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First Committee

2nd meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Percaya (Indonesia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Introductory statement

The Chair: In accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the Committee will today begin the first phase of its work, namely, the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items allocated to it — items 86 to 102.

Let me express a very warm welcome to all members. I am delighted to see familiar faces around the room. Before I proceed I should also like, on behalf of all delegations, to extend a very warm welcome to participants in the 2012 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme, who will be attending First Committee meetings this year as part of their training. They are sitting, mostly, at the back of the room, and I encourage members to acknowledge them when they meet them.

At this point allow me to make a brief statement in my capacity as the Chair of the First Committee for this session.

As members know, the issues before us are critical for world peace and security. I very much hope that we will play our role effectively to advance the work here. I am confident that by working together, cooperating and exercising our respective political capital, the globally agreed agenda on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation can be meaningfully advanced.

Political leaders of United Nations Member nations spoke in the general debate recently on the imperative of

attaining global well-being. Indeed, our interconnected world will achieve sustained progress only if people in all regions see visible peace, security and stability. That means that the unfulfilled items on the agenda of the First Committee should be fulfilled by all of us. While I do not minimize the difficulties and challenges ahead, members will agree that we need to redouble our efforts in the Committee and do our best to try to achieve agreements on vital issues.

I reiterate my goal of working closely and constructively with all members. I am positive that our collective endeavour can yield fitting progress on disarmament and international security.

In the field of weapons of mass destruction, to build on the progress made we need to intensify the implementation of the disarmament and non-proliferation commitments and agreements reached at the Review Conferences of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention, as well as the timeline agreed by States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We must assiduously and with steadfastness fairly discuss the issues that are hindering progress on disarmament and non-proliferation. It is paramount that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and non-proliferation, should start its substantive work on the core issues on its agenda.

Auspiciously, in the field of conventional weapons we have achieved success in the second United

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Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, 11 years after the adoption of the Programme of Action. That is to be commended. It is imperative that we implement the outcome and strengthen cooperation and assistance towards eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Although the recent failure to agree on the text of an arms trade treaty that will set a common standard to regulate the international trade in conventional arms is disappointing, it is encouraging that efforts are continuing to pursue the adoption of a treaty, building on the common ground reached during the negotiations. I believe that effort should be supported.

We need to be politically bold and inspire one another to overcome those hurdles that have impeded us. There is no obstacle that we will not be able to overcome if we join hands and work with sincerity and determination to produce solutions. Let us launch ourselves in this new Committee session with renewed zeal and be proud of its outcome when the session ends.

Most unfortunately, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, who would normally address the Committee at this time, is unable to be with us today owing to unforeseen exigencies away from Headquarters. However, she will join us at our next meeting, tomorrow morning, when she will address the Committee.

Agenda items 86 to 102

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: Before opening the floor for statements in the general debate, I should like to remind delegations to kindly adhere to the Committee's practice of limiting statements to a maximum of 10 minutes when speaking in a national capacity, and 15 minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations. To assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, it is my intention to introduce the use of a timing mechanism by having the red ring around the speaker's microphone blink when the time limit is reached. The blinking of the red ring means a speaker's time is up. From time to time, I will gently remind speakers myself when they exceed the allotted time.

As mentioned at last week's organizational meeting (see A/C.1/67/PV.1), I invite representatives with longer statements kindly to make an effort to deliver an abbreviated version of their text and to provide the full statement to be posted on the First Committee's web portal, QuickFirst. I also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed to allow adequate interpretation.

I remind delegations at this point that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed tomorrow, Tuesday, 9 October, at 6 p.m. I therefore urge all delegations intending to take the floor but which have not yet inscribed their names on the list to do so as soon as possible.

Delegations interested in monitoring media reports on our activities may wish to note that press officers from the Secretariat's Department of Public Information will be providing daily coverage of our proceedings. A few hours after each day's meeting, they will issue press releases in English and French, which will be posted on the United Nations website.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The full version of this statement is being circulated, and I will try to make a shorter statement.

I felicitate you, Mr. Chairman, and other Bureau members on your elections and assure you of our full support and cooperation.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its positions on the entire range of disarmament and international security issues as contained in its summit and ministerial documents, including those of the Tehran Summit held in August 2012. I should like to highlight NAM's views regarding some of those issues, and I shall share NAM's perspective on other, related issues in the thematic debates.

The Non-Aligned Movement underscores the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. However, NAM remains concerned about the continuous erosion of multilateralism in the field of arms regulation, non-proliferation and disarmament. The Movement reaffirms that resort to unilateral action by any Member State in resolving security concerns jeopardizes international peace and security, contravenes international law and undermines

confidence in the international security system, as well as the foundations of the United Nations itself.

NAM reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority. The Movement reiterates its deep concern over the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Movement also expresses its concern over the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament and the lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in fulfilment of their relevant multilateral legal obligations and their unequivocal undertakings in 2000 and 2010.

The Non-Aligned Movement strongly calls on the nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons without further delay, in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. The Movement also calls on them immediately to cease their plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

NAM reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of those weapons and reaffirms further that nuclear weapon States should effectively assure all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, NAM reaffirms the need to conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States as a matter of high priority.

The Movement remains deeply concerned by the strategic defence doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States and NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture Review, adopted at its Summit in May 2012, which set out the rationale for the use of nuclear weapons. NAM strongly calls for the complete exclusion of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons from their military doctrines.

NAM recognizes the need to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery. NAM notes that the main difficulty of the disarmament machinery lies in the lack of genuine political will by some States to achieve real progress, including, in particular, on nuclear disarmament. For its part, the Movement stands ready to engage constructively in a comprehensive consideration of the

United Nations disarmament agenda and the ways and means of revitalizing and enhancing its disarmament machinery. To that end, NAM reiterates its call for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is high time that all countries work together, cooperate more and bring to bear their respective political capital to revitalize that crucial machinery.

The Movement reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the single multilateral negotiating body for disarmament and reiterates its call on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work by, inter alia, establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible and as the highest priority. The Movement emphasizes the need to start negotiations without further delay on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention.

In that context, NAM reiterates its firm commitment to work to convene a high-level international conference to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date, with the objective of reaching agreement on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons — to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

While welcoming the successful conclusion of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the NAM States parties to the Treaty call for the full implementation of the action plan adopted in 2010 on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

NAM stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States. That should, inter alia, contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Movement reiterates that if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all States signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to nuclear disarmament would be essential. In that context, the ratification of the CTBT by Guatemala, Guinea and Indonesia is very welcome.

While noting the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011), NAM underlines the need to ensure that action by the Security Council undermines the Charter of the United Nations, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction or international organizations established in that connection, or the role of the General Assembly. The Movement further cautions against the Council's continuing practice of utilizing its authority to define the legislative requirements for Member States in implementing Security Council decisions.

NAM emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. NAM asserts that efforts aiming at nuclear non-proliferation should parallel simultaneous efforts aiming at nuclear disarmament.

NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of each State to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes and without discrimination. The Movement once again reaffirms the sovereign right of each State to define its national energy policies, including with regard to a nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes. NAM stresses that any decision on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle shall be made by consensus and without prejudice to the inalienable right of each State to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle. NAM is of the firm belief that non-proliferation policies will not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire and access material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

In that regard, NAM stresses that the technical cooperation and assistance provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in meeting the needs of its member States for material, equipment and technology for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy will not be subject to any conditions incompatible with the provisions of the Agency's statute. The Movement therefore strongly calls for the immediate removal of any such restrictions or limitations.

NAM once again reaffirms the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities and that any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities, whether operational or under construction, poses a great danger to human beings and the environment and constitutes a grave violation of international law, the principles of

the Charter of the United Nations and the regulations of the IAEA.

NAM is mindful of the unique and technical nature of nuclear safety and nuclear security and their distinct implementation within the IAEA. NAM recognizes that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety and nuclear security rests with the individual States.

NAM underlines the IAEA's mandate, authority and central role in the area of nuclear security. Any multilateral norms, guidelines or rules for nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the IAEA. NAM also reaffirms the mandate, authority and central role of the Agency in matters related to nuclear safety, including through the establishment of nuclear-safety standards.

The Movement emphasizes that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and nuclear security must not be used as a pretext or as leverage to violate, deny or restrict the inalienable right of developing countries to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination.

Finally — and when I say finally, Sir, I mean that I have another two pages to read out on behalf of 120 countries — NAM considers the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important measure towards achieving global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. At the same time, NAM stresses that the establishment of such zones is no substitute for the legal obligation of the nuclear-weapon States regarding the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In that context, NAM continues its strong support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Pending its establishment, NAM demands that Israel — the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so — renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without precondition and further delay and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards. The Movement also calls for a total and complete prohibition of the transfer to Israel of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources or devices, and of the extension of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields.

NAM States parties to the NPT express deep concern over the delay in the implementation of the

1995 resolution on the Middle East. They welcome the appointment of a facilitator and the designation of a host Government for a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. They note the report of the facilitator to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2015/PC/11) and call on him to accelerate consultations with all capitals in the region. They request the Secretary-General, in implementation of his mandate to convene the conference, to exert maximum efforts with a view to convening the conference at the earliest possible date in 2012 without any further delay. They further stress the importance of making available all the financial means necessary for the activities of the facilitator and for convening of the conference as soon as possible, including from the regular budget of the United Nations.

NAM States parties to the NPT urge the Secretary-General and the sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, to exert their utmost efforts to ensure the success of the conference to be convened in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. They stress the importance of the full implementation of all aspects of the agreed plan of action and the active and constructive engagement of all parties concerned to allow for the success of the conference in launching a regional negotiation process aimed at fully realizing the objectives of the 1995 resolution and the establishment of the zone.

NAM remains concerned about the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the threat of weaponization and militarization of outer space. NAM re-emphasizes the urgent need to commence substantive work in the CD, inter alia, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, taking note of the joint Russian-Chinese initiative.

While noting some new initiatives on outer space, the Movement underlines the importance of a universal, non-discriminatory and comprehensive approach. It stresses that any proposal or initiative on outer space should be pursued within the United Nations and that any possible decision thereon should be made by consensus.

NAM stresses the need for a multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive, transparent and non-discriminatory approach to the issue of missiles in all its aspects, as a contribution to international peace and security. Pending the achievement of such a universal approach, NAM reaffirms that any initiatives to address the issues related to delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction should be conducted through inclusive negotiations in a forum where all States can participate as equals. NAM emphasizes the need to keep the issue of missiles in all its aspects on the agenda of the General Assembly and supports continued efforts within the United Nations to explore further the issue of missiles in all its aspects. NAM further stresses the important contribution to human advancement made by the peaceful uses of space technologies, including space-launch-vehicle technologies.

NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention strongly call on all concerned possessor States to take every necessary measure to ensure their strict compliance with their obligations under the Convention and the decision on the final extended deadline adopted at the sixteenth session of the Conference of States Parties, according to which the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons shall be completed in the shortest time possible in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

NAM States parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention recognize the particular importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol and universal adherence to the Convention. In that regard, they urge the party rejecting the resumption of the negotiations for such a protocol to reconsider its policy towards the Convention in the light of the persistent requests of other parties. They also welcome the outcome of the seventh Review Conference, particularly its decision to include cooperation and assistance as a standing agenda item with particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X of the Convention.

While taking into account ongoing efforts within the United Nations in the field of information technologies and means of telecommunication, NAM calls on Member States to further promote at multilateral levels the consideration of existing and potential threats in the field of information security and of possible strategies to address them. NAM emphasizes that those technologies and means should be utilized by Member

States in a manner consistent with international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

NAM reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs. NAM expresses its concern about unilateral coercive measures and emphasizes that no undue restriction should be placed on the transfer of such arms.

NAM welcomes the successful conclusion of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. While taking note of the outcome documents of the Conference, NAM emphasizes the importance of the balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and stresses that international cooperation and assistance is essential for such implementation.

NAM expresses concern about the explosive remnants of the Second World War, particularly landmines, which continue to cause human and material damage and obstruct development plans in some non-aligned countries. The Movement calls on the States primarily responsible to defray the costs of clearance and to provide compensation for any losses caused by the mines that were laid.

Finally, the Movement stresses the importance of political will in addressing international disarmament and security issues. For its part, NAM remains committed to working actively and constructively with all Member States for tangible progress in the work of the First Committee. In that regard, NAM will be submitting seven draft resolutions and one draft decision, for which support from all delegations will be much appreciated.

The Chair: I now call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Kos (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country Liechtenstein,

member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Let me first congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on taking up this very important post. I assure you, Sir, that we will fully support you in your efforts to achieve a successful outcome to this session.

We warmly welcome the progress that has been made in the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, particularly the momentum created by major events such as the entry into force of the New START agreement last year, the successful 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and this year's first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

At the same time, we continue to be deeply concerned at the persistent impasse — for more than a decade — in the Conference on Disarmament, which prevents it from fulfilling its mandate. We are particularly concerned at the failure of the Conference to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, together with the risk that non-State actors, in particular terrorists, may gain access to such weapons, continues to be a major threat to international peace and security. It calls for a global approach, in addition to actions at the national and regional levels. Likewise, the unregulated trade in conventional arms and the illicit trade in and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons adversely affect regional and international security and stability, fuel conflicts and armed violence and threaten the lives of individuals.

Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, together with confidence and transparency, are vital aspects of collective security. The European Union has long stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to all those issues, which requires strengthening on the part of the international community.

Effective multilateralism, prevention and international cooperation are the three main goals of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The EU promotes universal adherence to, and the full implementation of, all non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions, not only through diplomatic means and initiatives but also

through practical training and assistance. The EU is a major donor to international organizations in that field, providing support to dozens of countries.

We also want to support and reinforce verification mechanisms, so as to ensure full compliance with international obligations. That enhances mutual confidence and ensures the credibility of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and conventions. The EU reaffirms the role of the Security Council as the final arbiter of international peace and security, including in cases of non-compliance.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation system, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its article VI and an important element in the further development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The EU emphasizes the importance of universalizing the NPT and calls on States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The EU is actively contributing to global efforts to seek a safer world for all and to the achievement of peace and security in a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the stated objectives of the NPT. In that context, the EU welcomed the outcome of the NPT Review Conference in May 2010 and the consensus established on the action plan and the other measures contained in its final document. That outcome has strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation regime by setting ambitious goals on all three pillars of the Treaty and by endorsing other concrete measures, including on the Middle East.

In that regard, we welcome the nuclear-weapon States' follow-up meetings to the NPT Review Conference in Paris in 2011 and in Washington, D.C., in 2012, as well as the initiatives of the non-nuclear-weapon States such as the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative to promote the implementation of the 2010 action plan, which is our common road map to the 2015 Review Conference. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference, which met in Vienna in May, paved the way for a smooth start of the new NPT review cycle.

The EU welcomed the reaffirmation by the 2010 NPT Review Conference of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East and the endorsement of practical steps leading to its full implementation. We welcomed the appointment of Under-Secretary of State Jaakko

Laajava of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland as facilitator, as well as the designation of Finland as the host Government for the 2012 Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We also welcome the report of facilitator Laajava presented during the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

As announced at that NPT Preparatory Committee session, the EU is pleased to confirm that it is finalizing preparations for a seminar following the same lines as our previous initiative. It will be held in Brussels on 5 and 6 November and will allow for an open exchange of views among participants on all aspects related to the creation of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The international community continues to face major proliferation challenges, which must be addressed in a resolute way in order to maintain the credibility and effectiveness of the NPT regime. Iran's nuclear and missile programmes and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's testing of a nuclear explosive device and delivery mechanisms and recent information on a uranium enrichment programme are the two most worrying examples in that regard. Similarly worrying is Syria's non-compliance with its safeguards agreement and its continued non-cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which remain to be addressed by the Security Council.

International concerns about the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme prevail and have resulted in the adoption by the IAEA Board of Governors of its most recent resolution on Iran, on 13 September. It urges Iran to comply fully and without delay with all its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and to meet the requirements of the Board of Governors, thereby deciding that Iran's cooperation on all outstanding issues, including those pointing to possible military dimensions, is essential and urgent in order to restore international confidence.

The EU's objective remains to achieve a comprehensive, negotiated, long-term settlement. The E3+3 — China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, led by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy — remain firm, clear and united in seeking a swift diplomatic resolution of the international community's concerns

about the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, based on the NPT, and the full implementation of resolutions of the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors.

Clear and credible proposals have been laid out in recent months for an initial confidence-building step that will address the immediate key concerns, focusing on Iran's 20 per cent enrichment activities in a comprehensive manner, as well as reciprocal steps that would benefit Iran. We urge Iran once again to engage seriously and urgently to take the necessary steps that will allow for the restoration of confidence.

The EU calls for strengthening the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime and for revitalizing the relevant international instruments. In that context, we remain deeply troubled by the apparent dysfunction of a crucial part of the disarmament machinery, that is, the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

For the EU, launching negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is more important and urgent than ever. In the meantime, the EU calls on all States concerned that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The EU continues to urge the last remaining State to join the consensus in adopting a programme of work that, *inter alia*, will enable negotiations on an FMCT.

We consider the blockage in the Conference on Disarmament unacceptable. It seriously undermines the principle of multilateral cooperation. The EU reaffirms once again its commitment to engage in substantive discussions on all the core issues on the CD's agenda. By the same token, the EU calls on the CD to consider the question of the enlargement of its membership.

The Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with the mandate it received from the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, should be the place to forge multilateral treaties. However, given the continuing stalemate in the CD, the international community needs to reflect on options and, if necessary, identify other ways to ensure progress. We are ready during this session to engage with you, Mr. Chair, and with all other Member States, especially on the proposals the EU presented during last year's follow-up to the 2010 high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference, as well as to consider other options to overcome the deadlock in the CD or, to put it

more broadly, to revitalize the multilateral disarmament machinery to take multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament forward.

The European Union continues to promote the universalization and implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and we will carry on providing significant support to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for meeting those goals. The EU welcomes the outcome of the ministerial meeting on the CWC held on 1 October on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Convention. The EU looks forward to making substantial progress during the third Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention, in April 2013.

The EU welcomes the outcomes of the seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, namely, the adoption of the new sustained agenda for the inter-sessional process until 2016 and of other decisions facilitating the implementation and strengthening of the Convention.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That was also underlined in the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT, on the early entry into force of the Treaty (A/67/515, annex), issued at a ministerial meeting held on 27 September 2012. We call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to ratify the Treaty at an early date. We welcome the latest ratifications by the Central African Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Guinea and Guatemala, and by Indonesia, an annex 2 State. In the meantime, the EU continues to provide significant support to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Provisional Technical Secretariat to strengthen the verification system.

The EU stresses the need to do everything possible to prevent the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, in particular the risk of nuclear terrorism. The EU emphasizes the essential role of the IAEA in that context, particularly through the Nuclear Security Fund, to which the EU makes significant contributions. We also welcome the outcome of the high-level meeting on countering nuclear terrorism that was organized during the ministerial week, on 28 September 2012, by the Secretary-General and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.

We reaffirm our support for the Group of Eight Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and

Materials of Mass Destruction, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Nuclear Security Summits, the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and the Financial Action Task Force. At the same time, we stress the need for compliance with obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009) and call for improved nuclear security for highly radioactive sources.

Strengthening the security of activities in outer space is another key priority for the European Union. On 5 June, in Vienna, we officially launched the multilateral diplomatic process to discuss and negotiate our initiative for an international code of conduct for outer-space activities. It is a political framework, absolutely compatible with and complementary to other existing initiatives.

The proliferation of missiles with the potential to deliver weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security, as underlined in Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2011). The EU is concerned about the ongoing missile programmes in the Middle East, North-East Asia and South Asia, including in Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The EU fully supports the Missile Technology Control Regime. We continue to promote universal adherence to, and the strengthening and full implementation of, The Hague Code of Conduct, which is the only multilateral instrument regarding missile proliferation. Our proposal to start consultations on a treaty banning short- and intermediate-range ground-to-ground ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction remains valid.

We continue to be seriously concerned by the devastating effects of the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market. We were therefore disappointed that the negotiations on the arms trade treaty last July were inconclusive. We are disappointed, but we are not discouraged. Together with others, we will continue to support the conclusion of negotiations on an arms trade treaty at the final United Nations conference early in 2013, based on the draft submitted by the President of the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty on 26 July, aimed both at regulating the legal trade and preventing the illegal one. Our aim is a strong, robust and effective legally binding instrument that sets the highest common international standards for the regulation

of the international trade in arms and that enjoys the support of all the relevant stakeholders.

At the same time, we are pleased that the Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons was able to agree on an outcome and to reaffirm the commitment of States Members of the United Nations to its implementation. We are confident that the results of the Conference will enable us to fight the spread and misuse of illicit small arms and light weapons more efficiently.

Finally, I should like to assure you, Mr. Chair, that the EU will work together with all interested countries to uphold and strengthen the authority of the United Nations.

Mr. Sarki (Nigeria): It gives me much pleasure, and it is a great honour, to speak on behalf of all the African Group Member States.

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We believe that your vast experience in the issues at hand will guide our debates and negotiations in the coming days. Let me also seize this opportunity to felicitate other members of the Bureau on their elections. The African Group assures you all of its full support and cooperation in these month-long deliberations and promises substantive contributions in our efforts to discuss issues of disarmament and international security.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered earlier by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The year 2012 has been rightly described as a disarmament year. Indeed, we have seen renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of disarmament and international security issues. We note, among other things, the Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the second United Nations Conference to Review the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Those meetings and events have highlighted a number of global challenges to disarmament and security and ways to address them.

The African Group wishes to take this opportunity to express its views regarding some of the issues affecting global security.

The Group continues to underscore the total validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. We are convinced that it is the most appropriate and efficacious way to address global disarmament issues. It should continue to be observed and respected in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We will continue to work across all regions and to cooperate with other partners to promote multilateralism as an abiding principle for negotiations in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. The Group will always support efforts geared towards addressing all threats to multilateralism.

No member State of the African Group is a nuclear-weapon State. Our continent continues to enjoy the status of a region free of all nuclear weapons. We wish to reiterate our support for complete nuclear disarmament as the highest prerequisite for world peace and security. We also wish to stress that the continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons do not necessarily guarantee security, but are an affirmation of the probability and risks of their future use. In our view, therefore, that remains an existential threat to global peace and the survival of the human race.

In the light of that, the African Group calls on all States Members of the United Nations to support the goal of nuclear disarmament and to work assiduously for the total elimination of all nuclear arsenals. We also call on all nuclear-weapon States to ensure the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in fulfilment of the relevant multilateral legal obligations and the agreed global norm of a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We stress the need for nuclear-weapon States to cease plans to further modernize, upgrade or refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities. We do so with a view to the eventual prohibition of their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling and transfer and to working towards the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

We continue to reaffirm that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. We reiterate our call for effective assurances to all

non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. We also support, as a high priority, the call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The African Group welcomes the convening of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which took place in Vienna earlier this year. While recognizing the contribution of that meeting, we reiterate the need for the full implementation of the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference with regard to nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

The African Group also stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States in that connection. The achievement of that objective could serve as the threshold for promoting the process of nuclear disarmament.

At the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the African Group joined other Member States in reaffirming the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), not only as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, but one which could be useful in unlocking the impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations. We wish again to reiterate our call concerning the urgent need for the CD to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. The African Group believes that a workable and agreeable programme of work is realizable, but it must be based on a balanced approach to disarmament. We call on the Conference to intensify efforts towards that objective as soon as possible. Notwithstanding constructive efforts in the past, there is a need for the CD to pursue a workable programme of work in its forthcoming session.

The African Group underlines the importance of intensified efforts geared towards the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and lends its strong support to the achievement of that noble objective — a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As highlighted in the Group's statement last year (see A/C.1/66/PV.3), we consider that an integral part

of the efforts geared towards the full implementation of the final outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. We call on all Member States to support the full implementation of that resolution.

Also at the Assembly's sixty-sixth session, the African Group welcomed the announcement of the 2012 conference, to be convened at the end of the year in Helsinki, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We remain committed to that objective and call on the Secretary-General, the sponsors of the 1995 resolution and, indeed, all stakeholders to ensure the success of the conference.

The Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, convened in New York from 2 to 27 July, did not achieve its stated objective. We note that there was general support among Member States on the need to establish a common international standard for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. We regret the lack of consensus on the draft text that the President presented to serve as the basis for negotiations on the envisaged treaty.

However, the consideration of that important future instrument should be approached with the understanding that the treaty is practically achievable with the cooperation of all States. We believe such a treaty should take due cognizance and reaffirm the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs.

Member States should also note that an unregulated conventional arms transfer system fuels the illicit trade and, in some cases, leads to unfettered access and use by non-State actors. In such cases no country appears immune to the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons by unauthorized individuals and/or groups. We therefore call on all Member States to seize the momentum provided by the July 2012 Conference to forge, in the near future, an acceptable treaty that addresses the gaps created by the unregulated transfer of conventional arms and that places no undue restriction in the way of the sovereign right of States to self-defence.

The African Group welcomes the successful conclusion of the second United Nations Conference to Review the Implementation of the United Nations

Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Illicit small arms and light weapons contribute to destabilization and to the creation of mayhem. Several States have witnessed the negative effects of their unauthorized use by non-State actors.

We are encouraged by the constructive engagement among Member States that characterized the entire process of the second Review Conference. We commend the efforts of its President, facilitators and all representatives of Member States in that endeavour. We consider the adoption of the consensus outcome documents as signalling a renewed commitment by Member States to rid the world of the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We continue to emphasize the importance of a balanced, full and effective implementation of the outcome documents of the second Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We wish particularly to stress that international cooperation and assistance is essential in the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

Finally, the African Group wishes to place on record the importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. We believe our deliberations in the coming days and weeks will be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and the course of peace and international security. In that regard, the Group will be submitting two draft resolutions, for which it will seek the support of all delegations: on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Sweden.

First, Sir, let me welcome your election to the Chair of the First Committee at this session. I also welcome the new Bureau. We look forward to supporting and cooperating with you over the coming weeks.

Advancing nuclear disarmament remains the *raison d'être* and enduring focus of the New Agenda Coalition. As stated in the 1998 founding declaration of the NAC, the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use or threat of use by nuclear-weapon States continue to pose a threat to humanity. In

that declaration, NAC Ministers called on the nuclear-weapon States immediately to start work on the practical steps required to achieve nuclear disarmament.

The sentiments expressed then are still relevant today. While modest gains have been made, it is clear that the threat posed by nuclear weapons persists and that the objectives of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are far from having been met.

Ever since the Coalition's establishment, some 14 years ago, we have worked towards the fulfilment of the NPT's objectives and the overarching goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential part of the global security regime. The NAC calls on all States parties to spare no effort to achieve the universality of the NPT and to desist from actions that could negatively affect prospects in that regard.

We wish to recall the grand bargain struck by all States parties to the NPT, whereby the nuclear-weapon States committed to nuclear disarmament in return for which non-nuclear-weapon States undertook not to develop nuclear weapons. NPT States parties also affirmed the inalienable right to pursue the peaceful development of research, production and use of nuclear energy. In 1995 the decisions on principles and objectives, the strengthened review process and the resolution on the Middle East were the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended.

The NPT needs to be fully implemented. Each article is equally binding on the respective States parties at all times and in all circumstances. The current challenges to the full implementation of the Treaty must be met with common purpose and concrete action, as the NPT's long-term success is dependent upon the realization of all its objectives. Over the years, significant progress has been made to meet the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of the NPT, thereby limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. The nuclear disarmament side of the NPT bargain, however, has yet to be realized.

The action plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference was an important step forward that holds the potential to put the process towards a nuclear-weapon-free world back on track. The nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their unequivocal undertaking to

accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, and committed to accelerating progress in that regard. That reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps to advance the implementation of article VI of the NPT. Furthermore, the action plan re-emphasizes the commitment to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to nuclear disarmament measures.

We welcome the renewed and growing interest in nuclear disarmament seen in recent years and the growing support more broadly for a world free of nuclear weapons. In our quest for the elimination of nuclear weapons, it is critical that remaining challenges be tackled head on.

We are deeply concerned that the long-standing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament continues to hamper efforts to make progress on nuclear disarmament issues. Those include, among others, the commencement of substantive work on nuclear disarmament — including the conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices — that should fulfil both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. They also encompass the need to give effect to the legitimate interest of the non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving unequivocal and legally binding security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States.

Continued and enhanced transparency is essential. States that are part of military alliances, which include nuclear-weapon States, could contribute to that by reporting on steps planned to reduce and eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in collective security doctrines.

Regarding the process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East, the NAC has welcomed the appointment of Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava of Finland as the facilitator and the designation of Finland as the host Government for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States of the Middle East. We look forward to the successful convening of that important conference, which is an essential element of the 2015 NPT review cycle. We call on the Secretary-General and the depositary States of the NPT to continue to

exert all their efforts to assist the facilitator in securing the success of the conference.

The NAC would like to reiterate that all States should work to construct a comprehensive framework of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Such a legally binding framework for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons must include clearly defined benchmarks and timelines and be backed by a strong system of verification, in order to be efficient and credible.

As in previous years, the Coalition will present a draft resolution to the Committee. It will be described in some detail during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, and we are happy to discuss the text with any Member State wishing to do so. We hope that the growth in support for our draft resolution that has been seen in recent years will continue this year.

Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, we remain convinced that the only guarantee for a safe and peaceful world is the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons, irrespective of their type or location. No nuclear weapon can ever be safe in any hands, whether State or non-State actor. As long as those weapons exist, the possibility of their use, whether by accident or design, will remain. Similarly, as long as some States continue to possess nuclear weapons, citing security reasons for doing so, others may aspire to acquire them.

As the NAC has always maintained, what does not exist cannot proliferate. It is for those reasons that the NAC remains steadfast in working for the accelerated implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments so that a nuclear-weapon-free world can be realized.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The full version of my statement will be distributed in the room for information.

CELAC congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections, and pledges to make a constructive contribution to the results of our deliberations. We also thank the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Jarmo Viininen, for the efforts and dedication with which he guided the Committee's work.

CELAC members have a long tradition of participation in disarmament issues, and consider

them to be one of their priorities on the United Nations agenda. We consider disarmament to be an essential component in efforts to promote and maintain international peace and security. CELAC wishes to recognize that in the framework of the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, its heads of State and Government adopted a special communiqué on the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that context, CELAC reaffirms the importance of complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, and also reiterates the priority of nuclear non-proliferation, in accordance with its long-standing position in support of a world free from nuclear weapons.

CELAC reiterates its firm support for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects, as well as its concern regarding the threat to humankind posed by the mere existence of nuclear weapons and the slow progress towards their total elimination, which is the only absolute guarantee against the threat or use of such weapons.

CELAC members reaffirm that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We welcome certain positive signals regarding disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the entry into force of the START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation and the recent ratifications of Ghana, Guinea, Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago and Indonesia of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty. CELAC emphasizes the need for urgent and consistent action aimed at the total elimination and legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons, within a specified time frame.

CELAC reaffirms the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime — and the balance among its three pillars. We stress the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT, and therefore urge the States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

CELAC urges the nuclear-weapon States to comply fully with their nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the Treaty and to display leadership in the fulfilment of their commitments under the Treaty, particularly through the practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 Review Conference

and the action plan adopted at the eighth NPT Review Conference. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate measures in that connection.

CELAC reiterates that States parties to the NPT must fully comply with all its provisions and, in that connection, reaffirms the inalienable right of developing countries to participate in research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. Our Community favours the broadest possible exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in accordance with the respective NPT provisions.

In our view, the agreed follow-up action plan in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference is a positive contribution to the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation. It serves as a basis for constructive compromise in the search for concrete results towards the earliest realization of a world free from nuclear weapons. In that regard, taking into account the commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to complete disarmament, we urge them to respond to the urgent call contained in action 5 of the action plan and to report on the progress to the 2014 meeting of the NPT Preparatory Committee.

While welcoming the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, held from 30 April to 11 May in Vienna, CELAC members call for continuing engagement in the process and renew their commitment to participate constructively in the second session of the Preparatory Committee, in Geneva in 2013. Meanwhile, CELAC calls for the full implementation of the 2010 action plan on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

CELAC also emphasizes the importance of nuclear-weapon States reducing their nuclear arsenals in an irreversible, transparent and verifiable manner, with a view to their total elimination. CELAC recognizes the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and is looking forward to its implementation. Although that agreement represents important progress, we ask for additional substantial reductions, especially with regard to non-deployed and non-strategic nuclear arms.

At the time of setting up the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, we confirmed that Latin America and the Caribbean was proud to be the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, by means of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco. That confirms the identity of our region and stresses that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens international and regional peace and security, as well as the non-proliferation regime.

All of that constitutes an important contribution to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We urge the nuclear Powers to withdraw all reservations to the Protocols of the Tlatelolco Treaty, thus helping to eliminate the risk of the use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

CELAC also renews its commitment to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world, and expresses its satisfaction that the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference encourages the establishment of further such zones in areas of the world where they do not exist, especially in the Middle East. In that regard, CELAC encourages all parties involved to fulfil the commitment assumed for the conference planned for 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

CELAC recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The group deeply regrets that despite positive developments, such as the agreement on the programme of work in 2009 and efforts made in 2010, 2011 and 2012, the Conference has been unable to start substantive work and fulfil its negotiating mandate.

The NPT Review Conference, the high-level meeting convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September 2010 on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, resolution 65/93 and the debate in the meeting convened by the Assembly President on 27 July 2011 to follow up the high-level meeting are clear demonstrations that the international community exhorts and expects the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament, to fulfil its tasks.

CELAC recognizes the need to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery and notes that the main difficulty lies in the lack of political will by some States to make actual progress.

CELAC welcomes the adoption at the 2012 session of the Disarmament Commission of an agenda for the current three-year work cycle that includes two main substantive items, namely, “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons” and “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons”. While recognizing the efforts of Peru, as Chair of the Disarmament Commission, to reach agreement on the agenda, CELAC calls upon Member States to exhaust all efforts in order to allow the United Nations deliberative body to draw up substantive recommendations on issues in the field of disarmament.

With reference to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, CELAC stresses the importance of achieving greater international support for the regime through the signature and subsequent ratification of this agreement. CELAC emphasizes that the safeguards are fundamental tools at the disposal of the international community to prevent nuclear materials and technologies from being diverted to activities contrary to the spirit and purpose of the NPT.

CELAC reiterates its position with regard to the complete cessation of any kind of nuclear testing and emphasizes the importance of all States maintaining the moratorium on all types of nuclear weapons and all types of nuclear explosive devices.

We emphasize the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome the recent declarations by some annex 2 States expressing their intention to take steps towards its ratification, and we express our hope that they will soon turn into concrete actions. CELAC calls upon all annex 2 States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty as a matter of priority and as evidence of their political will and commitment to peace and international security.

CELAC emphasizes that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is a problem related to other illicit activities that profoundly affect stability, exacerbate violence and undermine respect for international law in many countries. It causes many

deaths annually and absorbs sizeable resources that could be used for development. In the light of those considerations, we reaffirm the relevance and vital importance of the Programme of Action as the global framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

CELAC welcomes the adoption of the final document of the second United Nations Conference to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in New York from 27 August to 7 September, and stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as of the recommendations adopted by the biennial meetings of States and the commitments agreed upon in the Conference in the framework of the Programme of Action.

CELAC regrets that the process of the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held in New York from 2 to 27 July, did not come to a successful conclusion. We look forward to a substantive discussion at the current session of the First Committee.

The issue of anti-personnel mines continues to require the attention of the international community. CELAC welcomes Nicaragua’s completion of its mine-clearance activities, as well as the declaration of Central America as a mine-free zone. CELAC recognizes the assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service. Our group stresses the importance of cooperation for demining and assistance to victims and hopes that the successes achieved in recent years will continue.

CELAC considers that confidence-building measures are an important instrument for attaining peace and security, as they complement efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Our region has taken significant steps towards the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. They are intended to promote understanding, transparency and cooperation among States. We therefore see a need to strengthen, improve and extend confidence measures at all levels. It is worth recalling in that regard the relevant Assembly resolutions, including resolution 65/63, which was adopted by consensus.

Transparency in the area of armaments is another important element in confidence-building measures. CELAC advocates the application of the Register of

Conventional Arms and pays particular attention to the periodic revisions of the Register.

It is an obligation of all Governments to provide security and peace to their citizens. General and complete disarmament is a goal requiring the attention of the international community, in view of the possible devastating effects of disregarding or postponing it. Therefore, CELAC considers that significant progress in disarmament and non-proliferation requires the political will of all States, not just of some.

Mr. Cazeau (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to take the floor on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which fully endorse the statement made by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and that by the Chilean Ambassador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

First of all, CARICOM commends you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and we welcome the election of the members of the Bureau. We assure you of our full support.

The work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee opens in the context of deadlocked negotiations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In July, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty failed the international community, including CARICOM, which had vested great hopes in the conclusion of a robust, legally binding treaty that would regulate the sale of conventional weapons and mitigate the suffering of the millions of people who face armed violence, insecurity, deprivation and fear. It was therefore a wasted opportunity.

However, it is encouraging to note that States agreed to continue to work towards the adoption of a treaty based on the expectations that were raised during the long, albeit useful and revealing, negotiations. CARICOM calls for a resumption of negotiations and asks the General Assembly to take a decision during the current session to relaunch the process. CARICOM also continues to call for munitions to be considered in the text of the treaty.

Turning to the Conference on Disarmament, the Secretary-General reminds us, in his report on the activities of the Organization (A/67/1), of the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to overcome its differences and agree on a programme of work that would allow for the resumption of substantive work, including

negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is a priority for the international community.

CARICOM remains concerned that the Conference on Disarmament did not reach consensus in 2012 on the implementation of new commitments and agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation emerging from the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other meetings, such as the Nuclear Security Summits in Washington, D.C., and Seoul.

CARICOM recalls that its member States are part of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone by virtue of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — of 1967. It also encourages all initiatives towards the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors remains a source of great concern for the international community. In that respect, CARICOM has, with the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), sought to strengthen the capacities of the States of our region through the sharing of best practices and technology transfer, with a view to helping them to deliver on their commitments under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

CARICOM also welcomes the convening by the Secretary-General of a high-level meeting on countering nuclear terrorism in September on the margins of the Assembly's general debate. That meeting was a step in the right direction for enhancing the legal arsenal and preventing nuclear terrorism.

CARICOM believes that it is urgent to focus more on nuclear security. The accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in Japan in 2011 is still in our minds. In that respect, we commend the Japanese Government for the speed with which it was able to manage and contain the crisis. That accident has elevated nuclear security and safety to the top of the international community's concern. CARICOM gives its support to the IAEA for the decisive role that it is playing in the field of nuclear safety and security, as well as in emergency situations.

The adoption by consensus, on 7 September, of the outcome document of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action was a positive sign in combating the proliferation of, and illicit

trade in, small arms and light weapons. The references to the negative effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on persons with disabilities; the role of peacekeeping missions in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons; the importance of tracking developments in design and production technologies for small arms and light weapons for the purposes of marking, tracing and registration; and the reference to the necessity to further integrate the role of women into efforts to combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to ensure their full participation in the decision-making process are themes that reflect the commitment of the international community to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. CARICOM endorses those references and encourages the international community to work towards the comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action.

It has become customary for CARICOM to address the question of the trans-shipment of nuclear and toxic waste in the waters of the subregion. An accident during trans-shipment would have far-reaching consequences on our populations, economies and the environment. CARICOM calls on the countries that produce such waste to put an end to that dangerous practice.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our region's commitment to work with the international community towards the adoption and implementation of shared mechanisms to move the disarmament programme forward and thus ensure a better future for humankind.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a true pleasure to see you, Sir, chairing our work. Allow me therefore, first and foremost, to congratulate you most sincerely. We recall the contribution you made in your capacity as Vice-Chair of the Committee in 2004, and I am certain that we are in very good hands to ensure the continuation of earlier efforts to achieve international peace and security. You have the full support of the delegation of Mexico and my own support in order to help meet that goal.

Allow me also to align myself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and by the Representative of Sweden on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Our work is beginning in a worrying climate. After the euphoria of the 2009-2010 period, when we glimpsed an opportunity for disarmament, the

international scenario is currently marked by numerous and growing outbreaks of tension and conflict that fuel the sale, distribution and trafficking in arms, the use or threat of use of high-powered weaponry in densely populated areas, and the use of arms that have indiscriminate effect, including the threat of use of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, in an economic environment that is marked by the convergence of the financial, energy, environmental, social and food crises, there is a grotesque mismatch between the economic resources that are allocated to the upkeep of weapons arsenals compared to those that are allocated to development.

Given the urgency of the situation, we must address the great challenges facing peace and international security. The first of those challenges is nuclear disarmament, as a result of the stalemate in the multilateral negotiations in that area. More than 40 years on, following the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and almost two decades after the Cold War ended, there are about 20,000 nuclear warheads worldwide. Of them 2,000 are on a high-alert status. Such figures are absurd and incomprehensible, given the challenges of the international contemporary situation, above all bearing in mind the military uselessness of such weapons and the cost of their maintenance.

The intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons or the threat of the use of such weapons would have disastrous humanitarian consequences that would jeopardize the very security of those who argue that such devices of war serve the aim of protecting their security. The use of a single nuclear weapon would contravene all principles of international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, it would be a crime against humanity. For that reason and without further delay or further conditions, there is a need for the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to work towards achieving a world that is free from such weapons.

Over the past 15 years, we have been unable to launch multilateral negotiations to establish new legally binding instruments in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. That lack of negotiation is unacceptable. There is no legal or ethical justification for the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. The very existence of such weapons in itself poses a risk to international security, and the only guarantee against their use is their total elimination. Furthermore, the only way to

strengthen the non-proliferation regime is through nuclear disarmament itself. What does not exist cannot be used, nor can it proliferate.

Given that threat, it is most unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva remains paralysed, held hostage by its own inertia and unable to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the international community. That paralysis, which has resulted from the abuse of the concept of consensus, has become a de facto veto. The General Assembly — through the First Committee — is under the obligation to shoulder its responsibilities. Mexico, along with other States, will therefore continue to promote initiatives that would allow us to make some progress in the multilateral negotiations to achieve nuclear disarmament. We are certain that we will enjoy the support of all those States that are equally concerned at the current paralysis, and without a doubt, we constitute the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the Organization.

The second challenge to which I wish to refer is the challenge posed by conventional weapons, in particular the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Easy access to such weapons as a result of irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons and owing to the unlimited or uncontrolled possession of such weapons by civilians and the lack of adequate regulation of munitions and ammunition has had devastating consequences worldwide, not only in humanitarian terms but also in economic, political and social terms. Small arms and light weapons and their munitions and ammunition are an obstacle to peace and security, as well as to development. Moreover, they fuel transnational organized crime. Accordingly, we regret that the Diplomatic Conference held in July on the negotiations on an arms trade treaty ended without an agreement.

For Mexico the adoption of a treaty that would prohibit the transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and their munitions — where there is the risk that those weapons can be used to perpetrate violations of human rights and international law — can no longer be postponed. We urgently require a treaty that will establish effective mechanisms to ensure that such arms and munitions are not diverted to the illicit market or to internationally organized criminal groups with the humanitarian impact of which we are all aware.

Mexico will spare no effort to ensure that the treaty becomes a reality in the near future. We cannot allow

the political or economic considerations of a few States to impede the broad agreements that are necessary to meet that objective.

I wish also to single out the positive progress that has been achieved in that area, namely, the successful conclusion of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The successful outcome of that Conference is largely due to skillfulness of Ambassador Joy Ogwu, who was able to fulfil her task adroitly and tactfully. The First Committee must now build upon the achievements made at the Review Conference and ensure follow-up to the recommendations that were adopted in September. Those achievements cannot remain a dead letter. We must ensure that they are implemented as soon as possible.

The Review Conference of the Programme of Action has shown that we are able to demonstrate the necessary resolve to forge agreements. We hope that that same constructive spirit will prevail in the ongoing negotiations on the arms trade treaty.

Finally, allow me to state that, as this session begins, great decisions lie ahead of Member States in the field of disarmament. We must therefore shoulder our responsibilities and commitments, as was said previously, in order to make progress on our agenda. I have every confidence that under your leadership, Sir, we will be able to meet those lofty aims.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt is delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of States members of the League of Arab States. The Arab Group aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I extend to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. We are fully confident that, given your capabilities and expertise, you will contribute to the success of the work of the Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau of the First Committee.

As the First Committee meets this year, the Arab Group anticipates tangible progress on a number of issues, particularly the convening of a conference in

2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to the outcome of the last Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Arab Group welcomes the initial steps taken to prepare for the 2012 conference, such as the designation of Finland as the host Government for the conference and the nomination of Ambassador Jaakko Laajava as facilitator. The Arab Group also stresses the importance of the participation of all concerned countries in the Middle East in the conference, so as to determine the follow-up steps regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, with the help of the facilitator and in accordance with the action plan of the final document of the 2010 Review Conference.

The Arab Group stresses how important it is that all parties responsible for the convening of a conference in 2012 commit to holding the conference on the Middle East on the date set by the action plan, including taking the practical steps associated with the preparation of the agenda, issuing the invitations in a timely manner, and encouraging all countries of the region to participate in the conference.

We call on the international community to support efforts aimed at convening a successful 2012 conference and enabling it to result in a practical outcome with clear implementation mechanisms, set in accordance with a specific timetable that realizes the objective of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Arab Group stresses the importance of maintaining parallel progress in the process leading to achieving the total and complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, biological and chemical — in the Middle East, in accordance with the action plan. The Group also affirms the need for the Conference to agree on concrete results in order to achieve that aim and not be limited to mere theoretical discussions. It is our hope that the 2012 conference will contribute towards achieving that objective before the convening of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Arab Group stresses that the current situation in the Middle East does not adversely affect the unified Arab position concerning the convening of the

conference, on the date set for it, before the end of this year, as the convening of the conference will by itself contribute to the region's stability, thus addressing relevant aspects of the current developments in the region.

The Arab Group takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment and political will to achieving a successful outcome of the 2012 conference and calls on the conveners of the conference and the other countries of the region expected to participate in the conference to demonstrate similar commitment with commensurate political will. The Arab countries decided for the second consecutive year not to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities" at the last General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in an attempt to create favourable conditions for the success of the 2012 conference. It is our hope that that step will be reciprocated and will receive an appropriate response from all the parties on the other side.

The Arab Group believes that the attempt to link the peace process in the Middle East, which faces a stalemate as a result of the stubbornness of the other party, with the endeavour to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons does not conform with sound logic. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is an essential prerequisite for the achievement of security, stability and peace. It is also considered an important basis for confidence-building and for moving the peace process forward. The establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction fulfils the implementation of the several decisions adopted by the General Assembly in that regard, and also conforms with Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991), which affirmed the objective of establishing such a zone and of placing Israeli nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA.

The Arab Group reiterates that any delay in the implementation of the commitment to hold the 2012 conference, as decided by the 2010 Review Conference, will be a setback to the efforts for nuclear disarmament and will impede the progress of efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation, especially in the Middle East, which may lead the Arab League member States to review their policies in that regard.

The Arab Group stresses, on this occasion, the necessity for placing all nuclear facilities in the Middle

East region under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA. The Arab Group also emphasizes the need to achieve the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In that regard, the Arab Group stresses the need for Israel to join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. The Group urges the placement of all Israeli nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA, which would contribute to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region and to its economic and social development, and would prevent the countries of the region from entering into an arms race, which would hinder development programmes and undermine confidence-building efforts.

The Arab Group considers the NPT as the main foundation of the multilateral system for disarmament and international security. We stress the need for dealing equally with the three elements of the Treaty, especially the right of all States to conduct and use research and studies and nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty.

The call by the Arab Group to achieve the universality of the NPT is part and parcel of its principled commitment to nuclear disarmament as the top priority of disarmament efforts as established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Arab Group stresses that the United Nations disarmament machinery and its terms of reference emanate only from those special sessions and cannot be modified, unless there is a special session of the General Assembly devoted to that purpose. We strongly support the call by the Non-Aligned Movement to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Arab Group reaffirms the need to enable the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament within the framework of the United Nations, to fulfil its role. We also stress that the current stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament is not due to any shortcomings of the Conference itself, but is due to the lack of political will of the main States in the Conference. Therefore, we stress the need to preserve the key role of the Conference on Disarmament and not to disperse efforts through the establishment of other parallel mechanisms. The four issues on the Conference's agenda, namely, nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, are all interrelated. They are

part of an integrated agenda for nuclear disarmament. It is improper to deal with one of them ahead of the remainder, or to deal with a number of those issues from the perspective of non-proliferation at the expense of the nuclear disarmament process. That applies to the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty, which we believe must address the accumulated stockpiles within countries that possess nuclear weapons.

The Arab Group expresses its sincere appreciation to Ambassador Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria and President of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, on her efforts and the efforts exerted by the four facilitators to reach agreement on the final document of the Conference. The Arab Group participated actively in the Conference, with the aim of achieving that successful outcome. The Group reiterates its continued adherence to the commitments contained in the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, and recalls that any additional issues and concepts are just proposals subject to further consensus.

The Arab Group would also like to refer to the tireless efforts made by Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, President of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, in conjunction with all the countries that participated in the Conference. One of the co-Chairs of the Conference is from our sister country Morocco. The Arab Group also welcomes the adoption of the rules of procedure, which state that all substantive decisions of the Conference have to be reached by consensus. The Group was keen to participate actively in the further work of the Conference and to contribute to the creation of all the conditions needed for its success. We reiterate that the success of the negotiations on the treaty depends on reaching a balanced treaty reflecting the interests of all the States participating in the negotiations, including the State of Palestine.

In the view of the Arab Group, an acceptable outcome on all elements of the treaty can be reached only through the multilateral framework of the United Nations. The draft treaty has to be consistent with the content and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially the legitimate right of States to self-defence, their right to preserve their territorial integrity, the right of self-determination, the inadmissibility of

foreign occupation and the right to produce, export, import, and transfer conventional arms within the confines of law. The draft treaty must also take into account the balance of responsibilities between the arms-exporting and arms-importing States. Any criteria developed by the treaty to regulate arms exports must also be based on clear legal instruments, including relevant instruments of international humanitarian law, and decisions of the relevant United Nations organs. The treaty should also provide for recourse to arbitration in cases of refusal to export on a subjective basis or in the event that a State exploits the treaty for political purposes.

The Arab Group has shared its top priorities regarding the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, cognizant of the fact that the agenda before us imposes a daunting task. That should not curb our ambition; on the contrary, it should only further drive us to a commitment to exert every effort and to uphold every principle of justice and non-selectivity, as those principles are essential to generate the necessary political will for the success of the work of the First Committee.

Allow me to reassure you that the Arab Group is committed to implementing those principles and to working with you, Sir, and the members of the First Committee towards making progress on all issues related to disarmament and international security.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Let me join previous delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the Chair of the First Committee and in assuring you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the fulfilment of your task. Given the time limits that you have asked us to respect, I will present only an abridged version of my statement. The full statement, in French and English, is being distributed.

Disarmament and international security are in constant evolution, and the global community is facing new and increasingly complex challenges. I could refer, as an illustration, to developments in the fields of information technology, outer space and the life sciences. To meet those challenges, Member States will need to develop common responses, in particular in the form of new multilateral instruments.

Against that background, the protracted deadlock affecting the various forums of the United Nations disarmament machinery is gradually undermining the standing and legitimacy of that machinery — a situation

that is becoming increasingly untenable. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has once again failed to fulfil its negotiating mandate, and the Disarmament Commission again concluded its latest session without agreeing on recommendations, for the thirteenth consecutive year. Switzerland remains convinced that the CD has the inherent potential to negotiate the instruments needed to address disarmament challenges. My delegation is convinced that adopting such instruments is in the inherent interest of the international community. However, the continued failure to make substantive progress has once again highlighted the need to reflect thoroughly on the strengths and weaknesses of the disarmament machinery in order to be able to tap the full potential of the CD in the future.

The General Assembly has been grappling with that problem for the past few years. Last year it adopted the resolution entitled “Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations” (resolution 66/66). We feel encouraged that discussions have been initiated, in particular in the CD, on the various options for addressing the challenge of revitalization. We see that as a welcome first step but believe that the dialogue should be pursued and advanced in a more structured way. We expect that the issue will be at the heart of the deliberations of the Committee, and Switzerland intends to play an active and constructive role in that area.

The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in May, provided an opportunity to assess the implementation of that Treaty and, in particular, the plan of action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference. We welcome the positive atmosphere that prevailed at that meeting, yet remain concerned by the slow pace of progress and the outstanding challenges in implementing the various commitments related to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat to humankind. As long as some States retain them in their arsenal, the risk remains that they will be used. Significant progress is necessary in both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as those two areas are closely linked. That means moving resolutely towards an overall reduction in the global stockpile of all types of nuclear weapons. We therefore call on those

States possessing the largest nuclear arsenals to launch new disarmament negotiations as a priority. It also requires that all States that have not yet done so should ratify promptly the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in particular those States listed in the Treaty's annex 2. It is also important to give effect to the decision to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We urge all States to support that process.

A reduction in the operational readiness of nuclear weapons would also help to sustain disarmament dynamics. Switzerland, together with its like-minded partners, has been pressing for progress in that area for a number of years. Maintaining a large number of nuclear weapons today at the same level of operational readiness as during the Cold War raises fundamental questions and poses significant risks. We intend to continue our campaign, including at this session of the First Committee.

The final document adopted in 2010 also introduced new paths to advance nuclear disarmament. The humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament has since then gained significant support and momentum. Work has been undertaken to further our understanding of the unacceptable humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons. No State would be immune from the catastrophic consequences of their use. Nuclear disarmament has been a key item on the General Assembly's agenda since 1946, and addressing that issue in this body is therefore particularly appropriate. Accordingly, Switzerland also intends to promote that debate in this very forum.

The inability of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to come to an agreement last July can only be seen as a missed opportunity. Member States were unable to live up to their own expectations and those of large segments of civil society, namely, to achieve a treaty regulating the international arms trade and resting on the highest possible common standards. While we are disappointed that the negotiating Conference did not reach a successful conclusion, we are nonetheless encouraged that very significant progress was made on key aspects of an arms trade treaty. Those major advances are reflected in the draft treaty text submitted by the Conference President on 26 July.

A final meeting of the session, to be held in coming months, so as to maintain the momentum generated, would be an appropriate framework within which to reach a robust treaty. For such a process to succeed, efforts made thus far must be encouraged, which is the reason why the President's draft treaty text of 26 July should form the basis of any additional work. For the same reason, the rules of procedure applied at the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in July should be retained.

We are pleased that the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held this summer, was able to adopt by consensus a substantive outcome document providing for a strengthened implementation of both the Programme of Action and the international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. That document is of particular significance for the continuing relevance of the instruments adopted so far.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): First, on behalf of my delegation, I should like warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session. I wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in your important work. I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation throughout the work of the Committee and of its readiness to engage constructively in our collective endeavour to try to make the world a safer place for all.

Serbia has aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Nonetheless, I shall make a few additional remarks.

My country has consistently been a staunch supporter of proactive multilateralism and has long been of the view that, in a world of increasing interdependence and complexity, common challenges require common solutions. There is no doubt that the future prospects of ensuring progress in the international disarmament and arms-control arena depend by and large on the developments in the ever-evolving political and strategic global environment. At the same time, the positive results in that arena provide an important stimulus to strengthening international peace and security. The interconnection between the global political and strategic climate and achievements

in the field of disarmament makes it incumbent upon us to invest additional efforts to advance the work of the multilateral disarmament machinery, and thus help to improve the overall situation in the world.

Serbia has acceded to all the major international agreements and initiatives in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, and is committed to a full and systematic implementation of the obligations it has assumed. The successful conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the adoption of a comprehensive and forward-looking action plan by consensus are crucial contributions to strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and reaffirming the continued importance of the Treaty. The new review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a new opportunity to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the 2010 NPT action plan and to identify ways to address the remaining challenges related to the three pillars of the Treaty.

My country is resolved to abide consistently by its commitments under the NPT and has taken extensive legislative, regulatory and other measures in that regard. It is also involved in various international efforts aimed at preventing and combating nuclear terrorism and enhancing the security of nuclear materials and technologies. Serbia joined the Proliferation Security Initiative, in 2006, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, in 2007. It has ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Furthermore, Serbia's adherence to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management is expected to be approved soon. Intensive activities aimed at improving the national system for emergency preparedness and response have been undertaken as well. Significant progress has been made on the strengthening of the physical protection of nuclear objects and nuclear safety and security, including the establishment of the Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, fully operational since 2010.

Serbia strongly supports the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and encourages all States that have not yet signed or ratified it, especially States listed in annex 2 of the

Treaty, to do so as soon as possible. My country also continues to attach great importance to the fulfilment of its obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and, in January 2012, submitted to the relevant Security Council 1540 Committee its updated national report on the measures taken to implement that resolution. In addition, Serbia is the first country in the wider region to adopt a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) for the period 2012-2016.

Serbia is committed to the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Our 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 2009. Cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons continues to make progress and includes, inter alia, the organization of international training in response to chemical attacks and incidents, which is being held at the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training centre of the Serbian armed forces in Kruševac.

Serbia has demonstrated its continued engagement in the area of improving its capacities regarding the various aspects of the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. A framework law on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of such weapons and on their destruction was adopted in November 2011. In May 2009, the National Assembly of Serbia adopted the law on the withdrawal of the reservation to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare.

Serbia participates in the European Union's chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation centres of excellence initiative, jointly implemented by the European Commission and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. Our national team comprises representatives of all the relevant ministries, and Government agencies have been established with the task of following up on the operational implementation of the project, coordinating activities at the national

level and maintaining international cooperation in that regard.

Numerous projects in the area of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are being implemented. I wish to take this opportunity to mention just a few. The Capacity Development Programme for Conventional Ammunition Stockpile Management is being jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Ministry of Defence of Serbia, with the aim of improving the safety of ammunition storage sites and contributing to counter-proliferation measures by reducing the quantity of and reinforcing the security of surplus stockpiles. Last April, the regional conference of the South-East European Cooperation Process on enhancing mutual cooperation in the region for resolving the surplus arms issue was held in Belgrade. Serbia has established a stringent and effective arms and military equipment export control system consistent with the standards of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. It is also incorporated in the national strategy for the control of small arms and light weapons for the period 2010 to 2015.

Serbia continues to work on the fulfilment of its remaining obligations under the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Mines, to which it acceded in 2003.

My country regrets that the process of the elaboration of an arms trade treaty did not come to a successful conclusion in July, but it will continue to support the finalization of the work and the adoption of a strong and comprehensive legally binding treaty establishing the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms.

Serbia continues to implement the agreement on subregional arms control, set out in annex 1B, article IV, of the Dayton Peace Accords, thus contributing to fostering the atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the subregion. A new stage of implementation of the agreement, based on the transfer of ownership to the States parties, is under way and is to be finalized by 2014.

In order to make a full contribution to the relevant United Nations activities in the field of disarmament, my country submitted its candidature for membership in the Conference on Disarmament. Resolution 66/59, entitled "Report of the Conference on Disarmament",

recognizes, in paragraph 6, "the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament", while the rules of procedure of the Conference itself envisage that "the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals".

Serbia supports the appointment of a special coordinator on expanding the membership of the Conference in order to continue consultations on this issue in an organized manner. The current stalemate in the work of the Conference has to be overcome through the demonstration of clear political will by all Member States to proceed, seriously and without delay, with substantive work, thus enabling the Conference to resume its original function. That is a true test of its credibility and ability to reaffirm its own significance as an indispensable element of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): First, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. Indonesia itself, as we know, has exemplary credentials in disarmament and international security, and your own contribution personally is widely acknowledged. You can be assured of my delegation's support for your efforts as Chair. Allow me also to begin by commending Indonesia's own leadership in ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) this year, which has helped to breathe new life into our collective efforts to consolidate that crucial pillar of the nuclear disarmament regime.

Within Australia's broad commitment to the multilateral system, we have historically always placed disarmament and non-proliferation at the top of our agenda. Australians as a people and the Australian Parliament have always insisted that we do so. We have always been willing to do our share of the work and to try new things to ensure that we retain our collective ambition, to ensure that we all lift our game in our efforts to make the world more stable and secure and to save ourselves from ourselves.

I want to focus Australia's comments today on a few priority areas that require urgent action. The first is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We must take credible and definite steps to address the fact that the nuclear weapons that are still in existence have the combined destructive power of more than 150,000 Hiroshima bombs.

At the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, held in Vienna in May, which Australia was honoured to chair, it was very good to see that States parties were prepared to come and report on what they had done to begin implementing the 2010 NPT Review Conference consensus action plan. That enabled us collectively to acknowledge that we are in many areas on track — but of course not in enough areas. Importantly, States pledged to stay the course on some of the most challenging elements, such as concrete reductions in nuclear arsenals, strengthening adherence to the Additional Protocol and holding the Middle East conference in 2012. That was a solid early outcome for the new review cycle, but obviously we cannot be complacent. The greatest effort, as we know, lies ahead of us.

Expectations rightly fall most heavily on the nuclear-weapon States, particularly on reporting their action 5 nuclear disarmament commitments by the time of the 2014 Preparatory Committee meeting. To that end, Australia and the other members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, co-chaired by ourselves and Japan, have sought to push this agenda ahead by engaging the nuclear-weapon States directly on transparency and reporting. A stronger culture of transparency and accountability among the nuclear-weapon States and other States with nuclear weapons is indispensable to making honest progress towards nuclear disarmament.

The entry into force of the CTBT must remain our priority. We should never forget that the current moratorium against nuclear tests is actually fragile and that we could at any moment easily slide back into a time of nuclear tests and improvement. We must take all the necessary steps to prevent that. Last month, our Foreign Minister, Bob Carr, joined six of his colleagues in co-hosting a ministerial meeting at which we committed to a strong statement of support and expectation of the CTBT's entry into force. Australia calls on the nuclear-weapon possessors and other annex 2 countries that have not ratified to look again seriously at doing so.

At this session of the First Committee Australia, with New Zealand and Mexico, will introduce our annual CTBT draft resolution. We invite all Member States to support and sponsor this year's draft resolution, which reinforces the need, pending the CTBT's entry into force, to maintain a testing moratorium. That gives renewed expression to the Treaty's central obligation

and proposition that nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions should never occur again. We must remember that the CTBT is more than just a practical commitment not to test nuclear weapons; it is symbolic of a broader undertaking to prevent the further development of nuclear weapons, and it thereby says much about our commitment to nuclear disarmament.

At the same time as we halt the further development of nuclear weapons, we must also reverse the quantity of them. The start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices is long overdue.

There are clearly gaps in our global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We acknowledge them, and much of our effort is aimed at addressing them. But that also means that regional initiatives are a crucial complementary focus. They can strengthen global efforts, particularly where global efforts are faltering, and they can also address specific regional concerns and insecurities. Nowhere is that more relevant and urgent than in the Middle East. Australia strongly supports the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as well as ongoing efforts to convene a conference in 2012. We call upon all States in the Middle East to engage in a spirit of genuine and constructive cooperation to make this happen.

As gains are made in disarmament and non-proliferation, we face a situation where new challenges move ahead of us and have the potential to create new tension, for example in cyberspace. The new Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security is an important opportunity to build consensus on norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour by States, and on measures to develop trust and confidence between States in cyberspace, thereby enhancing international security. The need for that will only increase with our dependence on information and communications technologies. That is why Australia is honoured to chair the Group and is committed to a constructive outcome that improves our collective capacity to deal with this threat head-on, while at the same time ensuring that developing countries have enhanced access to the technologies that they very clearly need.

We are all only too aware that armed violence, fuelled by the availability of illicit conventional arms,

fractures societies, displaces populations, undermines development and kills people. We see it around the world. We see it now. Two thousand people a day are killed because of illegally and irresponsibly traded weapons, mostly small arms, and the impact is greatest on women and children. At the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in New York in July, States came close to achieving a treaty that would genuinely reduce that threat. We failed to adopt a treaty at that Conference, but we are almost there. On the final day, as only a handful of States asked for more time, more than 90 States from all regions joined together in a statement, delivered by the representative of Mexico, that showed a clear intent to finish the job.

At this session of the First Committee, therefore, seven co-authors, including Australia, will introduce a simple draft resolution to reconvene negotiations one more time to agree a treaty, and to urge that we use the 26 July text as our starting point. We must not lose the progress we made, or the momentum. Australia itself will work to improve the 26 July text to ensure that we get the strongest and most effective treaty. We hope that the arms trade treaty draft resolution will enjoy the strong support of the General Assembly so that we can finish the work of agreeing on the treaty and get on with the even more important work of implementing it effectively, and that is the important work of saving lives.

Australia has already pledged \$1 million to initiate a multilateral assistance fund to help developing countries with implementation, and will continue that support in future. Australia will provide further support to those wishing to participate in the final conference. Our principle has always been that all States should be at the table in those negotiations. Strong participation from regions most affected by this senseless trade and killing, including Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and our own region, the Pacific, is crucial if we are to achieve a treaty that actually makes a difference on the ground.

We also saw at the Review Conference on Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons that the United Nations membership universally wants action to prevent small arms from taking more lives. The political will exists to achieve strong consensus outcomes to that end. We thank Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria for guiding us to that outcome and capturing our collective commitment to a framework of measures that will hold us all to account

on this problem. Again, implementation must now be our focus.

Australia looks forward to setting out in greater detail during the coming few weeks our views, our ideas and, more important, the practical action we are taking on a range of disarmament issues. That includes our other efforts in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and our ongoing work in assisting partners to rehabilitate land and lives through our \$100 million Mine Action Strategy.

Throughout this session under your leadership, Mr. Chair, I hope that our collective focus can be on what multilateralism at its best can achieve — practical outcomes for the benefit of the international community and, at the end of the day, humankind ourselves.

Ms. Higgin (New Zealand): You, Mr. Chair, have been my neighbour in Geneva, and your country is our neighbour at home. Disarmament issues are as important for Indonesia as they are for New Zealand. Few others can match your personal expertise on First Committee matters. Accordingly, the New Zealand delegation is doubly delighted to have you presiding over us and to have the opportunity to work with you again. We look forward to engaging with you as New Zealand again promotes, with like-minded colleagues, a number of draft resolutions of key significance to us. They include the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), nuclear-weapon-free zones in the southern hemisphere, the reduced operational readiness of nuclear weapons, and nuclear disarmament — the latter in concert with the New Agenda Coalition (NAC).

New Zealand is pleased to associate itself with the statement delivered earlier by Sweden on behalf of the NAC.

This year's session of the First Committee has particular importance on several counts. In a message delivered last month, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon referred to the "growing recognition of the paramount importance of the protection of civilians". Those unfamiliar with traditional disarmament and arms-control approaches might perhaps view this as a statement of the obvious. In fact, at some times and in some contexts what we might term the humanitarian dimension to disarmament has been anything but uppermost. For New Zealand, the human and humanitarian dimension of security processes must be paramount. That underlies our strong support for an arms trade treaty. Even if that treaty cannot

immediately be a game-changer in the lives of ordinary citizens in dangerous areas of the globe, it will inevitably, over time, contribute significantly to their increased protection.

Like others, New Zealand was disappointed that the July Diplomatic Conference was unable to reach agreement on an appropriately robust and comprehensive arms trade treaty. We commend Ambassador Roberto García Moritán for his tireless efforts and recognize the good progress achieved under his wise stewardship. Further work is necessary to strengthen the text that was on the table at the end of the Conference so that we can be more confident that it will prevent irresponsible arms transfers and forestall their diversion to the illicit trade. It is not just our civilian populations that stand to gain from that. For instance, the safety of military forces engaged in peacekeeping around the globe would also be better assured. New Zealand remains wholly committed to adopting an arms trade treaty that meets our humanitarian ambitions.

I believe that the international disarmament community can draw some satisfaction from the consensual outcome of the recent Review Conference on small arms and light weapons. New Zealand pays special tribute to Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria for the prudence and skill with which she and her team secured that result. New Zealand was pleased that the Review Conference was able to agree on a range of practical steps for strengthening implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons over the coming years. The clear schedule of meetings for the period ahead will provide an opportunity to continue the good discussions at the Review Conference on core issues such as technological developments, border controls and stockpile management. The challenge before us now will be to translate the Review Conference's outcome into practical and effective measures that deliver a humanitarian dividend.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is well known as a disarmament treaty that was predicated entirely on humanitarian considerations. The third Meeting of States Parties took place very recently in Oslo, at a point when 75 countries have already become party to the Convention. Although the Convention on Cluster Munitions was negotiated outside traditional channels and is not yet universal, the use of cluster munitions is now seriously constrained. Those countries that have dared to use them since the Convention's adoption have

met with widespread opprobrium. The Convention has indeed contributed greatly to the global stigmatization of cluster munitions. Accordingly, New Zealand believes that the Convention is having the humanitarian and normative impact sought by the architects of the Oslo process.

Pursuant to our position as the Convention's coordinator for national implementation, New Zealand is closely involved in efforts to assist with the development of implementing legislation for the Convention. We stand ready to assist any State in that regard, whether through the model implementing legislation we have developed or via other national precedents. We look forward to carrying this issue forward, as well as the issue of the Convention's universalization, at the fourth Meeting of States Parties, which is to be hosted by Zambia in Lusaka next September.

This year's report card on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) — established as the international community's mechanism for multilateral disarmament negotiations — could once again, at its most euphemistic, be termed "patchy". Despite what seemed like a promising effort by Egypt as its President early in the year, the CD has again drawn another blank, now for its fourteenth year in succession.

We are close to losing patience. The fact is — as you, Mr. Chair, have cause to know only too well from your time in Geneva — the Conference is deeply mired in a rut of its own making. For as long as agreement on a mandate for one core issues is held hostage to agreement on mandates for each of the three other core issues, the CD will be unable to get its wheel out of the rut. At the least, the Conference needs to take careful notice of the recent reminder from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs that the achievement of major disarmament objectives will require parallel efforts on several tracks, rather than sequential efforts leaving nuclear disarmament as the last to be achieved.

Why is it that in a world in which no leader, to our knowledge, has publicly opposed the elimination of nuclear weapons, the obligation in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament — remains unfulfilled? Article VI has been on our books and in force for more than 40 years now.

It cannot be enough to say that the Conference on Disarmament is not able to work. Nor should we resign

ourselves to the CD not working. Where an obstacle blocks our path, if it cannot be removed it is necessary to detour around it. The Secretary-General recently described nuclear weapons as useless against today's threats to international peace and security, drawing attention at the same time to various risks such as accidents and potential health and environmental effects.

In that regard, I draw particular attention to the De-alerting Group's resolution on lowering the operational readiness of nuclear weapons, as well as to

New Zealand's participation in collective statements on the humanitarian impact of any use of a nuclear weapon.

My delegation remains encouraged by the explicit recognition at the 2010 NPT Review Conference that the consequences of any such use would indeed be catastrophic and by its reaffirmation of the full applicability of international humanitarian law to all aspects of nuclear weapons. We very much welcome the opportunity provided by the meeting being hosted next March by Norway to consider in full the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Again, this is an instance of the increasing focus on the humanitarian implications and human consequences of States' security policies and weapons.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.