like to call your attention to the issue of nuclear safety and security in my country. Tajikistan inherited from the Soviet Union numerous mines, mine dumps and uranium-tailing ponds. Such environmentally hazardous facilities located close to human settlements pose a serious threat to the environment and the population. We encourage States and international organizations with expertise in that sphere to provide assistance in the management and rehabilitation of contaminated sites and territories, so as to prevent environmental impacts caused by uranium mining and related activities.

Tajikistan supports the leading role of the United Nations in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and attaches importance to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. During the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at the national, regional and global levels, issues discussed for further action in this area included combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders, international cooperation and assistance, and an international tracing instrument.

We commend the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on 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. Tajikistan annually submits reports on its exports and imports of conventional

arms, including its nil report under the seven categories of the Register of Conventional Arms.

Tajikistan reaffirms its commitment to a full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, in cooperation with all the parties concerned. In fulfilment of its international obligations under the Ottawa Convention, Tajikistan has, since the Convention's entry into force on 1 April 2000, implemented the main provisions of the Convention.

Since 2002, in accordance with article 7 of the Ottawa Convention, Tajikistan also submits reports annually to the Secretary-General on the state of mines in the country. Since 2004 around 250 settlements, in an area of about 5 million square metres, have been cleared of mines by the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre. In line with its commitments under article 4 of the Ottawa Convention, the Republic of Tajikistan destroyed all stockpiled anti-personnel mines in its territory by the deadline on 31 March 2004. However, in the further implementation of article 5 of the Ottawa Convention, Tajikistan has faced additional objective difficulties that have significantly slowed the process.

Given those difficulties, during the second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in 2009 in Cartagena, Colombia, Tajikistan requested States parties to support its proposal for an extension of the deadline in order to meet its obligations in accordance with article 5 of the Convention. The proposal was supported by all States parties. Moreover, my country firmly supports a mine-free zone in the Central Asian region. We stand for the adoption of practical measures to remove mines from the mined areas of the region and for the resolution of other problems related to the consequences of mining.

In the context of international information security issues, I would call the attention of members to the initiative by China, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan regarding the document on the rules of behaviour in the sphere of international information security. The document was circulated in the United Nations on 12 September, and we look forward to its being considered in a constructive manner.

In conclusion, Sir, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in bringing this session to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Al Hail (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the other Bureau members, and wish you every success in your mission. On behalf of the delegation of the State of Qatar, I assure you of our full cooperation towards the success of this Committee's work.

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

There has been more international concern as a result of the increased risk, over the past decades, of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The selective and unfair management of nuclear-weapons controls has led to the stockpiling of terrifying amounts of nuclear weapons, in addition to the development of new deadly weapons in many countries without regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The Middle East continues to be the only region that has not witnessed serious international efforts aimed at effectively freeing it from nuclear weapons. That situation has encouraged Israel to acquire military nuclear capabilities outside any international controls.

In that context, it is worth warning of the risks that lie in continued international silence towards Israel's position. This abnormal situation has lasted too long and caused the peoples of the region to lose confidence and faith in the idea of nuclear non-proliferation and encouraged the revival of the arms race, despite the threats it poses to international peace and security.

Another challenge in the field of disarmament is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the failure to review that problem in a professional manner, as a blind eye is turned to the responsibility of countries of origin, which produce and export millions of such weapons without restrictions or sufficient control.

Another matter of deep concern to us is the proliferation of landmines and cluster munitions, such as those planted by Israel in southern Lebanon, which continue to kill civilians and maim others permanently.

Therefore, we signed first the Declaration of the Wellington Conference on Cluster Munitions and then the Convention on Cluster Munitions, at the Dublin Conference.

The State of Qatar is eager to strengthen the NPT and to activate its underpinnings, namely non-proliferation and disarmament. In that regard, we stress the inviolability of the right of States parties to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and that no obstacles should be put in the way of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty in their quest to develop nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes. We also call for the settlement of the dispute over the Iranian nuclear issue through peaceful means.

The State of Qatar also stresses the importance of taking effective measures to contribute to strengthening international peace and security, taking into account the principles of the right of States to acquire the means of self-defence, the sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Contrary to what some people may think, and despite the international efforts that have been deployed in recent years, including the holding of numerous conferences and forums in the United Nations, which unanimously agreed on the need to reduce military spending to maintain regional and international stability, the last five years have witnessed an unprecedented rise in global military spending, particularly with respect to the acquisition of conventional weapons. That demonstrates the alarming pace of arms acquisition in many parts of the world, including in areas that are not under any military threat.

On the other hand, while the United Nations mandate is the maintenance of international peace and security and building a peaceful world, the budget allocated to it and its agencies has suffered a marked decline over the past years. Building a world of peace and security is contingent upon Member States meeting their commitments on disarmament and thus providing the United Nations with the necessary financial resources to enable it to carry out its mandate in promoting a culture of peace throughout the world.

In conclusion, we emphasize the need to recognize the primacy of nuclear disarmament on the disarmament agenda and the need for Member States to exercise flexibility and foster political will in order to achieve common goals, bearing in mind that this will

only be achieved through fulfilling commitments and implementing agreements by Member States and by eliminating politicization from the work of the disarmament mechanism.

Mr. Ramafole (Lesotho): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and also to congratulate members of the Bureau on their election. I assure you of my delegation's full support. I align myself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representatives of Nigeria and of Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), respectively.

The world expects of the United Nations that it will fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security and eliminate threats to peace. It is essentially through the First Committee, as an all-inclusive forum for Member States, that the United Nations may fulfil that mandate. However, progress in the work of this Committee has been beset by various setbacks.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) do not enjoy the universal support of Member States. The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (DC) persists. Agreement is yet to be reached on the text of the arms trade treaty. Challenges abound impeding 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.

The first resolution of the General Assembly on disarmament was adopted in 1946 and called for

“the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction”. (*resolution 1 (I), para. 5 (c)*)

That resolution and similar ones that followed were reinforced by the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968. Despite the fact that the NPT became a legally binding commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in 1970, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remain with us. If anything, the number of nuclear-weapon States has steadily increased, and the world faces more danger than ever before.

Some nuclear-weapon States justify the retention of nuclear weapons in large stockpiles as deterrents. The end result of that strategy has been an upsurge in the number of countries that are today pursuing nuclear-weapon programmes. The reason is simply that the possession of nuclear weapons breeds a climate of mistrust and thus encourages others to seek to acquire them. It also increases perceptions that nuclear-weapon States are not on a path towards disarmament, but merely covering up their indefinite retention.

Indeed, the mere existence of nuclear weapons presents a possibility of their accidental or intentional use — even more so as some of them remain on high alert. Our aim to eradicate those weapons must be vigorously pursued. We must continue to espouse the multilateral approach to disarmament in order to achieve that purpose. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to renew their political will to fulfil their commitments for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation under the NPT. In the same breadth, we call on the States that are not party to the NPT to ratify and/or accede to the Treaty without any further delay.

The adoption by consensus of the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference was a great success in the field of disarmament. We need to build on that momentum as we prepare for the next Review Conference. The 64-point action plan agreed on by the 2010 Review Conference must be fully implemented by all State parties. Lesotho stands ready to play its part in the implementation of that action plan.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of paramount importance for achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. The CTBT's preamble clearly states that the Treaty's objective is to contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. Yet, more than 15 years after it was first opened for signature, that Treaty has not yet entered into force. The need to accelerate the CTBT ratification process must be our common goal. It is in that regard that we appeal to all States, in particular the annex 2 States, to urgently consider ratifying the CTBT, so that it may enter into force as soon as possible.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has been unable to make progress on the nuclear disarmament issues on its agenda for the past 15 years. That

paralysis is inexcusable, particularly because the modernization of nuclear weapons is on the rise. Consequently, we call on members of the CD to urgently implement the Conference's programme of work, in order to take the disarmament negotiations forward. We should commend the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to give impetus to the work of the CD. Lesotho fully supports all efforts aimed at revitalizing political will in the CD.

Equally frustrating is the lack of progress in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). During its past session in April, and for the twelfth year running, the Commission was unable to come up with any recommendations on any of the three topics on its agenda. There is a need for all Member States to strengthen their resolve to make some progress in the Commission during the next cycle of this Committee.

Conventional weapons continue to pose a serious danger to international peace and security. However, we believe that the efforts to adequately address their proliferation will soon yield some result. The progress made in the Preparatory Committee meetings for the arms trade treaty has laid a solid basis for the treaty's formal negotiation at the July 2012 conference. At that conference, our goal should be to come up with a robust and legally binding treaty that will set the international norms and standards for the transfer and sale of all conventional weapons.

It would be remiss of me not to talk about small arms and light weapons. Those weapons continue to bring untold suffering to people in the developing countries, Lesotho included. Their widespread prevalence impedes the global efforts to reduce gun violence. The 2011 report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2011/255) pertinently observes that the inadequate control and regulation of those weapons in many countries make it easy for small arms and light weapons to be diverted into the illegal market and be used to commit many crimes. To that extent, we submit that prevention of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons should be at the forefront of all of our efforts. Lesotho and other Member States struggling with the problem of curbing such weapons require urgent assistance in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Furthermore, we should not lose the opportunity that will be presented by the 2012 review of the Programme of Action to come up with specific recommendations that will enhance its effectiveness.

I will conclude by pointing out that the First Committee is a forum that should be utilized to reach a common understanding on how to move the disarmament agenda forward and make the world a safer place. Let us renew the faith of the citizenry of this world in the belief that the United Nations is not powerless in the face of challenges in the field of disarmament. Given the opportunity, the United Nations is capable of achieving the goal of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Chuquihuara (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin, Sir, by expressing my delegation's satisfaction at your election as Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Your long and acknowledged professional career should ensure successful management of the Committee, and you can count on my delegation's full support.

On 28 July, a new Administration took the reins of Government in Peru. Since this is the first time we have participated in this multilateral forum, President Ollanta Humala Tasso addressed the Assembly a couple of weeks ago, also for the first time (see A/66/PV.16). At that time, he explained to the international community the general directions that will guide his Administration in the next few years. President Humala also indicated that the great transformation that Peruvians are seeking involves of necessity a process of social inclusion; in other words, translating the economic growth that we have been experiencing in Peru for the last 10 years into development in a democratic context. That is clearly a cross-cutting task involving all policy areas, including disarmament and security.

One of the cornerstones of the President's foreign policy is founded on strengthening South American integration, with special emphasis on the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Andean Community. This policy has been in evidence since the day the President took office, with our hosting of an extraordinary meeting of UNASUR Heads of State and the Andean Presidential Council. But, while Peru's foreign policy is centred on the South American

nations, we are not ignoring political, commercial and cooperative relations with other regions of the world. On the contrary, our regionalism will serve as a platform for more advantageous participation in the worldwide chain of production and the decision-making process with regard to policies of global scope.

The issues and challenges of today's international context require that States be not only balanced and stable politically, socially and economically, but also that they possess a peaceful and stable immediate geographic environment that is conducive to development. In that regard, integration fulfils the dual function of maintaining the atmosphere of peace and stability that is essential to economic and social development, and of serving as a means by which to tackle shared challenges and opportunities as they arise on the path towards the sustainable and inclusive development that every country in the region aspires to.

Peru's new Administration plans to focus its efforts on the area that is in the foreground of its foreign policy activities, namely, our immediate geographical surroundings, as defined by our neighbouring countries. To that end, we aim to promote a concerted policy that, in the area of foreign affairs, implies openness to dialogue and respect for the legitimate interests of others, in order to find common ground on which to build a regional agenda with clear goals and specific objectives, enabling deeper regional integration without ideological distinctions or clashing loyalties.

In that context, Peru believes that through effective confidence-building measures States can make progress towards integrating and strengthening cooperative mechanisms and actions aimed at dealing with the urgent issues of extreme poverty, social inequity and social exclusion. To that end, we must continue to promote an environment conducive at every level to arms control, the limiting of conventional weapons and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which would enable every State to devote a greater percentage of its resources to its economic and social development, while taking into account all its international commitments as well as its legitimate defence and security needs. In that regard, we reaffirm the need to strengthen measures to achieve mutual trust and cooperation in the area of defence, as well as ensuring

that public spending is conducted with full public awareness and maximum transparency.

President Humala indicated in his address to the General Assembly that “we must control the supply of weapons that the cartels and criminal gangs use daily against citizens” (A/66/PV.16, p. 14). Because Peru is a country that is suffering from the consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, my country attaches particular importance to effective 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. In that regard, we believe it necessary to adopt legally binding instruments dealing with marking, tracing and illicit brokering; to strengthen cooperation in transborder controls; and to promote and strengthen international cooperation and assistance and national capacity-building, all significant cross-cutting issues.

We also support the preparation process under way towards the 2012 Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, whose adoption will enable the establishment of a system that will contribute to total transparency in the arms trade, thus creating confidence as States will be informed of others’ arms acquisitions, permitting strict control of their provenance and final destination.

As President Humala highlighted in his address in the general debate, the UNASUR heads of State, who met in Lima on 28 July, drew attention to the risks bearing down on our economies as the result of situations that originated on other continents. Those problems include high levels of public debt and unemployment, the slow recovery of credit and low levels of investment, as well as wars that have drained huge sums of money that might have been used to prevent the crisis altogether. That is why Peru considers it unacceptable to continue spending on arms far beyond the legitimate needs of national defence and security, while humankind has to cope with more important challenges, such as achieving social inclusion, fighting poverty, hunger and illiteracy, combating disease and protecting the environment. In the face of that situation, weapons only hinder social development, foster poverty and inequality and encourage a vicious circle of instability.

One of the central themes we will address in this session relates to the Conference on Disarmament, the consummate multilateral forum for disarmament

negotiations, which has been deadlocked for more than a decade. In Peru’s view it is crucial to insist on the urgent need for the Conference to begin its work and assume its responsibilities again, so that it can adopt and implement a balanced and thorough programme of work that takes into consideration all the interests and priorities on its agenda. Peru understands the necessity of showing flexibility, so as to allow the negotiation process of multilateral instruments in the area of disarmament to begin. We therefore consider it urgent that the Conference on Disarmament immediately initiate negotiations on international legal instruments in the area of disarmament, including a fissile material cut-off treaty and an international instrument for negative security guarantees.

Given the continuing impediments and postponements surrounding the Conference, we reiterate that Peru will not obstruct other negotiation initiatives that seek to make constructive progress on disarmament, since we realize that the security of our generation and future generations cannot permit more delays.

In recent years, disarmament-related issues have moved to the top of the international agenda. We must not lose this unique opportunity to adopt measures to contribute specifically to the strengthening of international peace and security. The efforts undertaken here in the First Committee should be geared to achieving this objective. In this regard, the Committee can count on the full support and commitment of Peru in its endeavours.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): Mr. Chair, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 2011 session of the First Committee. I wish to assure you, Sir, of South Africa’s full support and cooperation as we work towards a successful session that will strengthen the multilateral disarmament agenda and machinery. My delegation also associates itself with the statements delivered by the Africa Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as the New Agenda Coalition.

Heeding your call for brevity, Sir, and since South Africa will be delivering more detailed statements during the Committee’s thematic debate, this intervention will focus on South Africa’s national views on some issues in the context of the multilateral discourse on disarmament and international security.

South Africa, together with many world leaders, utilized the occasion of the General Assembly general debate to underscore the historic mandate of the United Nations and its responsibility to strive for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. South Africa believes that this was of utmost importance given the mutually reinforcing relationship between disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and the maintenance of international peace and security. South Africa is also of the view that this was the correct thing to do, because there is an urgent and compelling need for concrete action on disarmament. My delegation believes that we must rise to the opportunity now created to advance disarmament and sustainable international security after a decade of stalemate and a tendency towards unilateralism.

South Africa continues to be gravely concerned about the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Due to their reach and indiscriminate nature, such weapons threaten not only individual countries but the international community as a whole. It is for this reason, among others, that South Africa has consistently reaffirmed its full commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons and to the multilateral system that seeks to advance that objective. South Africa believes that the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never again be produced. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are therefore inextricably linked, and continuous and irreversible progress is required on both fronts.

For us in the developing world, poverty and the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons remain a serious threat and the real weapons of mass destruction. We welcome and strongly call for the establishment of effective partnerships to enhance the benefits of technical cooperation and assistance in the peaceful uses of nuclear, chemical and biological sciences, technologies and applications. South Africa believes that an intensification of activities related to the peaceful uses of the atom and in the fields of biology and chemistry would contribute to the socio-economic upliftment of the developing countries while also placing them in good stead to realize their Millennium Development Goals benchmarks.

Containing the problems caused by the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons beyond absolute defence requirements is also critical to

stability, peace and security, which are, by the way, necessary preconditions for socio-economic development. In this connection, my delegation is appreciative of the progress made since the previous session of the First Committee in the field of conventional weapons, and pledges to lend its full support to the success of the 2012 United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

South Africa is committed to a rules-based international system and to the strengthening of multilateral governance in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. South Africa is disappointed at the fact that the Disarmament Commission, as the sole deliberative body in the United Nations disarmament machinery, concluded another three-year cycle without any substantive results. It is equally regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament, which has the responsibility to conduct multilateral disarmament negotiations, has once again this year failed to commence negotiations on any of the items on its agenda.

Amid this continuing impasse, South Africa welcomes the emerging resolve among States that it can no longer be business as usual in terms of the disarmament machinery. Even as consensus on the appropriate remedies continues to elude us, there seems to be broad agreement on the need to ensure that these institutions serve the purposes for which they were created. South Africa believes that with the necessary determination and political will, the disarmament machinery can once again contribute to international peace and security by developing consensus norms for addressing issues in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Before I conclude, I would like to remind this gathering that the primary mandate of our Committee is disarmament and international security. It is a cause of concern to my delegation that little is being done to reflect this at both the deliberative and, especially, the practical levels of our work. The largest of the weapons possessors are not moving far enough in terms of translating into practice their political commitment to disarmament and international security. On the contrary, they are selectively focusing on non-proliferation in a manner that does not recognize the symbiotic and mutually reinforcing relationship between disarmament and non-proliferation. Likewise, disarmament is dealt with in a manner that falls far short of improving the prospects of international

security, even though we have witnessed the colossal effects of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the past two world wars, in the aftermath of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s.

My delegation stands ready to work with you, Mr. Chair, all Members of the United Nations and civil society with a view to achieving substantive progress on the multilateral disarmament agenda in order to strengthen the multilateral system of governance, enhance and maintain international peace and security, and thereby contribute towards sustainable development.

Mr. Srivali (Thailand): Mr. Chair, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important session. I am confident that under your able leadership, the First Committee this year will produce a successful outcome. My congratulations also go to all members of the Bureau.

Thailand would like to associate itself with the statements made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Disarmament and arms control are indispensable to the maintenance of international peace and security. However, real and perceived security concerns and power imbalances persist, between nations and within them. As a result, the continued possession, acquisition and further development of deadly weapons — including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and small arms and light weapons — by both State and non-State actors remain serious causes for concern.

Thailand is fully committed to supporting the process of disarmament and non-proliferation of all types of WMD. We urge all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to resolutely fulfil their respective obligations under the Treaty in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. The universality of the Treaty must be promoted, and efforts must be made to strengthen it. The work of the three pillars of the Treaty, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, must be balanced and pursued at the same time. In addition, the recommendations of the 2010 Nuclear Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and the five-point nuclear disarmament plan proposed by the Secretary-General

in 2008 must also be seriously pursued and implemented.

Thailand welcomes the entry into force in February 2011 of the New START treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States. The leadership of those two nations is crucial for the achievement of global nuclear disarmament. Negative security assurances are another important issue on which serious discussion and constructive action are required. Thailand believes that negative security assurances constitute a significant confidence-building measure between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States and will help strengthen global non-proliferation efforts.

Thailand supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones globally. Together with our friends in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand has played an active role in forging the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, also known as the Treaty of Bangkok. Given the close and ongoing consultations between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States, we hope that the nuclear-weapon States will be able to sign on to the Bangkok Treaty soon. We also hope that the resolution on that regional nuclear-weapon-free zone to be submitted by ASEAN again this year will receive even broader support from the international community than it did in the sixty-fourth General Assembly.

Since the end of the Cold War, the spectre of nuclear terrorism has grown ever more threatening. Thailand is committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), with a view to addressing the threat posed by the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors. We have also joined international efforts to address this issue through the frameworks of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit.

While nuclear security is important, nuclear safety is no less deserving of our attention. The Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power plant incident in March of this year was a wake-up call that nuclear safety cannot be taken for granted. The international community needs to urgently and effectively address this issue in order to restore public confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Thailand thus applauds the Secretary-General for convening the high-level

meeting on nuclear safety and security on 22 September 2011.

In view of the need to verify nuclear activities and ensure nuclear safety, it is incumbent upon all of us to increase our support for and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. As the sole international verification body, the Agency's technical expertise is indispensable in strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Thailand calls on all Member States to fully cooperate with the Agency and ensure that it be able to continue to work in an effective, transparent and independent manner.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are also key international instruments for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Thailand supports universal adherence to and strict implementation of those Conventions. We particularly support the complete destruction of chemical weapons within the agreed time frame and the strengthening of confidence-building measures within the BWC.

As our contribution towards promoting effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Thailand will co-organize the sixth Challenge Inspection Field Exercise from 31 October to 4 November 2011 with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Our aim is to ensure that the organization is well prepared to respond to any request for a challenge inspection under article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are pleased to host this exercise, the first such exercise to be held in Asia. Additionally, since the seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention is approaching, Thailand also looks forward to working closely with other BWC States parties to further strengthen the BWC and promote its full and effective implementation.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a serious threat to peace, security, stability and development in various parts of the world. Thailand supports the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a key multilateral framework to curb the proliferation of such weapons.

Thailand also reaffirms its support for the preparatory work leading up to the negotiations on an

arms trade treaty. We believe that such a treaty will help assure the responsible transfer of conventional weapons and minimize the social and humanitarian impacts from the illegal flow of such weapons. Thailand welcomes the progress achieved at the three preparatory meetings in 2010 and 2011, and looks forward to participating in the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty Conference in 2012.

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has long played an important role in advancing global disarmament and promoting international peace and security. For more than a decade, however, the CD has struggled to make progress in its substantive work. The High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament last year gave much-needed political impetus to the substantive work of the CD. The strong political will shown at the High-level Meeting now needs to be translated into concrete results. In addition, as disarmament involves the security of all countries, all States should have the right to participate in the discussion and negotiating process on an equal basis. As the first coordinator and an active member of the informal group of the observer States to the CD, Thailand firmly believes that the CD must engage all stakeholders, and we reaffirm our call for expansion of membership of the CD.

Peace and security are goals that are universally shared but not always easily achieved. Strengthened security for one nation should not come at the expense of others. All members of the international community must do their utmost to fulfil their political, legal and moral obligations in making the world safer. My delegation will continue to work with all Member States so that together we may build a world of lasting peace and security.

Mr. Ayebare (Uganda): I congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau upon their election to preside over the First Committee during this session. We are confident that they will successfully steer the Committee's work. My delegation assures them of its full support and cooperation.

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

Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a serious threat to

humanity. It is only by taking concrete and practical steps towards disarmament, non-proliferation and the total elimination of those weapons that durable peace and security can be attained.

Uganda reaffirms its commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. It is important that we sustain the momentum gained following the successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, especially the recommendations and follow-up actions that were adopted by consensus.

We reiterate our support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is aimed at banning all nuclear explosions in all environments and whose entry into force, after its adoption 15 years ago, is long overdue.

Many countries in Africa, including Uganda, have suffered and are still recovering from the negative effects of the proliferation of illicit conventional arms, especially small arms and light weapons, which fuel conflicts. Uganda therefore supports the conclusion of an effective and legally binding arms trade treaty in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/89 of 2006.

We look forward to the finalization of the preparatory processes culminating in the negotiation and conclusion of an arms trade treaty in 2012. In that regard, Uganda underscores the need for a balanced, non-discriminatory, universal, effective and equitable treaty that will not be subject to political abuse or prejudicial to the right of self-defence of any Member State.

The Government of Uganda is devoted to the elimination of illicit weapons from circulation to combat problems posed by their proliferation. We have undertaken the destruction of large numbers of assorted illicit small arms and light weapons, ammunition and unexploded ordnance to ensure that they do not find their way into the wrong hands. We welcome the important contributions of the United Nations, including the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the enhancement of national, regional and international counter-terrorism efforts.

Uganda supports the important work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and all other

international, regional and subregional bodies in the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and other counter-terrorism instruments.

Uganda has taken concrete steps to meet its obligations to combat terrorism by, inter alia, implementing existing legislation, enacting new legislation and enhancing regional and international cooperation. However, Uganda, like many other countries, still faces technical and human resource capacity constraints. We therefore reiterate that there is a need to commit more resources and technical assistance to the fight against terrorism, including training in detecting, investigating and suppressing the financing of terrorism and the development of related databases and software.

Finally, Uganda welcomes the renewed global attention to the need for more effective disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms and frameworks that are supported by a strong system of verification, compliance and full implementation. Through our work in the Committee, we have the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the realization of the universal aspiration for a peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on presiding over the work of this important Committee. We also extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau.

My delegation subscribes to the statement made at the Committee's 3rd meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We face an international scenario that is increasingly turbulent politically, economically and socially, due to the exhaustion of an unfair economic and political model that has unleashed a number of worldwide crises with a negative impact on the peace, prosperity and social justice to which all peoples of the world aspire.

To this situation of uncertainty, I must add the paralysis that for some years has affected multilateral diplomacy in the area of disarmament, which is the result of a lack of agreements on issues of vital importance to the international community. This stalemate can be attributed to the position of some

countries that attempt to impose hegemonic positions on others. They take unilateral actions that are contrary to the spirit of dialogue and cooperation that should govern relations among sovereign States.

Once again, we reiterate our commitment to achieving a world free of weapons of mass destruction. General and complete nuclear disarmament is a goal intrinsically linked to the building of a peaceful world. International efforts in the area of general and complete nuclear disarmament must be simultaneous with the achievement of the goal of horizontal and vertical nuclear non-proliferation. This process is interdependent, and there will be no progress until the nuclear-weapon States, first and foremost, comply with the commitments they have made.

During the fifth and sixth Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, expectations grew that States parties would work together in order to achieve progress in non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, those objectives have not been achieved, due to a lack of political will on the part of some nuclear-weapon States that avoid honouring their international commitments. Although Venezuela expected understandings of a greater scope to emanate from the eighth Review Conference, held from 3 to 28 May 2010, its results nevertheless have opened up a space for dialogue and the multilateral negotiation of agreements and measures in the area of disarmament. It is necessary to overcome the unilateralism that has been negatively impacting disarmament diplomacy for the past 10 years.

As to the arrangements agreed to during the Conference, our country agrees with the idea of convening a new international conference in 2012 to examine the issue of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. This event could lead to commitments among States, including Israel, in order to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and to ban the manufacture and possession of these weapons, in keeping with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We reiterate our call for the universalization of that international legal instrument and encourage those countries that have not yet acceded to the Treaty to do so.

Venezuela demands the upholding of countries' sovereign right to develop nuclear industries for peaceful purposes, in keeping with the provisions

enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, we are concerned about the pressures by Western Powers that seek to limit the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to develop its nuclear industry for peaceful purposes and its aspirations to achieve technology and energy independence.

We advocate the construction of a multipolar international system oriented towards peace, justice and development and based on the strict respect for the norms and principles of international law. We reject the undesirable practices that weaken the principle of the legal equality of States.

Granting negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States is another measure that my country believes is particularly relevant. The latent threat and the risk of the use of nuclear weapons against countries that do not possess such weapons are very present. Some nuclear-weapon States continue to engage in blackmail by threatening to use these weapons. It is therefore necessary to adopt a legally binding international instrument through which nuclear-weapon States would commit to not using nuclear weapons or threatening their use against States that do not possess them.

The priorities agreed to in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) remain fully in effect. That is even more true if we take into account the fact that the perverse process of modernizing nuclear weapons has continued at an accelerated pace.

Venezuela recognizes multilateralism as the safest and most complete means to achieve nuclear disarmament in all its manifestations and to control of conventional weapons. In that regard, we would like to highlight the importance of increasing the effectiveness of disarmament mechanisms.

My country hopes that the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral forum for negotiation on disarmament, will be able to emerge from the impasse that has lasted for more than 15 years. We emphasize the need for the Conference to address as soon as possible some priority issues, such as negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material, preventing an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and a convention on nuclear disarmament.

My country reiterates its support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is a political instrument of the first order to channel international cooperation efforts against this illegal activity. The international community must work towards negotiating a legally binding international instrument to identify and register such weapons, so as to press the fight against the traffic in small arms and light weapons. We place a very high premium on efforts to combat illegal trafficking.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to express to you, Sir, the sincere congratulations of my delegation on your election as Chair of the First Committee and to assure you of our full cooperation. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

I would like to commend Mr. Sergio Duarte for his statement, which was very relevant.

My delegation of course endorses the statements made at the Committee's 3rd meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Our deliberations here in the First Committee are taking place in an international context marked by progress with regard to controlling conventional weapons and by the determination to further strengthen international cooperation to find appropriate responses to new challenges. That is in stark contrast with the lethargy of the nuclear disarmament mechanisms.

All countries committed to promoting multilateralism agree on the importance of the effective implementation of all provisions of international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. It is therefore our duty to do our utmost to achieve the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

My country's commitment to issues of disarmament is an unswerving and permanent strategic choice that illustrates our firm commitment to international peace and security and to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. Being a party to all multilateral instruments on weapons of mass

destruction, my country remains committed to general and complete disarmament, in particular for irreversible, transparent and verifiable nuclear disarmament.

Morocco remains profoundly convinced of the relevance of the competent United Nations mechanisms in the field of disarmament and of international security. The enhanced effectiveness of those mechanisms remains dependent, we must recall and stress, on the political will of States and their respect for the commitments they have undertaken. The success of the eighth NPT Review Conference in particular showed that, thanks to dialogue, we are capable of reaching compromises that allow us to make steady progress towards achieving the NPT goals.

I wish to stress here that it is vital to bear in mind throughout our deliberations the goal of general and complete disarmament, in particular irreversible, transparent and verifiable nuclear disarmament.

Allow me now to share with the Committee the priority actions of my country in the realm of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The first priority action is the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Morocco believes that it is vital to hold an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East in application of the plan of action to implement the resolution of 1995. That conference would offer a historic opportunity to launch a process that would make it possible to rid the region of weapons of mass destruction.

My country stresses the importance of accession to the NPT and the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by all States in the Middle East region, including Israel. We welcome the consultation efforts undertaken to appoint a facilitator and identify a country to host the 2012 conference. We believe that those consultations should be stepped up in order to achieve our goal.

Morocco commends the initiative of the European Union in organizing an academic seminar on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, held last July in Brussels. We also welcome efforts by the IAEA Director General to organize a forum in Vienna on the same issue, in November 2011.

The second priority action for my country is the revitalization of the United Nations disarmament mechanisms. My country is profoundly convinced that establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons is contingent on the effectiveness of the United Nations mechanisms responsible for disarmament, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. Since its creation, the Conference has established itself as a unique forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations and an important body within which States can argue their positions. The lethargy to which the Conference has been confined for almost 11 years contrasts with the development of the international situation and the new security challenges facing the world. It undermines the ultimate goal sought by the international community, which is general and complete disarmament.

It is incomprehensible to us that multilateral disarmament initiatives abound in the margins of this United Nations body while the Conference is still unable to agree even on a programme of work. We share the view of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters that problems in the Conference on Disarmament that seemed to be related to issues of form are in reality of a political nature. Morocco reiterates its support for convening a special session on disarmament in order to establish a general diagnosis of the United Nations mechanisms responsible for disarmament.

My country's third priority action is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as soon as possible. Morocco advocates a complete ban on nuclear testing. We regret the acknowledged delay of the entry into force of the CTBT and reiterate our call to all States that have yet to ratify the Treaty to do so.

Despite the broad political support that it enjoys, that Treaty — whose importance was also stressed at the last NPT Review Conference — has still not entered into force, although the verification regime it requires is almost ready. Morocco, which from 2009 to 2011, along with France, coordinated international efforts with a view to facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty, is heartened by the new ratifications and the possibility of another by annex 2 States.

Our fourth priority action is strengthening non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security. It is vital to ensure that non-proliferation obligations and safety and security standards established by the

competent international institutions are scrupulously respected. Morocco welcomes the IAEA's efforts in that regard and believes that its financial and human capacities in the area of non-proliferation and technical cooperation for peaceful purposes must be strengthened.

Along the same lines, my country welcomes the holding in September of the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security, on the initiative of the Secretary-General, to draw lessons from the Fukushima disaster in Japan. My country hopes that the political will expressed during that meeting will translate into tangible measures. My country's active participation in several multilateral initiatives, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit, reflects the importance that it attributes to strengthening international and regional cooperation in the fight against the illicit trade in radioactive and nuclear materials.

The fifth and final priority action of my country is control of the circulation of arms and regulation of the arms trade. The uncontrolled and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in addition to the suffering and disasters that it causes, represents a real challenge to the stability, security and development of States, in particular in Africa. The absence of regulation of, and control over, the use and transfer of these kinds of weapons contributes to their uncontrolled spread in hotbeds of tension, particularly, unfortunately, on the African continent. Besides human suffering, it leads to unbearable consequences for the stability and security of States.

The capacity to respond to expectations of populations and civil society in this area puts to the test not only the effectiveness of disarmament mechanisms but that of the entire United Nations system. In that regard, my country firmly supports 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 Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Along similar lines, my country supports the conclusion of an arms trade treaty, whose terms of reference should expand to include small arms and light weapons and the negotiation of which should not ignore the fundamental principles of international law,

including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. In support of that process, Morocco organized in February in Casablanca, in cooperation with the European Union and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, a regional African seminar on the arms trade treaty. Morocco believes that regional and subregional cooperation is an essential tool in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The year 2012 will see major deadlines for disarmament and non-proliferation, including the conference on the Middle East, the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, the Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. These deadlines mean that we must all show political will and pull together in order to ensure the success of these meetings.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that as peace through disarmament is a common good of humankind, we should spare no effort to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and less inclined to an arms race at the expense of increasingly urgent imperatives such as combating poverty, pandemics and the deterioration of our environment.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker for today's meeting.

I shall now give the floor to representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): While international unanimity exists that the real and only nuclear threat in the Middle East region lies in Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, even to areas beyond the region, some people continue to deny that that threat exists today — even though it is manifest — and want to open imaginary doors to a sophistic dialogue of the deaf that is of dubious intent, dishonest and certainly not objective and clearly reveals the falseness of their declared intention to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

We regret hearing the non-declared alliance with Israel through what was said by the Ambassador of the Netherlands at the Conference on Disarmament. He meant to make a point by mentioning my country — in

a totally inappropriate and inaccurate way, aside from being provocative. It was only intended to cover up the actions of Israel, which is responsible for nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

Our colleague from the Netherlands does not have the right to preach at or criticize others. I am compelled, sadly, to remind him that his country has participated in the proliferation of nuclear arms and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Perhaps the incident of the airplane that crashed in 1992 near Amsterdam, carrying a cargo of radioactive and chemical materials, will prove his country's double standards and political hypocrisy. In his statement, he never even directly or explicitly mentioned Israel nor called on Israel to join the concert of nations as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

It is astonishing that the representative of Norway repeats the same pathetic allegations and throws stones at others, whereas her house is made of brittle paper. Contrary to what she said in her weak statement, her country, Norway, provided in a covert, clandestine manner, and without the knowledge of the International Atomic Energy Agency, large quantities of heavy water that helped Israel to produce nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in our region.

What is even more worrisome is that she did not mention Israel, nor did she call on Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State, especially since she herself has been Ambassador to Israel and knows better than anyone the reality of Israel's nuclear arsenal and weaponry, and that Israel has put Israeli nuclear engineers in Israeli prisons for long periods, as a way of intimidating and muzzling its critics.

If Norway truly wanted to promote non-proliferation, as it pretends to, then why does it not offer real, effective help in the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East? Let Norway stop furnishing technology and nuclear materials to Israel, as Norway is bound to do as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. If Norway really had good intentions, it would help the countries of the world, especially the International Atomic Energy Agency and the countries in the Middle East to put an end to Israeli nuclear weapons that threaten regional and international peace

and security. Instead, Norway has participated in a direct way — as have other countries — in the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world, principally in our region.

Our colleague from France made a reference to my country in a similar statement, which came as no real surprise to us, because we did not expect it to censure Israel for its attacks on a Syrian military site nor to uphold international law. I remind our colleague from France that France has a historic responsibility — more than any other State — for the nuclear danger posed by Israel. That is because France, sadly, was a pioneer in providing Israel with the Dimona nuclear reactor, which is capable of producing nuclear weapons. That has been going on since the 1950s, a time when nuclear weapons had not even been developed in China or other nuclear States.

We would be very pleased — as would other colleagues here — to hear a courageous statement from the representative of France and other countries that have helped Israel to build and acquire nuclear weapons, in which they finally recognize their guilt. They should make honest amends for their dangerous transgression, which threatens the future of the children and peoples of our region.

Their approach, which is not objective, and whereby they are in league against my country, is — to say the least — based on a flagrant double standard. It is a way of addressing things in a very deceptive way, especially when the Security Council itself, at its meeting on 14 July (see S/PV.6607), referred information on Syria directly to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, because that is the only competent body to assess this issue. This question, which is of a highly technical nature, should not be politicized here in New York.

Since the early 1960s, France has engaged in nuclear testing in the Algerian Sahara, even using human subjects to test those weapons. The French have bound Algerians alive to posts placed at a distance from the explosion site, so that they could test the impact of nuclear weapons on human beings, living Algerians. I put that grave crime before the amateurs here who want to make light of things. It was committed whether they want to know it or not.

The Chair: I would request that if members are going to reply to a statement, they try to reply to those

statements on the same day they were made. It would facilitate our work.

Mrs. Khoudaverdian (Armenia): I have asked for the floor during this general debate to exercise my delegation's right of reply, to make some comments regarding the intervention by the representative of Azerbaijan, who continued the standard practice of telling lies and falsehoods and referring to distorted facts and misleading figures about Armenia and the region.

Today, the international community is witnessing an unprecedented growth in the military budget of Azerbaijan, which has doubled and even tripled over the past few years. The enormous growth in military expenditure, coupled with aggressive anti-Armenian rhetoric containing explicit threats of the use of force, is an obvious manifestation of the arms race policy recently unleashed by the Azerbaijani authorities.

From the very outset, Azerbaijan has adhered to the policy of solving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by force, carrying out ethnic cleansing in the Armenian-populated areas of Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh and unleashing military aggression with the participation of thousands of mercenaries from known international terrorist organizations against the people of Nagorno Karabakh.

Allow me also to remind the Committee that, continuing its policy of solving the Nagorno Karabakh problem by force, Azerbaijan rejects the calls from the Secretary-General, the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries and other international organizations to reinforce the ceasefire regime. It instigates provocations on the line of contact and attempts to hamper the negotiation process within the OSCE Minsk Group, which is mandated with reaching a settlement to the conflict via the international community.

Resorting to such statements and actions, Azerbaijan tries to disguise its wrongdoings and evade responsibility for militarizing the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and for its consequences. The militaristic policy of the Azerbaijani authorities contradicts the letter and spirit of the relevant international instrument, namely, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. It also comes into conflict with various United Nations documents and resolutions related to the reduction of military budgets, regional disarmament,

conventional arms control at the regional level and transparency in armaments — issues that are part and parcel of the agenda of the disarmament discourse.

There is no doubt that this continued policy by Azerbaijan cannot yield any positive results. Quite the contrary, it will lead to an increased threat to the fragile security and stability in the region, resulting, inter alia, in a stalemate in efforts to resolve existing disputes in the South Caucasus.

Armenia will continue to follow up on Azerbaijan's Treaty violation case. It should be recalled that the exchange of information can be carried out within the regional and subregional frameworks and that such initiatives may work in parallel with the conflict resolution efforts in the region by preventing any further arms race and serving as a significant confidence-building measure.

Mr. Mammadaliyev (Azerbaijan): First of all, it has been internationally recognized that the Republic of Armenia occupied one fifth of Azerbaijani territory, and therefore there can be no doubt that any arms delivery to the aggressor State serves its continued occupation of Azerbaijani territories and is a source of concern not only for my State, but also for others.

I would like to use this opportunity to refer once again to the remark made by the Armenian President during his visit to NATO headquarters on 25 May 2010. He stated that the Armenian army has types of weaponry that countries "10 times the size of Armenia would dream of having". This statement is very illustrative and indicates the true level of Armenia's militarization.

The statement once again indicates that Azerbaijan has no choice other than to defend itself in the face of such a militarized aggressor. Since respective inspections have not revealed in the territory of Armenia the amount of weaponry that Armenia dreams of, the statement proves the legitimacy of Azerbaijan's concern, which I raised earlier, regarding the deployment by Armenia of a huge amount of armaments — including equipment listed in accordance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) — in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

It is clear that all the efforts of the Armenian side in international forums are about misinforming the international community and disguising the

consequences of its aggression. We are sure that the international community will not allow Armenia to do so and will take an adequate position on the behaviour of that State.

Allow me to return to the issue raised by my Armenian colleague about the budget. I would like to comment on the increase in the Azerbaijani military budget.

For us, it is just a bit weird that our neighbour is so worried about this fact, since, as we have stated previously, our country is undergoing the process of development, which is a natural process. Doubtless, once there is economic development and a general increase in the State budget, the share of all State sectors will subsequently be increased. Let me reiterate that our military expenditures are part of the overall increase in the budget of the country. From the point of view of quantitative indicators, we are not exceeding usual norms of peacetime expenditures. This process will be continued until the defence capabilities and security of Azerbaijan are fully ensured.

Moreover, comparative analysis shows that in correlation to its population, Armenia is much more militarized in terms of the number of military personnel and the quantity of armaments. So I think there is no need to mention the advantages of the military alliances to which Armenia is a party and Azerbaijan is not.

It is also curious how that State has the courage to preach about CFE commitments and refer to its provisions while it is itself the worst violator of them. Instead of accusing Azerbaijan, I would advise the Armenian side to direct their energy towards making clarifications and revealing their unreported procurements.

Allow me to switch to another issue that was also raised with regard to exceeding limitations. The Azerbaijani army is going through a modernization process, and old Treaty-limited equipment is being replaced by new and modern equipment.

It is actually not surprising that the Armenian side is once again making an unsuccessful attempt to mislead the international community. Perhaps it would be good to mention the situation in 2001, when Armenia, having circulated a new report under the Register of Conventional Arms, did not notify the United Nations of eight additional tanks it had

acquired. Only after Azerbaijan's statement on this issue was Armenia obliged to provide notification in the CFE Joint Consultative Group framework. Let me also remind the Committee that the Armenian side was obliged to report the purchase of 10 Su-25 combat aircraft after Azerbaijan raised this issue also, in 2005.

We could continue to this list, but these frequent mistakes create distrust between the States parties concerned and undermine transparency, especially in this situation of unresolved conflict.

Ms. Khoudaverdian (Armenia): I regret having to take the floor for a second time, but I cannot help mentioning that at a time when the Committee is jointly seeking ways to advance the disarmament agenda, the delegation of Azerbaijan continues to take the floor only for distorted, politically motivated and distracting statements.

If Azerbaijan is keen to find a resolution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, rather than wasting its

energy and resources on such groundless and provocative actions, it should direct them towards substantial, rather than formal, participation in the negotiation process within the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Mammadaliyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the remarks made by our Armenian colleague. Those remarks represent further evidence of Armenia's apparent disregard of its obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law, and also demonstrate how far that Member State is from engaging in a constructive search for peace in the region.

I do not wish to go into the issue of self-determination, but let me remind the Committee one more time that the fact of occupation was recognized by Member States and is stipulated in resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly and other international organizations.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.