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First Committee

8th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Ms. Golberg (Canada) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Canadian delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau. Rest assured that my delegation will do its part to ensure a productive session under your leadership.

Canada takes the floor today having served as the first of the Conference on Disarmament's six Presidents this year. Despite our vigorous efforts to get the Conference working again, we were not able to make any headway. The international community remains unable to start disarmament negotiations in the Conference. Furthermore, the fact that North Korea, a major proliferator of nuclear arms, held the presidency of the Conference struck a further blow to its credibility.

Procedural tactics and abuse of the consensus rule in the Conference on Disarmament have prolonged the already long-standing impasse and left some to wonder whether the Conference will ever play a constructive role again. In the light of this continuing stalemate, we believe that, during this session of the First Committee, we must seriously consider the manner in which the work of the Conference should be pursued. The Committee could, to that end, more closely consider Canada's draft resolution on negotiations on a fissile

material cut-off treaty (FMCT). A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices would be an important step towards reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation. We welcome the efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council to advance this issue.

Canada is also encouraged by the efforts made in the context of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative to launch negotiations on an FMCT. We also commend Australia and Japan on having co-hosted very productive side events held outside the Conference on Disarmament. Expert-level talks held there helped to provide momentum towards a future FMCT.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada is also encouraged by a number of other non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives which we view as making important contributions towards the common goal of a more secure world.

Canada welcomes the entry into force of the New START treaty. We commend the United States and Russia for the great efforts they expended in seeing this important Treaty enter into force. My country also welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1977 (2011), which extended for 10 years the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), a mechanism which monitors efforts to prevent weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) from falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-State actors.

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As Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs, John Baird, recently stated in his address to the General Assembly:

“Just as Fascism and Communism were the great struggles of previous generations, terrorism is the great struggle of ours.” (*see A/66/PV.26, p. 30*)

Canada believes that the extension of the Committee's mandate will allow for sustained capacity-building in the implementation of 1540 obligations. The implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) is an important mechanism to pursue our shared non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

To that end, Canada continues to uphold the principles of the Proliferation Security Initiative and encourages the broadest participation possible in its activities. We believe that the Initiative is an effective tool to improve the international community's ability to counter proliferation and an important complement to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In addition, Canada looks forward to the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, to be held in December 2011. Canada wants the Review Conference to be successful and hopes for the active participation of all States parties, as important challenges remain for the Convention to address. We will be discussing this further in our thematic statement, which we will deliver under the other weapons of mass destruction cluster.

Despite these laudable initiatives, the world continues to face serious proliferation concerns. Canada is deeply troubled that countries of proliferation concern continue to stand in the way of any real progress on international non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament efforts. It is imperative that the international community work to be strong in response to confirmed cases of non-compliance with nuclear non-proliferation commitments.

In this respect, Iran's failure to provide information on its nuclear activities with potential military dimensions, and its failure to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on a multitude of issues, betrays Iranian claims that its nuclear programme is peaceful in nature. Two IAEA Directors General have reported over a period of nearly

10 years that Iran has not lived up to the commitments to transparency and cooperation to which all Member States are held, particularly in regard to unresolved nuclear activities with possible military dimensions. Revelations of secret, undeclared enrichment sites in Iran are symptomatic of Iran's attitude towards safeguards and its international obligations, as well as the decisions of the IAEA Board of Governors and the Security Council. Iran's stated goals of further enriching nuclear material to 19.8 per cent, in spite of the illegality of any continued enrichment activity, is needlessly provocative and ill-advised if Iran wishes the world to believe that its intentions are truly peaceful in nature. Canada urges Iran to end this continued intransigence and to take steps to ease these tensions by complying fully and completely with Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors resolutions.

I look forward to a productive First Committee session this year and reiterate Canada's commitment to working with all delegations positively and constructively in this respect.

Mr. Hannan (Bangladesh): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your well deserved election as Chair of the First Committee. We look forward to a productive and fruitful session under your able stewardship. You can count on my delegation's fullest support and cooperation in discharging your responsibilities.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As a responsible member of the international community, Bangladesh has been doing its part for the promotion of international peace and security. We attach the utmost importance to general and complete disarmament in pursuance of our constitutional commitment. We have been a pioneer in South Asia in adhering to all multilateral disarmament treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Bangladesh's contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security through our participation in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts have received widespread recognition.

There is no denying that the greatest threat to humankind comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. Bangladesh believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee of a peaceful and secure world. Pending that ultimate goal, non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to receive security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. We note that the unilateral declarations made by five nuclear-weapon States, offering voluntary negative security assurances during the mid-1990s, were not adequate to dispel the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States, mainly due to the non-binding nature of such declarations.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and accession to their protocols may be useful interim steps towards securing negative security assurances. It is, however, obvious that setting up such zones may not be feasible in every region, including in South Asia. In any case, the use or non-use of nuclear weapons against any country is a problem of a global rather than a regional nature. Bangladesh therefore continues to stress the need for commencing negotiations on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument for negative security assurances as a matter of priority.

Bangladesh remains committed to the global agenda of nuclear disarmament and underscores the need to sustain the momentum in that direction. We therefore see merit in starting negotiations on a non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. We believe that such negotiations must take place in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), as that would bring all nuclear-weapon States on board. We also maintain that the negotiations should extend to existing stocks in order to make such a treaty comprehensive in its scope.

Bangladesh considers outer space to be a common heritage of humankind and calls upon the major space-faring nations to avert the weaponization of outer space. We believe that the CD should make progress in this critical area by building on the constructive work done so far. Bangladesh is a staunch supporter of the multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament must continue to uphold its legitimacy and credibility by breaking out of its current stalemate

and undertaking substantive work on the basis of consensus.

We urge the General Assembly to take necessary measures to convene a fourth special session on disarmament for the revitalization of the entire disarmament machinery, including the CD. We appreciate the Secretary-General's personal interest and initiatives in this regard.

We welcome the adoption of the report of the Conference on its work in 2011 (CD/1926). We have witnessed active and sustained engagement of delegations in the negotiation process towards finalizing the report. I thank all the 2011 Presidents of the CD for their dedicated work. We are encouraged by the regular high-level participation in the work of the Conference this year, which bears proof of its continued relevance and centrality to the global discourse on disarmament and non-proliferation.

We must recognize the need to make the CD more receptive to the global voices on disarmament by creating greater space for the participation of other relevant stakeholders. We endorse the call for moving towards global zero — a phased, verified elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide. It is a worthy initiative that deserves strong political support and direction.

Bangladesh reiterates the call for adopting a balanced approach in addressing the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament of countries currently possessing nuclear weapons, non-proliferation to countries not yet in possession, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for all. We recognize, as stipulated in article IV of the NPT, the inalienable rights of the States parties to development, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

We believe that the peaceful use of nuclear energy under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards can help address key development challenges. In this regard, Bangladesh, with the assistance and strict supervision of IAEA, has been working on civilian and peaceful uses of nuclear technology, especially in the agriculture and health sectors. Our Government is currently working towards the phased setting-up of a nuclear power plant for the generation of 1,000 megawatts of electricity in coordination with IAEA policy and technical support on nuclear safety and security.

Bangladesh has been the first annex 2 South Asian nation to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The universalization and entry into force of the CTBT at an early date would be crucial for attaining our objective of nuclear non-proliferation. The scientific applications of the verification regime of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization (CTBTO) have proved to be a critical resource, including in disaster prediction and preparedness. Bangladesh has set up an auxiliary seismic station in Chittagong under the CTBTO international monitoring system.

While we must continue to work for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, we must not lose sight of the perennial threats posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. Bangladesh has been following with interest the ongoing efforts to conclude an arms trade treaty to regulate the illicit movement and transfer of conventional weapons.

Bangladesh has acceded to most of the protocols of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Bangladesh remains committed to the Biological Weapons Convention regime and attaches importance to the full implementation of the provisions of that Convention, with focus on confidence-building measures.

As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Bangladesh calls for putting an end to the inhumane and unauthorized use of anti-personnel landmines. The international community must commit itself to enhancing financial and technical support for mine-clearing operations, as well as for the rehabilitation of victims in the affected countries.

It is evident that there is a need for a paradigm shift in international dialogue on peace and development in order to respond to the emerging global challenges of the twenty-first century. With that in mind, our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presented a people's empowerment and peace-centric development model in her address to the General Assembly last month (see A/66/PV.22). The multidimensional model emphasizes the need to promote social equity and justice and unlock the human potential of every individual in a world of peace.

That approach gives us a fresh perspective to consider the development dividends likely to emerge from arms control and disarmament. We must realize that we can ill afford to continue spending our economic, financial and intellectual resources on building stockpiles of armaments when our people go hungry, remain uneducated, cannot afford essential services and are vulnerable to diseases, climate change and natural disasters. That inherent paradox in our global discourse on peace and development must be resolved to address the inequities and disparities so prevalent in our world. The stock response in many parts of the world ridden by the current debt crisis has been to tighten the strings around development spending. It would perhaps help to take a step back and seriously question our approach, while we allow the mindless arms race around us to flourish unencumbered.

Mr. Lin (Singapore): Mr. Chair, my delegation congratulates you and the members of your Bureau on your appointments, and looks forward to working constructively with you in the coming weeks.

Singapore is heartened by the successful conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its inclusion of an action plan setting out practical steps on nuclear disarmament. The NPT is the only near-universal regime on the three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Its continued relevance is an important outcome of the Review Conference. That was followed by the recent entry into force of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and the Russian Federation in February 2011.

Singapore welcomes these positive developments and remains firmly committed to the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, Singapore has consistently supported the full implementation of non-proliferation treaty regimes such as the NPT, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). However, we are now in danger of dissipating the momentum that we have painstakingly gained. More concrete action needs to be taken to strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

First of all, long-standing and critical gaps in the existing framework must be addressed. Singapore thus urges all annex 2 countries that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so quickly in order to bring about the full realization of article VI of the NPT. We also welcome the convening of the seventh Review Conference of the BWC in Geneva this December.

Next, we must find ways to kick-start movement on issues that have yet to be addressed. It is disheartening to note that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains in a deadlock. This has ominous implications for the strengthening of international security. The CD is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum that brings together all the key players in the field and is therefore best placed to comprehensively address global disarmament issues.

Political will must be mustered and collective action taken to resolve the current impasse. We must enable the CD to continue its mission to advance the rule of law in the field of disarmament. There must be progress on all issues before the CD, namely, a nuclear-weapons convention, nuclear security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a fissile material cut-off treaty. But there should also be a pragmatic approach to making step-by-step advancements wherever possible, rather than holding any one issue hostage to another.

While it is the right of all countries under article IV of the NPT to develop nuclear power to meet their energy needs, all countries must reassure the international community that their intentions are peaceful and not directed at weapons development.

The Fukushima accident has shown that there is an urgent need to address issues related to nuclear safety. Singapore believes that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should drive the process to strengthen nuclear safety, and welcomes the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety that was adopted at its General Conference last month. In support of the IAEA's efforts, Singapore will host an Asia-Europe nuclear safety seminar in 2012 to address regional cooperation on emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones represents a prime example of a pragmatic and concrete step towards enhancing confidence and attaining the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament. Singapore therefore strongly supports the development of these zones. We are encouraged by the

renewed consultations on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the nuclear-weapon States, first in Geneva, Switzerland, this past August, and here in New York last week. Those consultations reflect the commitment of both sides to working constructively towards early accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the protocol of the Treaty. We will continue to engage with the nuclear-weapon States in that regard.

Singapore also supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not yet exist, especially in the Middle East, and looks forward to the 2012 conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In this context, Singapore welcomes the forthcoming IAEA forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, to be convened by its Director General and held at IAEA headquarters on 21 and 22 November.

Globalization will increase, not decrease, the cross-border flow of people and weapons-related technologies. The risks of proliferation require the constant vigilance of all Member States, coupled with renewed dedication to keep up momentum in the disarmament arena. We believe that multilateral efforts continue to show their immense value in addressing a wide variety of complex challenges. In this regard, we call on all States to cooperate with one another for global disarmament and non-proliferation in order to achieve our common goal of achieving a peaceful and secure world.

Mr. M'Beou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chair, I would like to join all those who have preceded me here in congratulating you and the members of the Bureau for electing you to steer the work of our Committee.

My delegation endorses the statements by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively.

In the course of our work in this body last year, we adopted some 50 draft resolutions calling on all Member States to take steps in the various fields of those resolutions to ensure that our world could achieve lasting peace and security.

It is certain that were we to conduct an evaluation of how far we have come since that time, we would find that only a very small number of those resolutions have been implemented with any visible result. This year, we will carry out the same exercise again. Useful as this may be — given that we are fighting for the survival of humankind — the lack of progress in certain areas calls into question our real willingness to make disarmament and international security a matter of genuine domestic and international concern. We therefore call on all countries to translate into action the recommendations contained in the draft resolutions that will be adopted this year.

The head of the Togolese delegation, along with other speakers in the general debate, as well as many participants right here, have stressed the serious impact of weapons of all kinds on international and national peace and security, development and human well-being.

In this regard, we welcome the numerous initiatives that have been adopted here and there over the years and particularly since the beginning of this year, not only to raise the alarm with respect to the danger of weapons to people's lives, but also to call for further action to reduce the risk of nuclear war, halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons, end nuclear testing and to combat and regulate the flow of arms.

Our Organization is at the forefront of various meetings being held in those spheres, with the valuable support of non-governmental organizations, which have worked tirelessly with Governments to achieve a world of peace and security. My country is grateful to them for all their activities.

Numerous Member States, including the nuclear-weapon States, have for a number of years worked in good faith and with an open frame of mind to advance the disarmament agenda. While commending that positive commitment, my delegation believes that the best gift to the community of nations would be to ratify the treaties banning the production, proliferation and testing of nuclear weapons.

In that context, it would be highly desirable for the work of the Conference on Disarmament to resume as soon as possible and for serious discussions to begin on all contentious issues, particularly the production of fissile materials. My delegation encourages all States members of the Conference to commit resolutely to the path of general and complete disarmament, and calls

on all States that have yet to do so to go beyond mere words and ideas by ratifying the legally binding international instruments. That call also goes out to countries that may seek to acquire nuclear weapons while hiding behind the right guaranteed in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for States to develop nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes.

Nuclear accidents throughout the world, despite precautionary measures taken to avoid them, must be a concern to all nations. On that note, the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security organized by the Secretary-General on 22 September was a good opportunity for States with nuclear reactors to assume their responsibility for the safety of their populations.

The relationship between disarmament and development is a subject of great importance to my delegation. Astute observers have long noted that our world would undoubtedly be a safer place if a tiny percentage of the money invested in the production and updating of arms were redirected to industrial development, agricultural and climate change programmes. Not only would that mitigate against unemployment, starvation and the disappearance of countries' extinction, but it would also bring domestic peace and stability. That is why my country, Togo, aware of its duty to defend its territory and maintain public order, devotes most of its resources to health care, education, jobs — in short, the social sectors.

It has also made combating the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons throughout the country one of its major priorities. The national commission for the fight against small arms and light weapons has carried out outreach, information and training campaigns on the manufacture, use and spread of such weapons. That vast programme, funded by the Government and international partners, has achieved considerable results on the ground.

In the light of the crises shaking our subregion and the porousness of our borders — which is conducive to crime and all sorts of trafficking — suitable measures have been taken to confront those scourges, with the cooperation and good intelligence provided by States members of the Economic Community of West African States.

In these matters, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, based in Lomé, continues to share its experiences through awareness workshops and training for African

countries on subjects as important and varied as developing and standardizing laws relating to arms, weapons brokering and trafficking, management of weapons stockpiles and the arms trade treaty.

My country reiterates its profound gratitude to all the countries and organizations that, since its establishment and especially these past two years, have extended financial and material support to the Regional Centre for its programmes. We encourage others to do likewise.

We have much hope that so long as the leaders of our world extol the virtues of peace, they will do their utmost to maintain it by working to eliminate weapons that gravely threaten that very peace.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and members of the Bureau on your election as Chair of the First Committee for this year. I take this opportunity to express our complete readiness to cooperate with you and to do our utmost to help the Committee to formulate draft resolutions and recommendations that meet the concerns of all Member States. We are fully confident that your experience and knowledge will contribute to the success of this year's meetings.

My delegation would also like to express its support for the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Government of Iraq, based on its belief in the importance of international peace and security, is seeking to create a world free of all weapons of mass destruction and supports all efforts in that field. Moreover, The Government of Iraq firmly believes that it is the responsibility of all Member States to respect and implement treaties and agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation. In addition to its commitment to those treaties and conventions, the Government of Iraq respects international arrangements related to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. In this context, I note that article 9 of the Iraqi Constitution states:

“The Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international obligations in the sphere of the non-proliferation, non-development and non-production of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and shall prohibit associated equipment, materiel, technologies, and delivery

systems for use in the development, manufacture, production, and use of such weapons.”

On the subject of the Conference on Disarmament, my Government reaffirms its standing position regarding the importance of pursuing efforts to end the deadlock in its programme of work and of the Conferences resuming the important and objective role it was created for. My Government focuses particular attention on the Conference on Disarmament, which has a record of successes. Therefore, Member States should redouble their efforts to agree on a comprehensive and balanced agenda that meets the concerns of all States members in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference, and to achieve progress on the issues of concern, which would be in the interest of international peace and security.

The Iraqi Government supports all initiatives aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference and at pushing the multiparty disarmament negotiations forward. Here, we stress the importance of States members of the Conference demonstrating the requisite flexibility. We also stress the importance of complete nuclear disarmament as one of the top priorities of the Conference agenda.

In this regard, my Government affirms its commitment to the principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the non-proliferation regime as cornerstones of maintaining international and regional peace and security. The Government also believes that the time has come to start the unconditional negotiation of a verifiable and non-discriminatory international fissile material cut-off treaty and to resolve the issue of stored fissile materials.

My Government recognizes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a step towards nuclear disarmament. It improves the security of countries in the zones and takes us closer to the ultimate goal of achieving and maintaining international peace and security. Zones free of those destructive weapons are important cornerstones in confidence-building at the regional level.

In this regard, we note that the prevention of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is a central and essential issue that threatens international and regional peace and security. My delegation would therefore like to reaffirm the importance of implementing the provisions of the final document of the 2010 Review Conference of the

Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) regarding the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Middle East is not at present free of nuclear weapons owing to the capabilities of Israel's military nuclear facilities, none of which is subject to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), unlike all other facilities in the region.

In that regard, my delegation notes the importance of implementing Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which states, in paragraph 5, that Israel must urgently place its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the IAEA. Paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991) calls for the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. If the resolution on the Middle East is not implemented, instability and tension in the region will continue and make it difficult to achieve the universality of the NPT, further exposing the whole NPT system to challenges and threats that will negatively affect the credibility of the Convention.

My delegation is closely following the efforts of the Secretary-General and the States parties to the NPT to prepare for the 2012 conference and the proposals for the post of facilitator and host country in order to implement the obligations listed in part IV, paragraph 7 (b) and (c), of the final document of the 2010 Review Conference.

With regard to guarantees not to use nuclear weapons or to threaten to use them, my Government believes that the active measures and arrangements of non-nuclear States will help to prevent the proliferation of those weapons. At the same time, such guarantees cannot be an alternative to the general and complete nuclear disarmament called for in article VI of the NPT.

In that regard, we reaffirm our demands to the Disarmament Conference with regard to the importance of establishing a subcommittee, with a negotiating mandate, entrusted with drafting a legal instrument that includes effective international arrangements to protect non-nuclear States from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them.

My Government has taken several steps to restore the regional and international role that Iraq enjoyed before 1991. Those steps resulted in Security Council

resolution 1957 (2010), adopted on 15 December, which removed all restrictions imposed on Iraq in the disarmament field. Iraq signed the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA on 9 October 2008. It is now before the Iraqi Parliament for ratification.

Iraq declared to the IAEA its voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol as of 17 February 2010, pursuant to article 17 of the Protocol. It submitted its initial declaration in that regard on 16 July 2010.

In that connection, an IAEA inspection team visited Iraq from 12 to 16 May 2011 as part of Iraq's efforts to implement its obligations, in accordance with the Additional Protocol. As part of its commitment to the obligations listed in Security Council resolution 1957 (2010), my Government made great efforts and took resolute and practical steps to accelerate the preparatory plans for the destruction of the decommissioned Al-Muthana storage facilities. The most important steps are setting up the project and appointing and creating national work teams in charge of destroying those two facilities. In addition, appropriate funds have been allocated to the project in order to prepare the worksite. In the same context, technical deliberations continue with countries interested in helping Iraq to reach a safe way to dispose of the contents of those two storage facilities.

I would like to mention that the first successful inspection visit to Iraq by a team from the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons successfully took place from 1 to 5 May. The head of the team underscored that Iraq had shown the necessary flexibility, and the Director-General praised Iraq's excellent cooperation with the team of experts.

For the first time, Iraq chaired the meetings of the substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which held meetings in New York from 4 to 22 April. Here, I would like to point out the importance of Iraq chairing the Commission following its liberation from the futile policies of the former regime.

The national unity Government has a policy of transparency towards the international community in implementing its international obligations, first and foremost, the prohibition of the production and

development of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their delivery systems.

Mr. Dennis (Liberia): Let me add my voice to previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. Your election is indicative of the enormous faith in your ability to guide our deliberations in the right direction. I also wish to congratulate members of your Bureau on their election and to wish them the best as we begin deliberations.

Liberia associates itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group (see A/C.1/66/PV.3).

Liberia submits that multilateralism is a *sine qua non* for achieving most of our goals in the disarmament process, and that the United Nations is the appropriate forum to address all issues of disarmament and arms control. In that regard, the First Committee plays an essential role, being the component of the General Assembly that has the responsibility to review disarmament and related issues affecting international peace and security.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority of all disarmament goals, including all related issues of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. As expressed in the statement of the African Group, we believe that the ultimate aim of the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. That process also upholds the principle of undiminished and enhanced security for all States.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an important cornerstone of the disarmament process. As part of the global community, Liberia encourages all States to adhere to the principle and idea of the NPT in all its aspects, including the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones across all regions of the world.

Liberia reaffirms that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) remains the sole competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring the compliance of States parties with their safeguards agreements, undertaken in fulfilment of their Treaty obligations. We call on all Member States to adhere to

the safeguards mechanisms of the IAEA and its protocols.

We commend the Secretary-General for convening the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security on 22 September. That laudable effort of the Secretary-General would no doubt help to promote the highest international standards of nuclear safety and security and to put the issue, which concerns all of us, on the front burner of negotiations.

We reaffirm that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We see the current impasse in the Conference as unhelpful to the overall principle of multilateral disarmament negotiations. We call on the Conference to agree, by consensus, on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

Liberia hails the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty on 15 July 2009, and calls on all States that have not yet ratified it to do so without further delay. In particular, we call on nuclear-weapon States to do so in order to ensure its effectiveness.

We wish to underline disarmament as a means of stopping human suffering. As a country that has witnessed the true meaning of mayhem as a result of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, we consider so-called small arms our very weapons of mass destruction. In view of that, countries of the West African subregion are cooperating, within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States, to address the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Liberia still grapples with some of the challenges, but we speak as a nation that has known real but unnecessary war. That is what happens when the world fails to contain illicit arms sales, including those of small arms and light weapons, which continue to destroy thousands of human lives.

Notwithstanding such challenges, we remain undaunted and vigilant about the illegal trans-shipment of small arms and light weapons in our region. We believe that the only way to curtail it is to strengthen collective efforts to tackle the menace. For that reason, we commend New Zealand for its pivotal role in addressing the key elements of the programme of action through a robust exercise during the meeting of governmental experts in May of this year.

My delegation is committed to actively supporting Nigeria as the Chair-designate of the 2012 Small Arms Review Conference. We believe that the year 2012 holds enormous promise with both the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference of the programme of action.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our support for the ongoing negotiations on an arms trade treaty. My delegation is committed to the process in its entirety, having critically assessed its benefits. We believe that it is time to halt the unwarranted suffering and the destabilizing effects of the illicit transfer of arms on the socio-economic well-being and stability of all regions.

The Chair: I would like to congratulate the Liberian representative and his Government and people on the recent Nobel Peace Prize awarded to his President and another national of Liberia.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to offer you our congratulations, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, which we hope will successfully conclude its work under your wise leadership. We also congratulate all other members of the Bureau, and affirm our commitment to make a positive contribution to the outcome of our deliberations.

We welcome the statement made by Ambassador Sergio Duarte at the beginning of the session. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Group, and would like to add the following comments.

In 2010, in this same forum, we underscored the existing positive climate in the nuclear disarmament agenda — a propitious framework that resulted in positive developments in the area. Although some optimistic signs still exist, we nevertheless view with concern the symptoms of deadlock that have affected some areas for years, as well as the very modest progress in other areas, in particular, the implementation of the road map conferred on us by the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in its plan of action.

With regard to the positive side of disarmament this year, we witnessed the entry into force of the new START agreement, which is certainly a significant step

towards that goal. However, only a minimal fraction of the arsenal remaining operational after its full implementation would suffice to destroy humankind in a short time. We therefore urge the United States and the Russian Federation to promptly implement it and to continue reducing their nuclear arsenals. In that context, we urge the permanent five to continue the dialogue initiated in Paris in July this year with a view to greater transparency, fostering mutual confidence and displaying sustained leadership in that regard.

Although unilateral, bilateral and regional efforts contribute to the goal of disarmament, it is in the area of multilateral negotiations that the signs of paralysis that we all know can be seen and that have already been extensively discussed in this and other forums. Progress requires the political will of States and functional mechanisms to implement it. We reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism in general and in the areas of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, in particular. We value effective multilateral institutions for disarmament and security that function as a guarantee of the security interests of the international community and of each individual State.

In that context, after more than 10 years of paralysis, the Conference on Disarmament has reached a position that can be described as untenable. A revitalization process aimed at an agreement allowing the Conference to resume its negotiating function requires a broad political consensus emerging in a context in which countries feel that they have a real place to participate in the building of a safer world and to protect their legitimate national interests.

It is not a matter of replacing the Conference on Disarmament. We prefer to continue working in it as the negotiating forum, par excellence, in that area. However, its indefinite status quo will make it increasingly difficult to question the legitimacy of seeking alternative options to guarantee operational and functional disarmament machinery.

We therefore appeal for renewed efforts to achieve consensus so that the Conference on Disarmament can adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that includes negotiations on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, including the issue of existing stocks. Approaching those topics with the necessary flexibility

and political will can help to unlock the existing status quo.

The NPT Review Conference, its action plan, the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations convened by the Secretary-General in September 2010, resolution 65/93 and the general debate organized by the President of the General Assembly on 27 July demonstrate the international community's concern about the functioning of the disarmament machinery in general, including the Conference on Disarmament.

We reaffirm that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We underscore the importance of achieving its universal acceptance and the balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Convinced of the need for close follow-up of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and its action plan, we support the work being done in that matter by the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, and we commend the joint statement made on 22 September by the Foreign Ministers and representatives of Germany, Australia, Canada, Japan, Poland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Chile.

As members of the first densely populated zone to be declared nuclear-weapon-free, under the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we reaffirm the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones and their contribution to peace and security globally and regionally. For that reason, we urge all the parties involved to fulfil the commitment made at the NPT Review Conference to advancing the implementation process for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that nuclear disarmament should be approached by working simultaneously on a number of fronts. We must continue to reduce nuclear weapons until their total elimination, and we must press for the prompt elimination of non-strategic nuclear weapons; the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategies; the consistent application of the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency; and the building of increased mutual confidence. We also need an effective reduction of the

operational status of deployed nuclear-weapons systems.

Within this framework, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a vital link. At the recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 23 September, it was clear that the international community was concerned about the topic. In this context, we strongly appeal to Governments and parliaments of brother countries that have not yet signed, ratified or acceded to the Treaty to do so promptly.

Chile supports promoting the international safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency and strengthening it through universal accession to the Additional Protocol. We also support the objective identification and firm condemnation of the dangers posed by proliferation. Effective prevention mechanisms must be identified.

The possibility of nuclear weapons being used by non-State actors or terrorist groups is a latent threat to the international community. We therefore support efforts to enhance nuclear security through international cooperation, and hope to participate actively in the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit, to be held in the Republic of Korea.

Chile reaffirms its commitment to supporting all multilateral measures to promote disarmament and non-proliferation and prohibit the use of all weapons of mass destruction. We condemn the military use of biological and chemical weapons by any country in any circumstances, and we urge universal accession by States to the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions.

The past few years have been a fruitful period for consolidating and advancing instruments regulating conventional weapons, such as the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in August last year. That instrument represents a qualitative step forward in the area of international humanitarian law and an instance in which the international community and civil society are working together. In this connection, we also reaffirm our support for and accession to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the need to move towards the total elimination of all mines.

Our delegation would like to highlight the progress made towards an arms trade treaty. We strongly support the preparatory process for the 2012 United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, and note the progress made in deliberating the structure and contents of such a treaty at the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, under the leadership of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina.

Another urgent topic is that of small arms and light weapons. The effects of this scourge, measured in lives destroyed, are essentially equivalent to those of weapons of mass destruction. We support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be evaluated at the 2012 Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which we hope will provide an opportunity to update and adapt the instrument to the new challenges.

I conclude by emphasizing the need for resolute commitment and the necessary political will to create the climate of mutual confidence needed for progress on disarmament. In this connection, we hope to make a constructive contribution to the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Šćepanović (Montenegro): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and other members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Montenegrin delegation throughout this session. I am confident that, under your able leadership, we will make progress towards achieving our common goals.

Last year was a good year for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Significant progress was achieved on a number of fronts. In May, the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted by consensus a comprehensive final document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), which contains a balanced action plan that builds on steps agreed in 2000 and recommends far-reaching concrete measures for making progress towards achieving a vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Preparatory work started on the arms trade treaty. The Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force.

This year saw tangible results as well. The New START agreement between the Russian Federation and

the United States entered into force in February. The five permanent members of the Security Council held a follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference in Paris, at which they reaffirmed their unconditional support for the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Montenegro welcomes all agreements of the nuclear Powers on mutual reduction in their nuclear capacities and in general supports global nuclear non-proliferation efforts, which are essential to creating a safer world for present and future generations. We therefore object to any further expansion of the number of countries that possess nuclear weapons.

Montenegro welcomes the progress made so far in the arms trade treaty negotiating process. We will continue to support that process and conclusion of the treaty, which will establish common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. We look forward to a fruitful fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the Arms Trade Treaty in February and ultimately a successful Conference in July 2012.

My country is also committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Montenegro reaffirms its attachment to the universalization and full implementation of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions, and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Each of those mechanisms has an essential role to play in preventing the risks associated with the use of weapons in their respective domains.

2011 is an especially important year for the Biological Weapons Convention. The upcoming seventh Review Conference of that Convention is a valuable opportunity for States parties to review and further strengthen the proper application and effective implementation of that instrument in light of the new challenges we are now facing.

Montenegro supports the swift entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its universalization. The civil benefits of the CTBT verification system, including the international monitoring system, as demonstrated by the Fukushima accident, have proven to be of utmost help and should be further explored.

We cannot but take note of the legitimate frustrations caused by the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which has lasted over a decade and a half. Montenegro supports efforts aimed at getting the CD back to substantive work. For that reason, Montenegro was a co-signatory of the letter and joined the initiative calling for the convening of the General Assembly High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations. We truly hope that practical steps will be taken to bridge differences so that the CD can soon adopt a programme of work and begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and other important instruments.

Montenegro is firmly dedicated to playing an active role and contributing constructively to the overall efforts in global disarmament and non-proliferation in pursuit of our ultimate shared goal of a safer world for all.

The Montenegrin delegation looks forward to engaging in the issues on the agenda of the First Committee and is open to constructive cooperation in all fields. I would therefore like to assure you, Sir, of our support in bringing this session to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Al-Abri (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman, I have great honour in offering you my sincere congratulations on your election to the Chair of the First Committee during the work of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. I am confident that your long experience and diplomatic skills will bring positive results.

Allow me also to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election, and to express my appreciation to your predecessor and his colleagues for the work they did during their term of office. I take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement (see A/C.1/66/PV.3), and for the part he and his team have played in strengthening the disarmament machinery. My delegation also supports the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Many meetings and high-level international conferences have been held over more than three decades in efforts to advance nuclear disarmament talks and reduce nuclear proliferation. In affirming our

support for nuclear non-proliferation, we hope that the results of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York in May 2010, can be translated into action.

My country also looks forward to the possibility that the hoped-for 2012 conference on declaring the Middle East a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction will take place, bearing in mind the legitimate right of States to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the NPT and under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this context, my country calls on Israel to respond to global appeals to ratify the NPT and to allow the IAEA to inspect and report on all its nuclear facilities.

Regarding the Iranian nuclear issue, the Sultanate of Oman encourages all parties to recognize the need to pursue negotiations and dialogue so as to find a peaceful solution that safeguards security and stability in that important region, guarantees Iran's right to benefit from the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and dispels the international community's fears.

The Sultanate of Oman, like other Arab countries, calls once again for a region free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and is confident that achieving this goal will help create a positive atmosphere of cooperation among the countries of the region, promote trust and control the arms race, and foster a climate of confidence and peace that will have a positive effect on the entire world and on international peace and security. Establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is enormously important and deserves the backing and support of the international community.

In support of this proposal, my country calls on Israel to accede to the NPT and to subject all its nuclear facilities to systematic monitoring, in accordance with the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime and in implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which objectively tied the indefinite extension of the Treaty to the establishment of a region free of weapons of mass destruction and to Israel's accession to the Treaty. Unfortunately, there has been no progress on this so far.

The success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and its final document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) demonstrated genuine political willingness on the part of the international community to move forward on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and universalization of the Treaty so that the world may enjoy security, stability and prosperity. However, this will not happen if tangible progress is not made in implementing the three pillars of the Treaty — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — along with the implementation of the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. My country welcomes the IAEA's convening of a special forum on such a zone, to be held in Vienna on 21 and 22 November. My country hopes that the forum will achieve positive results aimed at establishing a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and promoting confidence among the countries of the region.

My delegation hopes that the action plan laid out by the Review Conference will lead to acceleration of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. That in turn will contribute fundamentally to the sustainable development and energy sufficiency of developing countries.

My delegation commends the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security convened by the Secretary-General on 22 September on the sidelines of the general debate of the sixty-sixth session, and supports its findings, which focused on enhancing nuclear safety and security, making every effort to improve standards and respond rapidly to disasters, and seeking full transparency on all nuclear issues. We also welcome the action plan for nuclear safety and security adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors.

My country affirms its full commitment to the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and has long enacted comprehensive legislation to combat this phenomenon.

In conclusion, my delegation calls on all Member States to fulfil their commitments to disarmament treaties and conventions, especially those concerning nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We hope that under your leadership, Sir, the Committee's

deliberations will contribute to fulfilling the aspirations of all the people of the world to live in security, peace and stability.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, as well as Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and to thank him for his constructive efforts in support of our work.

My delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The challenges facing our world as a result of the vertical and horizontal threats posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), especially nuclear weapons, have become a source of major concern. International alarm continues to grow concerning the alarming number of such weapons possessed by certain countries that have repeatedly declared publicly their readiness to use them in support of political objectives and gains.

We should therefore all ask ourselves whether it is not high time — more than 40 years after the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — that the nuclear-weapon States respect article VI of the Treaty and work resolutely and seriously to rid the world of nuclear weapons and the dangers they pose. The only guarantee of global peace and security is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the first of the four pillars of the NPT States.

Over the past year, NATO has again adopted a military strategy that is predicated on nuclear weapons. This security and military policy of NATO may well increase the danger of nuclear weapons being used around the globe, sending a negative message to the overwhelming majority of countries that see the need to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Maintaining national security is the right of all States, guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations, and is not the sole preserve or prerogative of certain countries so that they can justify their circumvention of the principle of nuclear non-proliferation; nor can it serve as a pretext for the use of double standards that block nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me recall our affirmation that Israel has continued, decade after decade, to

receive advanced nuclear technology from nuclear-weapon States. Those States continue to uphold the exception for Israel, which runs counter to the NPT and allows Israel to manufacture and produce nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, thereby jeopardizing the entire Middle East and beyond.

Some nuclear-weapon States continue to regulate nuclear arms control in an asymmetrical manner in order to directly serve their narrow interests and those of certain States, to the detriment of international peace and security. This is borne out by the statements issued by some of those countries to the effect that there is a link between the commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and what they refer to as their national security and the security of their allies. This is a new discriminatory approach that could indeed destroy the international consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The regrettable accident at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima, Japan, bears out our legitimate concerns about the Dimona nuclear facility in Israel, which have been further deepened by statements — made by some Israeli nuclear scientists who helped to build such facilities — that the Dimona facilities should have been shut down years ago, as they have become obsolete by all international standards.

A number of the practical measures adopted by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT are limited and no longer sufficient, and we are deeply concerned because to date the Review Conference has not been able to produce a programme of work with time-bound deadlines for the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. More than a year has elapsed since the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the adoption of its Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), which contains conclusions and recommendations, four of which relate to the Middle East. Indeed, a general call has been made for that region to become the fifth nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We are also troubled because the measures contained in section IV, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b), of the Document have not been implemented. A host country has not been designated for the holding of the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and no facilitator has been appointed to support the implementation of the 1995 resolution.

We therefore call on the Secretary-General and the three countries that submitted the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East to meet their commitments and to step up close consultations with the countries of the region. We wish also to reaffirm the views expressed at the Review Conference in connection with declaring the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, that pressure should be brought to bear on Israel to accede to the NPT, as all other countries of the region have done. It must subject all its facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), IAEA resolution GC(53)/RES/17 and other relevant resolutions, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Here we should warn against the danger of international silence concerning Israel's policies, which have shifted from nuclear ambiguity to openly declaring that it possesses and is prepared to use such weapons. All this has been met with a rather strange silence, which only confirms our suspicion that some States wish to protect Israel from the consequences of its non-compliance with its relevant international obligations.

This abnormal situation is thus protected and has gone on for too long; the NPT regime has lost its credibility. We recall the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT, under article IV of the Treaty, to acquire, develop and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The IAEA should foster cooperation among States to promote that right. We object to any attempt to construe the text in a manner that would diminish that right, which would represent a departure from the initial goal.

In closing, the Conference on Disarmament is the only forum for the consideration of disarmament issues. The rules of procedure of the Conference need to be observed and respected, as they ensure that its work is done on the basis of consensus. In this context, we stress that the Conference must adopt a balanced, comprehensive programme of work. That programme should seek the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in keeping with a precise, binding and unconditional time frame, together with the negotiation of a legally binding global instrument on negative security assurances to ensure that non-nuclear-weapon States are neither threatened by nor subject to the use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. There

should also be negotiations to prohibit an arms race in outer space, as well as on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, Sir, to join with previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and likewise extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. Please be assured that you have the full support of the Uruguayan delegation.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Uruguay is committed to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. For that reason, our country wishes to underscore the progress made in the recent Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which adopted a substantive Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) and identified 64 steps for progress in implementing the provisions of the NPT. We hope that the consensus we achieved will promote further progress at the 2015 Review Conference, beginning with the work of its Preparatory Committee next year.

Despite this advance on the part of the international community, we need not only the implementation of instruments complementary to the NPT but also the earliest possible commencement of negotiations aimed at the ultimate goal of a nuclear-free world.

Uruguay would like to stress yet again the decisive importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. With that in mind, we urge the annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. We hail the steps taken by some of those States with a view towards ratification, and reiterate our appeal to all States of the international community to maintain their moratorium on nuclear and similar tests.

With respect to pending negotiations, Uruguay appeals for the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations without further delay on a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. At the same time, my country requests the unconditional start of negotiations on a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will not suffer the catastrophic effects of the use or threat of use of such weapons by the nuclear-weapon States.

To this end, I recall Uruguay's proposal, in the framework of the eighth NPT Review Conference, to negotiate a protocol additional to that treaty that would legally and bindingly enshrine negative security assurances in favour of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, which would also serve as an incentive for countries that have not yet adhered to the NPT to do so. Similarly, Uruguay calls for the negotiation of new, effective and verifiable multilateral instruments aimed at preventing an arms race, including the placement of weapons in outer space.

Uruguay reiterates its firm support for the Secretary-General's five-point proposal on disarmament and non-proliferation, which offers ample opportunities for progress in those areas.

My country is aware of many valuable initiatives on disarmament originating from various countries or groups of countries and centres of discussion. They all share a concern for the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We understand that it would be beneficial to coordinate the existing initiatives, consider them in perspective, and take advantage of their synergies in order to better trace the path ahead. Those initiatives should converge constructively, within a clear-cut time frame, towards the goal that inspires us all, namely, the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that regard, we affirm our conviction in the importance of delivering a decisive political message in which all players involved come together to advance disarmament and a non-proliferation agenda after far too many years of deadlock.

As a member country of the Treaty of Tlatelolco that made Latin America and the Caribbean the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in one of the most densely populated areas of the world, Uruguay has continually promoted the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world. Convinced that stability in the Middle East is vital to that region and the international community as a whole, we urge all States to redouble their efforts to achieve one of the most important measures from the eighth Review Conference of the NPT, namely, to hold in 2012 a conference in which all States of the Middle East would participate to the end of establishing in that region a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Uruguay is convinced that in order to strengthen the regime of full general disarmament with strict and

efficient international controls, there must be effective implementation of conventions advocating the prohibition and elimination of other weapons of mass destruction.

Uruguay is a firm advocate of a legally binding agreement on the conventional arms trade, which today causes countless victims in all regions. Our country will continue to actively and constructively participate in the process culminating in the adoption of an arms trade treaty in 2012.

Uruguay recognizes the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as a truly multilateral forum of the international community for disarmament negotiations, and of its lead role in the substantive negotiation of the priority issues of disarmament. However, as was stressed by the majority of delegations at the meeting of 27 July in follow-up to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Revitalization of the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations (see A/65/PV.113), it is clear that the Conference on Disarmament has reached an untenable impasse. While various reasons and interpretations have been put forward to explain the failure of the Conference's work in recent years, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that the supreme multilateral negotiating body on disarmament discharges its mandate.

In this respect, Uruguay believes that one possible measure is to expand Conference membership to those States that have expressed their legitimate interest in being members of that body. Our country has formally expressed its wish to become a member of the Conference on Disarmament, as have 25 other States who have advocated such an expansion since 1982. Uruguay understands that this issue, too, cannot be postponed indefinitely, so we are gratified by the appeal for the appointment of a special coordinator to consider an expansion in the membership of the Conference on Disarmament with a view to examining modalities for reviewing its composition.

Furthermore, Uruguay believes that if the Conference on Disarmament is not able to break its stalemate, it is inevitable that the General Assembly will have to act pursuant to its mandate under the United Nations Charter, whose Article 11, paragraph 1, stipulates that the Assembly may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of

international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to Members or to the Security Council.

In conclusion, we must recognize that in the bilateral sphere, the disarmament and non-proliferation world has made some progress that, albeit modest, is to be commended. In this respect, we welcome the successful conclusion of the New START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation and the readiness displayed by the permanent five to consider issues concerning transparency, verification and confidence-building measures. This progress should not be halted.

Nonetheless, the international community must shore up these efforts in a multilateral manner and through institutions that the United Nations has legitimately established to address these issues. We must direct all our efforts to revitalizing the means at our disposal in order to make progress towards achieving disarmament and stopping proliferation, in keeping with the United Nations Charter. We need to work with open minds and in the spirit of renewal for the common good. We cannot and do not have the right to shirk this responsibility.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, for taking up the important task of chairing this Committee. Please accept my delegation's assurance of our full support for your challenging work and our best wishes for your endeavours.

As we convene here today, we hope that the result of our work can be positively influenced by the progress we have been witnessing for the past couple of years in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Such is the case of the results achieved at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), where we took important steps towards a safer world. We have also witnessed recently the entry into force of the New START agreement, renewing the momentum for the disarmament goals we all share. On the conventional weapons side, tangible progress towards an arms trade treaty has been made, increasing the prospects of a diplomatic conference for its adoption next year.

However, much remains to be done. The impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, which has lasted

for more than a decade, reminds us of the need to move faster in areas such as the fissile material cut-off treaty. Negotiations on such a treaty should start at once, while a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons by all concerned States needs to be immediately upheld. Serious consideration should also be given to all the other core issues.

Twelve years have gone by since the last review of the Conference on Disarmament's membership, and no further action has since been taken. The Conference needs to become more open and more inclusive. More countries should be able to join in, making the Conference truly representative of the world we live in. We just heard the Permanent Representative of Uruguay speak eloquently on this theme, and we fully support what he said. We have thus called for the Conference, at its next session, to initiate consideration of the review of its membership by appointing a special rapporteur to examine the enlargement modalities without any prejudice to the outcome.

Trust and confidence are at the very core of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy rests on this premise. In this regard, we are deeply concerned by the lack of assurances from Iran on the civilian nature of its nuclear programme. We urge Iran to engage without preconditions with the international community in the negotiation of a solution that gives credible and internationally verifiable assurances on the peaceful purpose of its programme.

The non-compliance by Syria with its Safeguards Agreement is yet another cause for concern. We thus urge Syria to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a fully transparent and cooperative way.

We are equally concerned by the latest developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by its international obligation to return to full compliance with its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations.

Portugal, along with its European partners, is committed to the efforts that are currently being taken in various international forums to create a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which we see as an important step towards peace and stability in the region and beyond. In this regard, we look forward to the IAEA forum next

month and to the United Nations conference in 2012 on the establishment of such a zone.

Fifteen years have passed since the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Regrettably, the Treaty has not yet entered into force. Nevertheless, we welcome the commitment by some annex 2 States to its ratification, and we call on all States that have not done so to ratify the Treaty at an early date. It is essential that this important Treaty remain high on the world's disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

We are fast approaching the seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. At the Conference, we should endeavour to tackle issues such as the universalization of the Convention and the strengthening of some of its provisions, namely, those related to confidence-building measures and to building confidence in compliance. We note that the Convention remains the only convention on weapons of mass destruction that still lacks a verification mechanism. We hope that this situation can be changed so we can reduce and eventually eliminate the serious threat that these weapons pose.

In conclusion, we have outlined some of the key issues that, in our opinion, delay the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope that the work of the First Committee at this session can make a tangible contribution to real progress towards those goals, thus increasing international security and stability.

Ms. Traoré (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Please accept our sincere wishes for the success of your work. We also congratulate the members of the Bureau and assure them of our full cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States, respectively.

The entire world, and Africa in particular, is afflicted by the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. Their excessive and uncontrolled use in certain conflict-torn countries compounds humanitarian crises affecting the most vulnerable civilian populations, namely, women, the elderly and children,

whose use as soldiers in various theatres of operations we strongly deplore.

In addition to the loss of lives and the destruction and scattering of families, the large-scale and excessive use of small arms and light weapons also creates a financial drain that slows economic development on my continent. In this respect, we cannot fail to mention the huge financial resources devoted to difficult and sometimes hypothetical disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes instead of to useful investments that could be made to benefit our populations. The international community must therefore act urgently, and we have a moral duty to work to contain this phenomenon.

The complexity of the scourge and the involvement of numerous actors call for great political will on the part of Governments and coordinated and strengthened State action through the establishment of international and regional mechanisms. My delegation therefore calls for improved implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which remains an important instrument in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It also welcomes the conclusions of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States Parties to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held from 14 to 18 June 2010, and invests great hope in the deliberations of the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, scheduled for June 2012.

In that spirit, my country participates actively in the work of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which since 2006 has held a convention on small arms and light weapons, their munitions and other related materials, in order to confront the illicit arms trade in the subregion. Thanks to domestic mechanisms created by its member States to ensure implementation of the Programme of Action, the organization has made substantive progress.

Burkina Faso attaches great importance to follow-up to the issue of small arms and light weapons, and trusts that the multilateral negotiations on an arms trade treaty will culminate in 2012 in finding a way to control that sector and thereby reduce the suffering of populations. As its contribution, my country took an active part in New York this year at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations

Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, to be held in July 2012, and in the open-ended working group of governmental experts on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Burkina Faso remains convinced that strengthened actions of the entire international community to support regional initiatives will help in addressing that scourge. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should consider further attention to that matter.

The world will live in peace and security when general disarmament is total and complete under a transparent and verifiable international control and monitoring system. Sadly, we remain very far from that goal, and humankind continues to suffer the permanent threat of weapons of all kinds, in particular weapons of mass destruction, whose devastating effects are well known.

On the topic of nuclear weapons, until they are eliminated from our planet the entire world will continue to live in fear of their effects. That is why Burkina Faso urges the international community to enhance the non-proliferation regime. To that end, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime, launching the multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, and action within the Disarmament Commission to halt the production of fissile material remain overriding priorities.

Burkina Faso welcomes the holding of the seventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). While congratulating Ghana and Guinea on having ratified the Treaty, we call on the annex 2 States to accede to that major nuclear non-proliferation instrument.

Convinced that nuclear-weapon-free zones have a positive impact on nuclear disarmament, my delegation welcomes the entry into force on 15 July 2009 of the Treaty of Pelindaba and urges all the African States that have not yet done so to ratify it in order to enable the continent to honour its commitments to the international community.

The consequences of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station in Japan are still fresh in our minds. Those tragic events once again highlighted our vulnerability to such disasters and required us to rethink the nuclear safety regime, particularly at a time when nuclear energy is a major hope for many countries. My country reiterates its solidarity with the Japanese people in the wake of that difficult ordeal.

My delegation commends Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for convening the high-level meeting on nuclear security and safety on 22 September. Its relevant outcomes will enhance our understanding in the search for an appropriate solution. Burkina Faso remains convinced that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must be based on the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the disarmament of nuclear arsenals, and the right of all States parties to the Treaty to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in conformity with their non-proliferation commitments.

With respect to chemical and biological weapons, the international community should also pursue its efforts to eliminate completely such weapons from our planet, as they are another source of concern in the field of disarmament.

Burkina Faso reiterates its support for the United Nations disarmament mechanisms, in particular the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We remain troubled, however, by the lethargy of both entities, which is at odds with the security concerns of the moment. It is indeed inconceivable that, after 10 years, the Conference remains unable to launch negotiations on subjects that are so crucial to the survival of humankind. The international community should therefore make its utmost effort to break the deadlock, which does not help to strengthen mutual confidence among the main actors.

At the subregional level, we welcome the revitalization of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in Lomé, Togo, whose myriad activities make it an important central actor in the disarmament process in the African continent.

Burkina Faso is working actively to establish peace and security in the West African subregion. A party to the main disarmament treaties and

conventions, it remains willing to contribute to building a safer world for all.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): At the outset, I would like on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session, and to wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in your important work. The delegation of Serbia assures you of its readiness to engage constructively and to fully cooperate in our collective endeavour of making the world a safer and more peaceful place.

In addition to traditional threats, the new millennium has brought new challenges to international security that could seriously impact the international community as a whole. Serbia believes that the role of proactive multilateralism is indispensable to addressing those challenges effectively and sustainably. It is convinced that effective multilateralism in the areas of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament is not only necessary but also possible if the spirit of cooperation, compromise and flexibility, as well as a common vision and strategic foresight, are embraced by all. Moreover, in my country's view, there is no alternative to such an approach in a world of increasing interdependence and complexity, where common challenges require common solutions.

Serbia supports all efforts aimed at strengthening global security and promoting international stability. It has acceded to all major international agreements in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, and is committed to the full and systematic implementation of the obligations it has assumed.

The success of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is of particular significance in strengthening the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and in reaffirming the NPT as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. Serbia welcomes the fact that the 2010 NPT action plan was agreed by consensus and that it contains a number of important measures related to all three pillars of the Treaty. Intensified joint efforts are required in order to translate the conclusions and recommendations of the Review Conference into concrete results that will significantly contribute to the continued vitality of the Treaty and thus pave the way to a world free of nuclear weapons. The forthcoming new cycle of the NPT review process will be an opportunity to assess the

practical achievements in the implementation of the action plan and to define ways to boost progress in this regard.

My country is committed to the consistent fulfilment of its obligations under the NPT and has taken extensive legislative, regulatory and other measures to implement the Treaty. Since 2007, Serbia has regularly submitted an annual declaration related to the application of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. In addition, significant progress has been made with respect to strengthening physical protection of nuclear objects and overall nuclear safety and security, including the establishment of the Agency for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and Nuclear Safety.

Serbia has ratified the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. In addition, procedures are being undertaken for the Government to approve Serbia's adherence to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, as are intensive activities aimed at further improving the national system for emergency preparedness and response.

Active cooperation with the IAEA has also been established. The Vinca Institute Nuclear Decommissioning Programme on the transfer of irradiated nuclear fuel and enriched uranium from the Vinca Institute of Nuclear Science to the Russian Federation, carried out with the assistance of our international partners, is the biggest project of technical cooperation in the history of the Agency. In this way, Serbia has joined the group of countries having no enriched uranium on their territories, thus contributing in a concrete way to the prevention of nuclear terrorism. My country also joined the Proliferation Security Initiative in 2006 and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in 2007.

Serbia strongly supports the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as one of the fundamental pillars of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In addition, my country continues to attach great importance to the fulfilment of obligations under

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Three years after submitting its last report in 2008, Serbia is now in the process of preparing its new national report, aimed at updating the information on the measures taken to implement the resolution.

Serbia is committed to a full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. A new law on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction was adopted by the Serbian Parliament in May 2009. Cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons continues to develop in many directions, especially in the fields of training and the organization of international seminars on assistance and protection in the Regional Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence Training Centre in Kruševac, Serbia.

In July 2010, the Government of Serbia adopted a framework law for the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). Fully respecting the recommendations of the sixth Review Conference of Parties to the BWC, in May 2009 the Parliament of Serbia adopted a law on withdrawing the reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

My country has acceded to all major international instruments in the field of combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations Firearms Protocol and the International Tracing Instrument. It has also accepted the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) documents on small arms and light weapons, as well as other OSCE decisions in this field, notably on the storage of conventional arms, man-portable air defence systems, end-user certificates and verification procedures and brokering.

The standards of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports are incorporated in our national strategy for the control of small arms and light weapons for the period 2010-2015 and in a 2005 law on foreign trade in arms, military equipment and dual-use goods. A new law is being drafted that is intended to modernize the existing solutions in certain areas and to fully correspond to the changes in European Union legislation and the new obligations arising from Security Council resolutions and other international

instruments. Serbia continues to work on the fulfilment of its remaining obligations under the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, to which it acceded in 2003.

Export control is a very important element of the security policy of my country. Serbia has established an effective regime of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods export control and improved border and customs control measures. It has initiated the process to regulate its membership in the Wassenaar Arrangement, and started the national procedure to regulate its status within the Nuclear Suppliers Group. In addition, the competent Serbian authorities have prepared a draft law on international restrictive measures, which they have shared with the European Union in order to obtain its expert opinion.

The ongoing activities towards an arms trade treaty are of particular importance in the context of establishing an effective international regulatory framework for transfers of conventional arms. Serbia will continue to work in close cooperation with other States Members of the United Nations in the process defined by resolution 64/48, convinced that a vigorous commitment on the part of us all will be necessary to ensure that the 2012 United Nations Conference produces a treaty that will set the highest possible common international standards in conventional arms transfers.

Along with other Parties, Serbia continues to implement the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control, pursuant to article IV, annex 1.B of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which provides for the achievement of a stable military balance based on the acceptance of numerical limitations of armaments by all the parties, according to a baseline scale and a corresponding country-specific ratio. In the 15 years that it has implemented the Agreement, Serbia has carried out all its obligations in a timely manner. A new stage of implementation of the Agreement — the so-called transfer of ownership to the parties — is under way and is to be finalized by July 2014.

In order to make a full contribution to the relevant United Nations activities in the field of disarmament, my country has submitted its candidature for membership in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Serbia supports the initiative to appoint a special coordinator on expansion of the membership of

the Conference as a means of giving new impetus to addressing, in its view, one of the most pressing issues, namely, that of membership expansion. Convinced that the best way to reaffirm the significance of the Conference as the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum is to make it more efficient and effective, Serbia calls on all States members of the Conference to invest additional efforts in overcoming the current stalemate and engaging, seriously and without delay, in substantive discussions on core issues on its agenda in order to make a credible contribution to international peace and security.

The Chair: I call on the observer of Palestine.

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

I wish also to state that Palestine aligns itself with the important statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At this session, the State of Palestine has applied for membership of the United Nations. While the issue is still being considered, my delegation wishes to reiterate its strong belief that Palestine's membership will open doors to our increased contribution to international efforts on disarmament.

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

Combating and preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is another important goal that the international community needs to address. In addition, Member States should pay due attention to

cases of States officially arming and forming militias that reside unlawfully on occupied land, committing aggressions that terrorize the civilian population. Such militias, supplied with State-sanctioned and State-funded small arms, feed conflicts and perpetrate human rights violations.

In occupied Palestine, armed Israeli settler militias residing unlawfully on occupied land have unleashed their terror on Palestinian communities, while the Israeli occupation army provides protection and backup to such groups, in effect contributing to their crimes. Statements by senior Israeli officials encouraging the arming of settlers and promising them extra aid are of additional concern to us. That premeditated behaviour has encouraged a culture of impunity that threatens to further undermine the safety, lives and livelihoods of Palestinian civilians.

We believe that international disarmament efforts, including the Conference on Disarmament and any further treaties, must address the indiscriminate effect of certain conventional weapons, such as cluster bombs, anti-personnel landmines, flechette missiles, dense inert metal explosives and ammunition containing depleted uranium, especially when used illegally against civilians. The long-term, devastating effects of those weapons on civilian populations have been proven beyond any doubt. International and United Nations reports have documented the devastating consequences of Israel's use of such weapons against civilians, particularly in its war on Gaza in 2009.

South Lebanon is another example. There, the civilian population, especially children, continue to suffer the effects of Israeli cluster munitions, which have claimed the lives and limbs of scores of innocents every year.

We wish to reiterate that States responsible for laying mines and similar unexploded ordnance outside their territory must be held fully accountable for clearing them, including through cooperation with the affected countries.

The renewed international commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must be accompanied by concrete and consistent actions. In this regard, we regret that the Middle East has yet to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone and that Israel remains the only State in the region that has neither become nor stated its intention to become a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

That is why efforts to rid the Middle East of nuclear arms must be comprehensive rather than selective. Earlier today, several examples were cited, rightly or wrongly, yet unfortunately those who declared that Israel had nuclear-weapon capabilities were ignored. We maintain that turning a blind eye on a State proven to act with utter disdain towards international law, and that is stockpiling nuclear weapons while refusing to submit to international inspection, is gravely dangerous and will not serve the goal of nuclear disarmament.

More dangerously, the credibility of the very system that regulates our relations will also be severely damaged. In this regard, we fully support holding a regional conference in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We consider a vital step forward towards the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and towards achieving the goals and objectives articulated by the 2000 Review Conference of Parties to the NPT, which remain the core terms of reference in this regard.

The Arab States have been engaged in serious and constructive consultations on the full implementation of action plan IV of the 2010 Review Conference. We call on all concerned to redouble their efforts to facilitate the earliest possible start of preparations for the upcoming conference, including the appointment of a high-level facilitator.

Finally, we believe that the devastating, long-term effects of the violation of human rights, impunity, foreign occupation, underdevelopment and poverty are directly linked to our efforts on disarmament. Those conditions induce violence, radicalism and hopelessness, providing fertile ground for a host of illicit trades that this Committee must address responsibly.

It is our duty to treat the root causes of conflict, the continuation of which ensures the vicious cycle of deadly strife and the illicit arms trade that accompanies it. It is our collective responsibility to stop the scourge of needless and senseless wars through our cooperation. We can and we must provide the millions of defenceless civilians who have long suffered the indignities of violence and grinding poverty a safer and better future. Instead of squandering \$1.6 trillion a year on military expenditures at a time of economic difficulty, food shortages and social turmoil, we need to do our utmost to invest in our people's future to make sure that it will

not only be prosperous but also free of the nightmares of war and the brutality of foreign occupation and the nuclear arms race.

The Chair: I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic Republic of Korea): Concerning the remarks made by the representative of Canada, I would like to exercise the right of reply. The representative of Canada referred to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a major proliferator and said that, in exercising the role of President of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), it destroyed the credibility of the CD.

First, allow me to speak a little about the issue of proliferation. I wish to remind the representative of Canada of the basic facts. What are the basic facts that underlie the legal issues of the Korean peninsula?

First, there is the question of blackmail, which dates back to October 1950, when the former President of the United States announced that he would use nuclear weapons against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. One month later, in November of that year, during the Korean War the so-called United Nations Force Commander, General MacArthur, openly told the world that he would not hesitate to turn the Korean peninsula into a corridor of radiation from the tip of the south to the extreme top of the north. That meant the entire Korean peninsula.

Secondly, that continued after the Korean War. In 1957, they deployed the first nuclear weapons. By 1975, it was confirmed that more than 100,000 nuclear warheads had been identified. In 2002, former United States President George W. Bush included the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a list of targets of a planned nuclear strike. He also included the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the list of the countries making up the axis of evil, along with Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The forces used to attack Iraq have been turned against the Korean peninsula, with open statements that the next target would be the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Those are the basic facts that I would like to remind the Ambassador of Canada about so that she can understand the questions relating to the nuclear issue and the Korean peninsula.

I would just add one small thing with respect to the efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In 1959, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea first proposed to make the Korean peninsula a zone of peace. What was the response? There was no response. In 1981, we again proposed to make the peninsula a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In 1986, we proposed turning North-East Asia into a similar zone. Again, there was no response. Those are the basic facts, and I would like to suggest to the Ambassador of Canada that she study them carefully first and talk afterwards, so that she knows what the issues are.

Concerning its presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is exercising its sovereign right as a full member of the Conference. Canada's position, I believe, undermines its own credibility, because no one but Canada was against our role as President.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I apologize for taking the floor at this late hour. In the statement made by the representative of Canada today, there was some regrettably misleading information, and I am therefore obliged to elaborate on some of the points made. For example, Iran's Natanz and Qom facilities have never been secret; they were declared to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) well in advance of the due date, in accordance with the IAEA's safeguards agreements. They continue to function under constant monitoring by the IAEA.

Concerning the issue of Iran's 19.8 per cent enrichment activities, contrary to Canada's claim, those activities are completely legal, since they are designed to provide Tehran's research reactor with needed fuel. Tehran's research reactor produces medical isotopes for more than 1 million patients with diseases such as cancer, and is therefore intended for purely humanitarian purposes. Through the IAEA, Iran made a request for suppliers to provide new fuel for this reactor, which regrettably was rejected, thus leaving Iran with no choice but to be self-sufficient in enriched uranium and produce the fuel itself. We regret that Canada tried to mislead the Committee concerning such purely humanitarian activities.

Canada's sincerity on non-proliferation matters is seriously in question, since the Canadian delegation has been completely silent about the Zionist regime's

secret nuclear-weapons programme, which is not subject to any verification and is a very significant threat to regional and international peace and security. Canada is also well known for its role in supplying that regime with all kinds of weapons and thus for its accountability for the war crimes taking place in the occupied territory of Palestine.

Furthermore, just recently in July, Canada concluded a nuclear cooperation agreement with a State that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in clear violation of its obligations under the Treaty, according to which Canada cannot provide nuclear materials or technology to a country outside the NPT that is a self-proclaimed nuclear-weapon State. We urge Canada to end this hypocritical nuclear policy, comply with its nuclear non-proliferation obligations and reconsider its nuclear cooperation with non-parties to the NPT.

Programme of work

The Chair: I should like to remind all delegations of the announcement I made on 6 October regarding my intention to initiate a discussion on my informal proposal on the format of participation by non-governmental organizations in the First Committee. The discussion will take place at the beginning of the Committee meeting scheduled for 3 p.m. tomorrow afternoon and will be conducted in an informal setting. I trust that all representatives have taken some time to consult, as necessary, with their respective capitals on this matter so as to enable us to deliberate effectively tomorrow. I have held some consultations with several delegations, and some different views have been expressed with respect to my proposal.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.