



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

First Committee

5th meeting

Wednesday, 9 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Dabbashi (Libya)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 89 to 107 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

Mr. U Maung Wai (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar.

At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate you on assuming your functions as Chair of the prestigious First Committee. We are confident that, under your able leadership, the Committee will produce very fruitful outcomes. Our tribute also goes to the other members of the Bureau. ASEAN will extend its full support and cooperation to the Committee as it discharges its important responsibilities.

ASEAN, with its sustained development, strategic geographical location and peace-oriented values, plays a pivotal role in maintaining and promoting peace and stability in the region by promoting the prevalence of international peace and security. Materializing their vision of a concert of South-East Asian nations that are outward-looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, and bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies, the ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN Charter. In line with that Charter and guided by the

principles and purposes contained therein, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Council (APSC Council) blueprint was adopted in March 2009. Under the APSC Council, one priority area is the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, launched at the twenty-first ASEAN summit in November 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, aimed at promoting research activities on peace, conflict management and conflict resolution in the region.

We devoted a significant effort to establishing the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM). The first formal meeting of the network was held in September 2013 in Phuket, Thailand, and subsequently, its terms of reference were formally endorsed in a meeting of ASEAN senior officials in the same month. We strongly believe that ASEANTOM will support and contribute to the purpose of ASEAN in preserving South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We reaffirm the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as the key code of conduct governing inter-State relations in the region and a foundation for the maintenance of regional peace and stability. In that regard, ASEAN welcomes the entry into force of the third protocol, amending the Treaty and the accession to it by the United Kingdom, the European Union and Brazil in Phnom Penh in 2012, and Norway in Bandar Seri Begawan in July 2013, which is a positive signal of their commitment to strengthen cooperation with ASEAN and contribute to peace and security in the region. We are, therefore, encouraged by the continued interests on the part of other non-ASEAN member

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States in acceding to the Treaty, and we encourage others to do so.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority on the disarmament agenda of ASEAN. We underscore that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, provide the only sustainable method for addressing disarmament and international security issues.

ASEAN attaches great importance to the outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and reiterates its call for the full and effective implementation of the action plan as set out in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-up actions of the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, particularly the 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament. While welcoming the success of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, the ASEAN States parties to the Treaty call for the full implementation of the action plans adopted in 2010 on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Although there have been some positive signals and developments, the world is still confronted by unresolved challenges. ASEAN therefore calls for renewed efforts to resolve the current impasse in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. In that regard, we welcome the successful convening of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament. We hope that, building on the outcomes of that meeting, we can move forward to achieve the common goal of nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, we also welcome the work of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. In order to have concrete and deliverable outcomes, we strongly believe that all stakeholders should be involved in the process of the open-ended working group.

ASEAN member States stress the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We reaffirm the importance of that Treaty as a core instrument that prohibits all nuclear testing on Earth by seeking to

stop the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and prevent the development of new nuclear warheads and their means of delivery systems, thereby promoting nuclear disarmament. While welcoming the recent ratification of CTBT by Brunei Darussalam, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq, we reiterate our call on all States, in particular those whose ratification is needed for the Treaty's entry into force, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

ASEAN member States are committed to continuing to contribute to the work of the First Committee. In that light, two draft resolutions will be submitted by ASEAN member States again this year. One draft resolution that will be introduced by Malaysia again this year is entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons". That draft resolution essentially underscores the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice on 8 July 1996 that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control.

In line with the very high priority that we attach to our disarmament agenda, Myanmar will again present a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament in this session. We are convinced that the mere existence of nuclear weapons, combined with the lack of international, legally binding instruments on the complete prohibition of such weapons, poses the greatest threat to the survival of mankind. The draft resolution has been introduced for a number of years, and is sponsored by the ASEAN member States and like-minded countries. The draft resolution reflects, inter alia, interim measures and steps to be taken by nuclear-weapon States, as well as various multilateral approaches leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame. The draft resolution underscores the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by ASEAN member States. We hope that we will enjoy the support of States Members of the United Nations in taking action on the draft resolution in this Committee.

ASEAN continues to believe that the nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of Tlateloco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba, as well as the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, contribute significantly to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. ASEAN underscores the

importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not exist, especially in the Middle East region, and expresses its continued support for the earliest possible convening of the conference on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. We would like to also stress that the nuclear-weapon States must provide unconditional assurances that they will not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against any State in a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

One of the purposes enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, as well as one of the key elements of the APSC blueprint, is the preservation of the South-East Asia region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of all other weapons of mass destruction. ASEAN will continue to engage with the nuclear-weapon States in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty, taking the outstanding issues into consideration, with a view to persuading them to sign the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (SEANWFZ) without reservations and as early as possible.

ASEAN underscores the importance of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime so as to maintain peace, security and prosperity in the region. We welcome the adoption of the revised Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the SEANWFZ (2013-2017) with its renewed commitment and a stronger emphasis on concrete actions.

At the sixty-eighth session, Brunei Darussalam — as ASEAN Chair and Chairman of the SEANWFZ Commission and on behalf of ASEAN States members — will submit, once again, the traditional biennial draft resolution entitled “Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone”. Building on the results of 2011, ASEAN is hopeful that it can find co-sponsors for the SEANWFZ draft resolution among the nuclear-weapon States this year. We look forward to the support of all Member States for this draft resolution, which encourages nuclear-weapon States and States parties to the Bangkok Treaty to continue to work constructively with a view to ensuring the early accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the Treaty’s Protocol, without reservation.

ASEAN reaffirms that the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention also play a major role in combating weapons of mass destruction, as those types of weapons pose a serious

threat to humankind. While expressing our concerns regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria, we again urge States that have not yet done so to join the Conventions at the earliest opportunity, with a view to achieving their universality.

ASEAN member States share the concerns of other States regarding the negative impact of illicit small arms and light weapons on security, human rights and social and economic development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels. As such, we are seriously concerned over the illicit manufacture, transfer and trade in small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. It is therefore essential to promote the full and effective implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, we reiterate our call on all States and organizations to fully support the Programme of Action.

While welcoming the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April, ASEAN wishes to state that the Treaty could be more balanced and inclusive. ASEAN upholds the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and reaffirms that every nation has the right to self-defence and to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity and has the primary responsibility for the prevention of the illicit arms trade and transfer in their own territories.

ASEAN recognizes the adverse humanitarian impact of landmines and cluster munitions. Underscoring the importance of an ASEAN regional mine-action centre, we have established the relevant terms of reference for such a centre. We welcome the thirteenth meeting of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, to be held from 2 to 5 December in Geneva.

We also recognize the important work carried out during the fourth meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Lusaka, Zambia from 9 to 13 September.

ASEAN member States reaffirm the importance and validity of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament forum on disarmament. We are disappointed by the continued stalemate at the Conference during its 2013 session. However, we welcome the establishment of an informal

working group to produce a draft programme of work that is robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. Although there are some arguments regarding the potential effectiveness of the informal working group, we believe that it is a step in the right direction and constitutes a new opportunity for us to move the work of the Conference forward. We also call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, as soon as possible and as a matter of the highest priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. ASEAN also supports the appointment of a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the CD.

We are further intensifying our efforts to ensure a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible ASEAN community in 2015 by implementing the ASEAN Charter and the road map for an ASEAN community. In doing so, we are committed to striving for international peace and security and to strengthening efforts to reach the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world as a matter of the utmost priority.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition members: Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Egypt. We warmly welcome your appointment, Sir, as Chair of this year's First Committee and look forward to supporting your efforts and cooperating with you over the coming weeks.

The Coalition will present a draft resolution to the Committee, which will be introduced during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons. As a cross-regional grouping, the New Agenda Coalition has been working actively for concrete progress on nuclear disarmament. Achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons remains the New Agenda Coalition's primary goal.

The issue of nuclear disarmament has been on the international agenda since nuclear weapons were first used. Sixty-seven years after the General Assembly sought to initiate a process to achieve the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction, much remains to be done to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world. The existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose a threat to the very survival of humankind. The renewed international focus on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has reinvigorated international efforts to

achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. We firmly believe that there is a shared understanding that the only guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

More than 125 countries came together in March in Oslo to discuss the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Evidence presented during that meeting made it clear that no country, group of countries or international humanitarian organization is capable of dealing with the devastation that would arise from any nuclear detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design. We look forward to the follow-up conference that will take place in Mexico next February.

In 2012, the Assembly responded to the lack of movement on nuclear disarmament by establishing the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, which met in Geneva this year. The Assembly also mandated a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), in which the New Agenda Coalition participated actively, just a few days ago. We believe that those meetings will bolster efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education play a crucial role in supporting those efforts. We value the role played by civil society, and we encourage its increased participation in all nuclear-disarmament efforts.

There is a growing gap between the increased awareness of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons, on the one hand, and the slow pace — if any — on achieving nuclear disarmament on the other. Rather than lamenting that fact, the New Agenda Coalition and many other States, as well as civil society, have chosen to direct more energy towards initiatives that hold the promise of progress on nuclear disarmament. That is entirely consistent with the obligation of all States to advance nuclear disarmament. The nuclear-weapon States have a special and differentiated responsibility in that regard.

The action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was an important step forward that has the potential to put the process towards achieving 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, which would lead

to nuclear disarmament. They committed to accelerating progress in that regard. That commitment reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps, to advance the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The action plan also contained a requirement for the nuclear-weapon States to report on the actions they have taken to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament. We look forward to reviewing those reports, and we underline the importance of assessing the implementation of the action plan.

Throughout the past 15 years, the New Agenda Coalition has advocated the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures. While there has been some reason for optimism along the way, we have been disappointed by the slow pace of nuclear disarmament, at both the regional and the global levels, despite successive undertakings by nuclear-weapon States. Although undertakings are not lacking in that field, concrete progress is.

The absence of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, including the failure to hold a conference on the establishment of such a zone in 2012, as agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, continues to be a serious concern. All efforts must be exerted to hold that conference without any further delay. In that context, we take note of all efforts aimed at advancing the goal of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including the Egyptian initiative of 28 September in that regard.

Nuclear disarmament is an international legal obligation. It is also a moral imperative. In spite of the growing international consensus regarding the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons, an estimated 20,000 nuclear devices still exist. Nuclear weapons remain at the heart of the security doctrines of a number of States. Far from strengthening international peace and security, such a state of affairs serves to weaken efforts to reach that goal, aggravating international tensions and conflict, and jeopardizing the collective well-being of all States and peoples. Indeed, in a world where the basic needs of billions of people cannot be met, the growing spending on nuclear weapons is both unacceptable and unsustainable.

The allocation of vast resources to retain and modernize nuclear weapons is at odds with international

development aspirations, as expressed by world leaders at the turn of this century. Rather than investing in nuclear weapons, Governments should direct much-needed resources towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Over the years, significant progress has been made on nuclear non-proliferation objectives, limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament, however, has yet to be achieved. We firmly believe that a legally binding multilateral commitment to nuclear disarmament, backed by clearly defined timelines and benchmarks, is long overdue. It would serve to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and guide all future efforts. A nuclear-weapon-free world is within our collective grasp. Achieving that goal will require concerted action with a humanitarian focus at its core.

Ms. Golberg (Canada): As High Representative Kane noted on Monday (see A/C.1/68/PV.3), the past year has seen increased efforts aimed at making progress on issues of multilateral nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The second meeting, in April, of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) critically assessed the status of that Treaty, took stock of progress in implementing the 2010 NPT action plan and identified a number of issues that could be addressed by the 2015 Review Conference to further strengthen the NPT regime. We encourage all States to strengthen their efforts to implement the 2010 action plan, as that will be important in creating an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of successful outcomes, both in the 2014 Preparatory Committee and in the 2015 Review Conference.

The year also saw repeated and genuine attempts to return the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to work. But we must not confuse efforts to develop a programme of work with substantive negotiations — the true mandate of the Conference. Regrettably, the CD remains deadlocked. We welcome the establishment of the informal working group and hope that its ongoing efforts will be characterized by a spirit of compromise and flexibility from all delegations.

Meetings of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons,

established in 2012 by the General Assembly, have demonstrated that constructive dialogue on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is possible. We hope that such a spirit can be carried to other forums in 2014, including the CD and the NPT.

In that regard, Canada looks forward to the convening of the group of governmental experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as mandated by the Assembly in resolution 67/53. The group will offer a renewed opportunity to make progress toward negotiations on that key issue. Canada encourages the experts who will be named to the group to approach their work with a constructive and collaborative spirit.

Finally, on the theme of progress, Canada was encouraged by the positive outcomes arising from recent meetings of the parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Canada strongly supports the current Chair's call for more diverse voices in BWC meetings and hopes to see the trend of greater participation continue at the 2013 meeting of States parties. We believe that it is important for BWC member States to understand scientific and technical developments in the life sciences and to consider carefully their implications in relation to the Convention. We must ensure that implementation of the Convention addresses those increasing threats, while also ensuring that States can benefit from the important peaceful applications of new biological developments. We also call for concrete action on improving both the participation in and the functionality of confidence-building measures in the BWC context.

(spoke in French)

Despite those initiatives and many others, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials and technology continues to be a major concern for international peace and security. Iran continues its illegal programme to enrich nuclear material and refuses to cooperate with the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In a region where peace is fragile and tensions high, Iran's possession of nuclear weapons could lead to devastating consequences.

In terms of its nuclear programme, Iran must respect its obligations and the unambiguous legal requirements established by the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors, which it has wilfully

ignored. Indeed, Iran has yet to begin any meaningful cooperation with the Agency since November 2011, when the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution on the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme. We therefore urge the Iranian Government to comply fully with its NPT obligations and to fully cooperate with the IAEA without delay, starting with achieving progress on concrete outcomes from the 27 September meeting.

At the same time, North Korea's nuclear test in February and its ongoing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes show blatant disregard for global non-proliferation and disarmament obligations, as well as the related fundamental principles and the institutions that guide them, including the Security Council. North Korea's actions seriously threaten regional and international stability. Astonishingly, that country has expressed pride in its actions before the CD; in doing so it has once again demonstrated its complete lack of commitment to disarmament or to responsible conduct at the international level.

In addition, late this summer, the world was shocked to learn about the use of weapons of mass destruction on a scale not seen in nearly two decades that left thousands of victims. The international community cannot turn away from the deaths that resulted from the use of chemical weapons on 21 August in Syria, as has now been confirmed, thanks to the excellent work of the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The people of Syria, who have already been subjected to the mass suffering wrought by conventional weapons, have now been subjected to the use of an illegal and indiscriminate weapon, which the Syrian Government, itself, promised never to use. That said, Canada welcomes Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, we are highly concerned about Syria's years of hypocrisy and want to ensure that its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention is not merely a delay tactic.

The Syrian Government must comply with its commitments under the agreement mediated by the United States and the Russian Federation, which has Canada's full and unconditional support. Similarly, we urge the Government to comply with any decisions of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Security

Council taken in furtherance of such objectives. The Syrian Government must fully comply with all of its commitments and responsibilities. Moreover, Syria remains uncooperative with regard to nuclear issues and persists in furthering its missile-technology capacity. The Syrian Government must be held to account by the international community.

(spoke in English)

In closing, let me say that the circumstances I have described demonstrate that we cannot relax our efforts to respond to and reduce the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction, particularly through efforts to ensure non-proliferation and disarmament. If traditional ways of doing so continue to fail, we must search for new and innovative methods. We cannot afford to bear the consequences of inaction. We cannot sit back while States willingly contravene international norms and their obligations.

It is our hope that the First Committee at its sixty-eighth session, under your able leadership, Sir, will be productive and will provide direction towards meaningful progress to address those challenges, thereby ensuring a more peaceful and secure world.

Ms. Gottemoeller (United States of America): I congratulate you, Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during its sixty-eighth session. We pledge to support your leadership and the work of the Committee. We look forward to a productive session.

This is the fourth year in a row that I have spoken to the First Committee on behalf of the United States. I look back to 2009, and I am proud of all we have accomplished. That said, we have a long path in front of us. The conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons do not yet exist, but together we are completely capable of creating these conditions. I am sure of that, because of the examples of our predecessors.

Tomorrow is the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT). That groundbreaking Treaty went from a seemingly unattainable goal on the horizon to an international law on the books within a year of the Cuban missile crisis. Perhaps it was those dark days that helped solidify United States President Kennedy's view that it was possible — in fact, imperative — that we work to address nuclear dangers through multilateral diplomacy. Peace need not, in his view, be impracticable, and war need not

be inevitable. By defining our goal more clearly — by making it seem more manageable and less remote — we can help all people to see it, to draw hope from it and to move irresistibly towards it.

That idea should be our touchstone as we move forward with the Committee's work. If our predecessors could accomplish a treaty like the LTBT in the midst of the cold war, surely we can find ways to work on further arms reductions, increase transparency, ban the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and more.

Over the past 50 years, we have had many unprecedented successes. We have gone from the brink of nuclear war to successful strategic arms reduction treaties, the latest of which will bring us by 2018 to the lowest number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons since the 1950s. We have continued to limit nuclear explosive testing over the years through treaties, including the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT), which prohibited the United States and the Soviet Union from conducting nuclear explosive tests in excess of 150 kilotons.

Before the TTBT entered into force, some voiced concerns that the parties had different ways of measuring nuclear explosive yield. To deal with that problem, the United States and the Soviet Union undertook an unprecedented step in transparency and confidence-building. They invited each other to their respective nuclear test sites to observe a nuclear test and use their preferred methods for measuring explosive yields as they applied to the TTBT. That event, known as the joint verification experiment, happened 25 years ago, and it paved the way for subsequent negotiations of new verification protocols for both the TTBT and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty. Our joint work would ultimately help the international community negotiate a total ban on nuclear explosive testing, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

This year also marks a significant non-proliferation accomplishment: the 1993 Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America concerning the Disposition of Highly Enriched Uranium Extracted from Nuclear Weapons will reach a major milestone with the final delivery of low enriched uranium derived from the downblending of 500 metric tons of Russian weapons-origin highly enriched uranium. The low enriched uranium that results from that downblending

process is delivered to the United States, fabricated into nuclear fuel, and used by nearly all United States nuclear power plants to generate half of the nuclear energy in the United States. Approximately 20,000 nuclear warheads have been eliminated under that unique Government-industry partnership.

Over the past 15 years, nuclear fuel from that source has accounted for approximately 10 per cent of all the electricity produced in the United States. We expect to meet with our Russian partners this November to observe the loading in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, of the final containers of low enriched uranium downblended under the Agreement, and we will meet again in the United States when that ship delivers its important cargo in December. We look forward to jointly celebrating this historic achievement.

Another success that flies under the radar is the Treaty on Open Skies. It just marked its 1000th completed mission in August. It is a great example of a Euro-Atlantic transparency and confidence-building measure, and it has proved itself a valuable arms-control monitoring tool for both strategic and conventional purposes.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, the Obama Administration, working with international partners, has made many of its own significant achievements in non-proliferation and disarmament: the entry into force of the New START treaty; the launching of the Nuclear Security Summit process; an agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation committing each party to verifiably dispose of 34 tons of weapons-grade plutonium; and more recently, an agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on threat reduction that reinforces our long-standing partnership on non-proliferation matters.

That is why I can state that we have accomplished a lot, but it is not enough. The United States and the Russian Federation still possess over 90 per cent of the nuclear weapons in the world, and it is time we move beyond Cold-War postures.

That is why, in June, the President announced in Berlin that we would pursue further reductions of deployed strategic nuclear weapons. That decision flowed from the Administration's extensive analysis of the current strategic environment and deterrence requirements. That analysis confirmed that the United States can ensure its security and that of our allies and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent while

reducing our deployed strategic nuclear weapons by up to one third below the level established by the New START treaty. The President said on that occasion, "I intend to seek negotiated cuts with Russia to move beyond Cold-War postures". To that end, we will pursue a treaty with the Russian Federation.

We are also making sure that our lines of communication on strategic issues are solid. On Monday in Bali, Indonesia, United States Secretary of State Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov signed a new agreement to strengthen the connection between our nuclear-risk-reduction centres. Today's centre-to-centre relationship and communications link continue to provide vital transparency in strategic and conventional forces, facilitate the verification of arms-control treaties and agreements and support strategic stability. Actually, we just passed a significant milestone there. The two centres have now exchanged over 5,000 New START treaty notifications since the treaty's entry into force in 2011. They provide us with day-to-day updates on the status of each other's nuclear forces. These are joined by the 97 on-site inspections that we have now conducted under New START, which give us even more insights into each other's nuclear forces, thus enhancing predictability and stability for both countries.

We are also working with the other nuclear-weapon States, the Permanent Five (P-5), on disarmament-related issues to support the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 2010 NPT action plan. The P-5 have now had four official conferences, with China hosting the fifth meeting in 2014. But we are not just meeting. Through dialogue at the political level and concrete work at the expert level, our engagement has moved from concepts to concrete actions. For example, P-5 experts are meeting to address issues related to the CTBT, especially those relating to the on-site inspection element of the CTBT's verification regime and to the on-site inspection integrated field exercise to be conducted in Jordan in 2014. The objective of that effort is to define and engage in technical collaborative work based on our unique expertise with past nuclear explosive tests.

In the broader multilateral context, the United States continues to hold to its long-standing position calling for the immediate commencement of the long-delayed negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. That treaty is the

obvious next step in multilateral disarmament, and it is time to get to the table. We hope that the soon-to-be-established group of governmental experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty will provide useful inputs and impetus. Another priority for the United States is to continue building support for the ratification of the CTBT, as affirmed by President Obama this past June in Berlin. We encourage all annex 2 nations to join us in that pursuit.

We will have a lot of things to discuss and debate this session, from cyber- and space security to conventional arms control, and from the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons to a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. It is critical that we continue to work together.

Two weeks ago, the international community reached a landmark with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the Executive Council decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Together, they enable a strong international partnership to eliminate chemical weapons from Syria and end the threat to the Syrian people.

And elsewhere, we should be cautious but cognizant of potentially historic opportunities. We must continue to push to bring Iran back into line with its international nuclear obligations. We will also continue to make clear to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that, should it meet its own denuclearization commitments; it too can have an opportunity to reintegrate into the international community. The United States is ready to talk, we are ready to listen, we are ready to work hard, and we hope that every country in this room is ready to do the same.

It is no secret there are issues on which we disagree. That does not mean that we are trying to stop moving ahead in a step-by-step fashion. Even in the darkest days of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union found it in our mutual interest to work together on reducing the nuclear threat. Of course, today, that is not just the responsibility of the United States and Russia. All States can and must contribute to the conditions for disarmament and for non-proliferation; they are two sides of the same coin.

The road toward the next steps might not be familiar, and it will require difficult negotiations and complicated diplomacy. Nevertheless, armed with patience and persistence, we can keep our compasses pointed at the one reason we are here — to pursue

disarmament in ways that promote mutual security, because it is in our mutual interest. The United States asks that we all commit ourselves to the hard work ahead.

This statement will be available on the website of the United States Mission to the United Nations.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): Mr. Chairman, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. Allow me to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support and cooperation and to express appreciation for your able leadership.

This year, we reached a historic milestone in our collective effort to prevent the illicit transfer and diversion of conventional weapons when, in April, we adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). As a legally binding international instrument, the ATT will contribute to States' efforts to regulate the illicit flow of conventional weapons and munitions. For the first time, States are required to take into account human rights and humanitarian considerations in their export decisions. It is encouraging that, in the short time since its adoption, 113 countries have already signed the Treaty. As one of the original signatories, the Republic of Korea will play its part in bringing the Treaty into force at an early date.

Recently, the Security Council took an important step to aid that effort by adopting the first Security Council resolution on small arms and light weapons (resolution 2117 (2013)). We hope that the resolution will propel us towards making further progress at the Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects next year. The General Assembly — and the First Committee in particular — should make the best use of that momentum to further strengthen substantive norms in the conventional weapons field.

While we have made considerable achievements in the conventional arms field this year, we have also witnessed an unforgiveable tragedy with the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The live footage of dying children on 21 August in Ghouta has deeply shocked every man and woman throughout the world. The Republic of Korea once again condemns that atrocity in the strongest possible terms. The use of chemical weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption by consensus of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), which should lead to the complete elimination of all chemical weapons in Syria. The Government of the Republic of Korea urges the Syrian Government to faithfully implement its obligations under that Security Council resolution and the decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and render full cooperation to the United Nations and the OPCW. The Government of the Republic of Korea therefore calls on other countries, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that have not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so without further delay.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria painfully reminds us that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of the most serious threats to humankind. It is time for us to renew our collective efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The non-nuclear-weapon States must faithfully observe their commitment to non-proliferation, and the nuclear-weapon States must do their part by making meaningful progress in nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we welcome the entry into force of and the implementation of the New START treaty between the United States and Russia. We also take note of the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), held on 26 September 2013, and hope that that process will lead to more constructive discussions on the matter.

My delegation believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. As we set our sights on making the 2015 NPT Review Conference a success, full and faithful implementation of the 2010 NPT action plan should be given a high priority by all States.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is also important in our efforts to move towards a world without nuclear weapons. Despite recent achievements, including ratification by Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq, the Treaty's entry into force is long overdue. My delegation urges all States, particularly the States listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

Starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is another shared task. The Republic of Korea urges the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on an FMCT as a top priority and

hopes that the work of the group of governmental experts on the FMCT will lay the foundation for those negotiations in an effective manner. In a larger perspective, the revitalization of the Conference is imperative for resuming multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation talks.

The risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons to non-State actors has emerged as a challenging threat to global security in the twenty-first century. Concerted efforts by the international community are important in that regard. At the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, 58 global leaders declared a collective international commitment to work towards a peaceful world free of nuclear terrorism, adopting the Seoul communiqué. My delegation hopes that the third Nuclear Security Summit, to be held in The Hague next March, will further strengthen global nuclear security and identify the necessary steps to prevent nuclear and radiological terrorism.

As indicated in the latest report of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran's nuclear programme remains a source of concern for the international community. We are cautiously watching the positive developments unfolding between Iran and the six countries. All sides express hope and concern. Ultimately, Iran's words have to be backed by credible actions in order to convince the international community of the solely peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

With regard to a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, my delegation regrets that the proposed conference on the topic did not take place and continues to be delayed. We hope that all relevant parties will seriously strive to overcome their differences and convene the conference in the near future.

One of the gravest concerns of the international community is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued development of nuclear weapons and its ballistic-missile programmes. We all witnessed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions in its launch using ballistic-missile technology in December last year and a third nuclear test in February this year. In response to those provocations, the Security Council reaffirmed, through its resolutions 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013), that the international community will not tolerate such actions. However, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in proceeding with its

nuclear activities, has not stopped expanding its nuclear capabilities. In particular, last April it announced a plan to restart all nuclear facilities in Yongbyon, including its uranium-enrichment plant and its five-megawatt reactor.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must realize that it cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State under the NPT, as clearly stressed in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009). The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must comply with its international obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and the 19 September Joint Statement agreed upon in the framework of the Six-Party Talks. It must abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and immediately cease all related activities.

With the rapid development of science and technology, we are increasingly facing new types of challenges. As cyberterrorism transcends national boundaries, global cooperation is indispensable for addressing such threats. The Seoul Conference on Cyberspace 2013 will be held from 17 to 18 October, under the theme "Global Prosperity through an Open and Secure Cyberspace — Opportunities, Threats and Cooperation." My delegation believes that, with the active participation of Member States, the conference will provide a global platform for constructive engagement on cyberspace issues, including cybersecurity and capacity-building.

The peaceful use of outer space is another emerging issue in this era. The Republic of Korea, as a State party to all major conventions on outer space, welcomes the efforts by the European Union to develop an international code of conduct for outer space activities. The Republic of Korea also highly values the work of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Outer Space Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures.

My delegation once again pledges to closely cooperate with you, Sir, to ensure the success of the First Committee at this session and beyond.

Mr. Kommasith (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this Committee, as well as and other members of the Bureau. I pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation in the

discharge of the Chair's responsibility. My delegation also associates itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3) and of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

The continued existence of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, remains a matter of concern with regard to their possible use or threat of use by terrorists and non-State actors. In that context, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its view that only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons can the international community ensure an absolute guarantee against the use, or threat of use, of such weapons.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic also welcomes the successful conclusion of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held from 22 April to 3 May 2013 in Geneva and calls for the full implementation of the action plans adopted in 2010 on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle-East. The Lao People's Democratic Republic also welcomes the successful convening of the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, on 26 September 2013 (see A/68/PV.11) at United Nations Headquarters. We believe that the outcomes of that meeting will move us forward to total nuclear disarmament.

Universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would certainly contribute to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, 17 years after its adoption, the CTBT has not yet gone into effect. It is therefore the duty of the international community to ensure the entry into force of the Treaty, and we have to be optimistic. In that context, my delegation welcomes the recent ratification of the CTBT by Brunei Darussalam and Iraq. We hope that more States, particularly non-signatories, will sign and ratify the CTBT at an early date.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributes significantly to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as enhancing regional and global peace and security.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, we wish to reiterate the importance of nuclear-weapon States adhering to the treaties establishing such zones and their providing unconditional assurances against the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons to all States in the zones.

We also wish to re-emphasize the importance of the full operation of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and encourage the nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol annexed to the Treaty without any reservation as soon as possible. This year marks the sixteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the SEANWFZ Treaty. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has joined other ASEAN member States in resubmitting the traditional biennial draft resolution, entitled "Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone", and hopes that the draft resolution will receive full support and co-sponsorship from member States of the Committee, especially from the Permanent Five.

While focusing on the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation, we cannot afford to ignore the challenges posed by conventional weapons, particular cluster munitions, which also constitute a threat to peace, human security and development as a whole. As one of the countries most affected by the explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, the Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes the progress made to date in universalizing the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We encourage further efforts by the international community in that regard, and call on those States that have not acceded to the Convention to consider doing so.

We welcome the successful outcome of the fourth meeting of the States party to the Convention, held from 9 to 13 September in Lusaka, Zambia, to review the implementation of the Convention and the 2010 Vientiane action plan. The Lao People's Democratic Republic also appreciates Costa Rica's generous offer to host the fifth meeting of the States party to the Convention in 2014, and looks forward to working closely with Costa Rica to ensure its success.

To date, it seems to us that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have progressed at a very slow pace. Expenditure on armaments has skyrocketed, while human beings struggle in extreme poverty. In that regard, the Lao People's Democratic Republic wishes to

stress the need for strong political will and a collective effort in order to overcome the impasses that exist and to re-emphasize a multilateral approach to achieving the ultimate goals of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Although it is a small country with limited resources, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a State party to a number of international disarmament instruments, and it is fully committed to fulfilling its international obligations under those treaties. We believe strongly that political will and flexibility on the part of Member States are essential to any progressive action in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to overcoming the challenges that they present to the international community. Great efforts on the part of all countries, working closely together, are needed to achieve our common goals, so that the world can be free from all the fear and threats that such weapons pose. My delegation remains committed to constructive engagement with the work of the Committee.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): Unfortunately, my Permanent Representative, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, has been called away to another consultation, so I will read out our statement on his behalf.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as Chair of the First Committee at its sixty-eighth session, and to associate itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf, respectively, of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group (see A/C.1/68/PV.3), and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

The disarmament and international security landscape has seen some improvement over the past year, with the adoption of the text of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly. At the time of the adoption, when South Africa voted in favour, our delegation stated that the Treaty was an international instrument that fills a glaring gap in the global conventional-arms control system. The fact that South Africa was eager for President Zuma to sign the ATT during the general debate of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session reflects how important my country considers that highly relevant Treaty to be.

Beyond that welcome development, much remains to be done. Progress on the various efforts aimed at achieving disarmament has remained beyond our grasp. The disarmament machinery established under the

first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, is stagnant, and the First Committee remains divided on many key issues. The continuing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament undermines its credibility and raises questions about its continued relevance. It is therefore imperative that the work of the Conference be revitalized so that it can once again discharge its mandate as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

With each passing year, it has become clearer that the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations are exasperated with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. Member States participated actively in the open-ended working group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, and the General Assembly recently held a High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). The successful outcomes of the High-level Meeting and the open-ended working group demonstrate what is indeed possible.

It is evident that the achievements in the area of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation remain particularly uneven. The regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is constantly reaffirmed by the majority of the international community, yet the Treaty's nuclear-disarmament pillar remains neglected, in contrast to the progress made in strengthening nuclear non-proliferation. It is South Africa's firm belief that nuclear weapons do not provide security; rather, they exacerbate insecurity. The deliberations of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo in March reminded the international community of the devastating impact that a nuclear detonation would have. The very existence of nuclear weapons means that humankind faces the peril of a nuclear catastrophe. We therefore welcome the follow-up conference that Mexico will host in 2014 and the continued focus on the humanitarian consequences of such weapons.

Beyond the general failure to implement any progress in the nuclear disarmament field, we are equally concerned about the failure to convene a conference in 2012 on the designation of the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We continue to hope that a conference will be convened as soon as possible.

In the area of chemical weapons, South Africa was alarmed at the escalations in the conflict in the

Syrian Arab Republic, and condemned the use of chemical weapons there. The use of such weapons in Syria is of serious concern and wholly unacceptable by any standard. No cause can ever justify the use of weapons of mass destruction by any actor under any circumstances. We therefore welcome Syria's accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. It is imperative that all parties in Syria and the international community provide their full support and cooperation to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its efforts to fulfil its mandate in securing, verifying and destroying all chemical weapons in Syria as soon as possible within the agreed time frame.

We are pleased at the successful outcome of the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we call on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and individual States parties to work together to realize the agreements reached. A challenge facing that Organization, and one that requires the urgent and concerted efforts of all States parties, is that of the Convention's universality. States parties should redouble their efforts to encourage those not party to it to join. In that context, South Africa extends its congratulations to Somalia on joining the Convention.

Given the rapid pace of developments in the life sciences, South Africa believes that the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention and its full implementation remain important priorities. In that regard, States Parties should maximize the opportunities created through the decisions of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. Central to our common goal of eliminating the threat posed by biological weapons is the need to ensure that Member States are given opportunities to realize the vast potential that biological technology holds for advancing capacity and socioeconomic development, particularly in developing States parties.

On the issue of cluster munitions, South Africa has on many occasions expressed concern about the humanitarian impact of such munitions. As a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, South Africa is fully committed to the implementation of all its provisions.

South Africa continues to believe that the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and

Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects represents the central, universally agreed set of undertakings to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and that its full implementation remains as relevant today as when it was adopted in 2001. Apart from national implementation efforts, my delegation wishes to emphasize the full implementation of the entire Programme of Action, including that of its undertakings relating to the issue of international cooperation and assistance. The task of successfully and fully implementing the Programme of Action at all levels rests on all our shoulders — Member States, international and regional organizations — in partnership with civil society. It is a task that none of us are able to do alone.

My delegation stands ready to participate actively in the work of this year's First Committee and to join you, Sir, and other delegations in making a success of our work.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): It is a pleasure to see both you, Mr. Chair, and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane sitting at the podium today. Since I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to express my delegation's sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and to the members of the Bureau. I am confident that, under your able leadership, the work of the First Committee at this session will be successful. You can be confident of Thailand's full cooperation and support.

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3) and Myanmar on behalf of the 10 member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Recent events leave us with little doubt that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction hinders progress in the area of international peace and security. At the same time, other events have brought to the fore a solemn reminder that conventional arms falling into the wrong hands continue to fuel conflicts around the world and can be the weapon of choice for transnational crimes and terrorism.

The goal of total disarmament with respect to weapons of mass destruction must continue to be at the core of our efforts. For our part, Thailand is party to and has complied with all key international

treaties and conventions and the relevant Security Council resolutions on disarmament. Thailand joined the Proliferation Security Initiative in 2012. This year, Thailand hosted the Thai-United States workshop on the Initiative and the second ASEAN Regional Forum confidence-building seminar on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) with a view to advance the understanding and implementation of both issues. In mid-January 2014, Thailand will host the Nuclear Security Summit sherpa meeting in preparation for the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit, to be held in The Hague.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, held on 26 September (see A/68/PV.11), which marked the first time that the General Assembly had met on that important topic. We hope that that meeting will mark the beginning of a process for serious and inclusive negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material and a nuclear weapons convention.

Thailand urges all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to carry out their obligations under the Treaty in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. We also call for the strengthening of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime through the establishment of legally binding security arrangements.

The Conference on Disarmament is the only formal multilateral disarmament negotiating body. Unfortunately, it is still struggling to make progress. We welcome and support the efforts of the open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. As an active member and the first coordinator of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, Thailand hopes that the Conference will be able to move forward in a transparent and — most importantly — inclusive manner.

Thailand believes that regional nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute positively to global nuclear non-proliferation. As an active proponent of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, also known as the Treaty of Bangkok, Thailand hopes that the Permanent Five will consider sponsoring the draft resolution on the Treaty this year. We also reiterate our call for nuclear-weapon States to accede

to the protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok at the earliest opportunity.

We note, however, with regret that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has not yet been held. We urge all parties concerned to continue to engage seriously in discussions so that the conference can be convened as soon as possible.

We see nuclear safety as an equally important pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Thailand continues to recognize and support the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the only international verification body in that field and calls for cooperation from all its member States. As a member of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, Thailand is working closely with the members of the international community to enhance nuclear security, nuclear safety and their safeguards.

In our ASEAN region, last month, the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) met for the first time and was able to finalize its terms of reference. The first ASEANTOM meeting also discussed the Network's future action plans and activities. We are confident that the Network will further contribute to a South-East Asia free from all nuclear weapons.

We reiterate our call for the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We support universal adherence to and strict implementation of both the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention. We urge States that are not yet party to those Conventions to accede to them as soon as possible. We welcome the outcome of the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in April.

Recent events, particularly in Syria, have reinforced our conviction as to the importance of the universality of the CWC. We join the call for the destruction of chemical-weapon stockpiles. We fully support the role of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in accounting for and destroying such weapons. In that regard, we welcome Syria's accession to the CWC and the adoption of the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW regarding Syria.

My delegation welcomes the successful negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We fully support

the ATT and look forward to its entry into force. For our part, we hope to be able to conclude our internal process and sign the Treaty in the very near future.

Thailand has long borne much of the brunt of the effects of landmines, experiencing at first hand the serious impact of the remnants of such weapons. Humanitarian concerns have always been at the forefront of Thailand's foreign policy. As one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Thailand will continue to contribute constructively to implementing that Convention. In June, in our recent capacity as co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance, Thailand hosted the Bangkok Symposium on Enhancing Cooperation and Assistance: Building Synergy towards Effective Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation, with the valuable support of the Australian Government. The successful three-day event underscored the vital need for international cooperation and assistance in removing the scourge of landmines.

Finally, although progress in multilateral negotiations can be slow and at times disheartening, too much is at stake for us not to seize the opportunity to act responsibly. Thailand stands ready to work with you, Sir, and the First Committee, as well as with all Member States, towards disarmament, as our contribution to building lasting peace.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau, on your election, and to assure you that my delegation will support and assist you in your endeavours.

Let me also to express Slovenia's support for the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

I would like to begin by expressing Slovenia's strong condemnation of the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria. Almost 80 years after the signing of the Geneva Protocol and 20 years after the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we witnessed the use of chemical weapons against civilians on a massive scale. We believed that such stories belonged to the past and that the international community had closed that chapter a long time ago. We hope that the missions of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will soon fulfil their

mandates and that those who committed that horrific crime will be prosecuted and punished.

I would like to say a few words on matters relating to international security, disarmament and non-proliferation. Slovenia welcomes the adoption and ongoing signing of the Arms Trade Treaty. Through it, we seek to effectively regulate the international trade in conventional arms and related military equipment and technology at the global level in order to create a better world — a future with fewer international and regional conflicts and civil wars, and consequently a future with fewer victims and a world with more respect for human dignity and human rights, in short, a world with less suffering. Slovenia has signed the Arms Trade Treaty, and we expect that the ratification process in Slovenia will be concluded by the end of this year. I would like to take this opportunity to urge other States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

Together with Algeria and Cambodia, Slovenia, in its capacity as Chair of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, has submitted a draft resolution on the Convention to the Committee. However, we still have a long road ahead of us. We must make every effort to clear all mine-affected areas and reduce the number of mine victims. We also have to make the Convention compatible with other instruments dealing with international humanitarian law. We should strengthen its secretariat in Geneva and prepare for the Third Review Conference on the Treaty, to be held in Mozambique. There are still many challenges ahead. This is why we are convinced that our draft resolution remains relevant and necessary. We hope that this time around more Member States will express their support and vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Slovenia deplores the fact that international disarmament forums such as the Conference on Disarmament are failing to fulfil their mandates. We are particularly concerned about the 17-year impasse in the Conference. We support all efforts aimed at revitalizing the multilateral disarmament machinery. We see the work of the open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament, which met this year in Geneva, as a reasonable attempt to break that impasse and offer a possibility of moving forward. We believe the open-ended working group deserves another chance, through the extension of its mandate for another year.

Lastly, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the issue of reporting on national implementation of disarmament and non-proliferation conventions and multilateral agreements, international initiatives and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. We note with regret that the level of national reporting has continued to drop. The lack of coherent reporting on the part of Member States is undermining the credibility of the Treaty system. We have to end that practice and reverse the trend. We are convinced that better reporting is an attainable goal, and we therefore appeal to all delegations to improve our joint record.

Mr. Varma (India): At the outset, Sir, we take pleasure in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and we pledge to you our full cooperation and support.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (see A/C.1/68/PV.3). The full text of India's statement is being circulated, and I will read only the more important portions of it.

This year we meet against the backdrop of a complex international situation and the difficulties being faced in fashioning multilaterally agreed and effective responses to the numerous challenges to international peace and security. The First Committee can and should play a substantive role in bringing purpose and direction to our efforts as we seek to build an international consensus on meeting those challenges.

India has been unwavering in its support for universal and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Our policy is consistent with the top priority given to the goal of nuclear disarmament as enshrined in the Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly on disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988 for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order. Speaking last month in the general debate of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Manmohan Singh, expressed our support for time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable nuclear disarmament (see A/68/PV.18). India remains convinced that its security would be strengthened in a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent

world order. That conviction is based both on principle and on pragmatism.

India firmly believes that the goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process, underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is a need for a meaningful dialogue among States possessing nuclear weapons in order to build trust and confidence and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. India's draft resolutions in the First Committee give expression to some of those ideas and have found support from a large number of States as steps for the progressive de-legitimization of nuclear weapons. Our working paper, submitted to the General Assembly in 2006, also outlined a number of steps in that regard.

India welcomed the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), held on 26 September, which was addressed by our Foreign Minister, Mr. Salman Khurshid. India supports the proposed NAM draft resolution on the follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament.

Without prejudice to the priority attached by India to nuclear disarmament, we are ready to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) on the basis of the Shannon mandate. We see the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community, as the appropriate forum for undertaking FMCT negotiations. India is a nuclear-weapon State and will approach those negotiations as such. India would be willing to join an FMCT that meets our national security interests.

India is committed to working with the international community to advance our common objectives of non-proliferation, including through strong export controls and membership in multilateral export control regimes, and to strengthening the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). India does not see a contradiction between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as they are mutually reinforcing. India has contributed actively to the Nuclear Security Summit process. We also contributed to the success of the International Conference on Nuclear Security of the International Atomic Energy Agency held in July 2013. We fully share global concerns with regard to nuclear terrorism and clandestine proliferation, which continue

to pose serious threats to international security. It is important to maintain public confidence in the viability of nuclear power as a safe and secure energy source through enhanced international standards on nuclear safety and security.

India attaches importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The recent events in Syria show the importance of the complete destruction and elimination of all chemical weapons stockpiles in the world as soon as possible; terrorists and non-State actors must be prevented from gaining access to such weapons. The use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone must be condemned, and the international norm against the use of chemical weapons must not be breached. India supports the ongoing efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons aimed at the expedited destruction and elimination of chemical weapon stockpiles in Syria.

India continues to contribute actively to the BWC discussions in the new intersessional period from 2012 to 2016. The vitality of the Convention is important for enabling State parties to face the new security challenges, including the threat of bioterrorism, posed by the rapid pace of developments in biological sciences and technology in the twenty-first century.

We support continuing international efforts to strengthen the international legal framework to ensure the safety and security of space assets and to prevent the weaponization of outer space. While universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, they cannot substitute for legally binding instruments in that field. It is also important that all the major space-faring nations be involved in any multilateral endeavours related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space in order to enhance the possibility of universal acceptance of any outcome.

India participated actively in the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in the expectation that such a treaty would have a real impact on illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their illicit use, especially by terrorists and other unauthorized and unlawful non-State actors. During the ATT negotiations, India consistently stressed that the Treaty should ensure a balance of obligations between exporting and importing States. However, the finalized Treaty text did not meet our requirements on those counts. We are undertaking

a full and thorough assessment of the ATT from the perspective of our defence, security and foreign policy interests.

India will make detailed statements on some other issues during the thematic debate, including on the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Lastly, let me conclude by mentioning, that, as in past years, India will present three draft resolutions to the First Committee, namely, "Convention on the Prohibition of Use of Nuclear Weapons", "Reducing nuclear danger" and "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction". We look forward to gaining the support of all members for those draft resolutions.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): At the outset, the Philippines wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at its sixty-eighth session. We assure you and the members of your Bureau of our utmost support and cooperation throughout the work of the Committee.

The Philippines associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3), and by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

This year's session is indeed special, as it comes on the heels of the historic High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). The Philippines welcomes the successful convening of the High-Level Meeting, as it provided an excellent opportunity for States to reflect on their roles and responsibilities with regard to nuclear disarmament, as well as on the challenges they face and the ways forward to achieve the long-sought goal of nuclear abolition. Now is the time for States to take action on the words delivered in that meeting.

The Philippines also welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the General Assembly last April and the Treaty's opening for signature in June. The proliferation of conventional arms has contributed to violence and instability in many parts of the world, including in my country. As such, we were the first country in South-East Asia to sign the ATT, on 25 September, to fulfil our country's commitment to promoting international peace and security.

The Philippines is supportive of multilateral efforts to promote disarmament and the non-proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction, and we see the imperative for a harmonized response by the international community. We lend our support to all initiatives consistent with the policy of promoting nuclear disarmament, preventing nuclear non-proliferation and putting an end to the flow of illicit weapons.

In our quest for a nuclear-weapon-free world, it is crucial to sustain the momentum created by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by fully implementing its 64-point action plan, including the agreement on the Middle East, particularly the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

We need to reaffirm certain principles and agreements, but we must act now and do what we already agreed on in order to fulfil our obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The outcome of the second Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in Geneva did not advance some of the issues put forward and highlighted the challenges facing efforts to advance the agenda throughout the new review cycle. We urge all delegations to be flexible, so that the next Preparatory Committee can produce a positive outcome. Moreover, the next review conference will need to make significant advances on a range of critical NPT issues, especially on nuclear disarmament, in order to sustain the credibility and integrity of the Treaty.

One of the most important initiatives arising from the second Preparatory Committee, and one which the Philippines supported, is the joint statement on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, delivered by South Africa on behalf of 80 States. The Philippines believes that addressing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is an absolute necessity and it should guide our work and actions for the review cycle of the NPT and beyond.

In that regard, we welcome the announcement by Mexico that it will host a follow-up conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in February. The Philippines looks forward to participating in that conference to continue the discussion on that topic.

We also welcome the outcome of the eighth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of

the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in September, which produced a Final Declaration. We laud the Governments of Guinea-Bissau and Iraq for their recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We urge the remaining eight annex 2 States to follow suit without delay.

The Philippines also welcomes President Obama's renewed call to action, in his speech in Berlin in June, to ensure United States ratification of the CTBT.

The voluntary nuclear-test moratorium has become an established norm. But the challenge remains to figure out how we can move from a voluntary to a mandatory moratorium. Only the CTBT's entry into force will make this possible.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is crucial to our goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Bearing in mind that millions of my countrymen are living and working in areas where nuclear weapons exist and where the nuclear threat persists, we remain hopeful that a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, attended by all States of the region, will be convened. My country reiterates its call to all relevant actors to continue consultations to ensure that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is held at the earliest possible time. The Philippines recognizes the tireless efforts of Ambassador Jaako Laajava, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy of Finland, and welcomes his latest initiative to convene a pre-conference planning session this month in Switzerland with the three sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to move forward the process of convening a conference. The Philippines hopes that that meeting will yield positive results.

We also welcome the latest decision of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva to establish an informal working group to produce a robust programme of work. It is our fervent hope that that working group will fulfil its mandate and finally bring the Conference back on track to start long-delayed disarmament negotiations. The Philippines calls on all members of the Conference to show the much-needed political will and flexibility in the work of the CD. The revitalization of the Conference, as well as its enlargement, are imperative, and the Philippines supports the position of the 39-member-strong CD informal group of observer States on those issues.

On the core issues of the CD, the Philippines sees great potential in the various initiatives that have been proposed, including the draft resolutions on commencing work on fissile materials as well as on a nuclear-weapons convention. Such proposals afford the opportunity for the world community to begin work and have the advantage of being inclusive.

We also welcome the recent outcome of the open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The working group process proved that we do not lack options to move forward. The challenge is to find and agree on the best route to take. We urge the international community to focus on common grounds and not on differences, so that we can finally get the momentum going.

In the area of conventional weapons, the Philippines welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the General Assembly in April. The Philippines sincerely thanks the President of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia, for his tireless efforts in guiding the negotiations and for his diplomatic skills, which made it possible to adopt that instrument. If implemented in good faith, the ATT will help strengthen a legally binding international regime on the transfer of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. We also wish to recognize the excellent work undertaken by the previous President of the Conference, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina.

We have sought to strengthen bilateral and international partnerships, including with the European Union (EU), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Research Institute and the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific in addressing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) concerns through the promotion of the Centres of Excellence initiative in South-East Asia. The regional secretariat of the CBRN Risk Mitigation Centre of Excellence was officially launched in Manila on 6 March 2013. As the host country of the CBRN Centre of Excellence, the Philippines is committed to supporting capacity-building in the South-East Asian region to address the CBRN threat.

The Philippines is an active member of the Nuclear Security Summit, the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Most recently, the Philippines joined the

Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The Philippines is in fact the first South-East Asian country to join the Global Partnership and hopes that others will follow suit. Given the considerable interest and numerous programmes in the weapons of mass destruction and CBRN fields, it is important to ensure coordination among those programmes so as to avoid duplication and overlap.

At the regional level, the Philippines has played a proactive role in advancing the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and major disarmament agreements. My country has been at the forefront of efforts in ASEAN to strengthen cooperation on non-proliferation and disarmament issues by hosting the fifth ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament from 4 to 5 June in Manila.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction is a useful framework for advancing biosecurity-biosafety cooperation. The interrelation between biosecurity, biosafety and overall public health concerns, particularly with respect to the activities of the World Health Organization and the World Animal Health Organization, also need to be further explored.

We welcome the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Philippines also welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), which calls upon Syria to implement and abide by the framework for the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons, agreed between the Russian Federation and the United States to ensure the destruction of Syria's chemical-weapons stockpiles in the quickest and safest manner.

We are proud and honoured to be able to contribute to the global discourse on conventional weapons. The Philippines served as the President of the 2012 Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. My delegation will introduce the draft resolution on the Convention, and we look forward to the support of all delegations to ensure its adoption, once again, by consensus. As the universalization of the Convention is a priority of the Philippine Government, we urge States that have not yet already done so to accede to the Convention and its protocols.

In conclusion, throughout our history the Philippines has shown its desire and capacity to pursue peace. Many of our efforts are pursued not in isolation, but with regional and international partners. The relationships we foster with others are grounded in collaboration, cooperation and building a peaceful and secure environment.

Let me assure you once again, Mr. Chair, of the Philippines' full support and cooperation as we undertake our work in the First Committee over the next four weeks.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. We are confident that your distinct experience and capabilities will bring successful outcomes to the work of the current session. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

My country aligns itself with the statements to be made by the representatives of the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

As a founding Member of the United Nations and as one of the very first signatories of its Charter, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always been eager to participate in every effort and endeavour to maintain international peace and security, promote the performance and activities of this international Organization and its activities, and bring it closer to realizing the noble goals and objectives stipulated in its Charter, which we all strive to achieve. The Kingdom still firmly believes that the ability of the United Nations to fulfil its mandate derives primarily from the steadfast political will of its Members to put its principles into actual implementation, while also developing and reforming the main bodies of the Organization to make them more representative and to adapt them to the changes that have taken place since the earlier periods of its history.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports all calls for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world. Our delegation expresses its deep regret at the postponement of the special conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. The conference was scheduled to be held in Helsinki at the end of 2012. We emphasize the need to hold the postponed

conference as soon as possible in 2013. The convening of the conference is the responsibility of the entire international community. Its delay constitutes a breach of the review process and the commitments agreed upon in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It also casts great doubt on the process of consensus and compromise within the framework of multilateral relations in the field of disarmament. Israel bears responsibility for that postponement, as it did not agree to attend the conference. As a result, progress towards ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has been hampered.

In that regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses the need to achieve the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place all nuclear facilities in the Middle East under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition, the Kingdom also emphasizes the need for Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

The crisis of the Iranian nuclear programme is one of the greatest challenges to international peace and security, particularly in the Arab Gulf region. In that context, my country supports the ongoing efforts of the 5+1 group to resolve the crisis peacefully and in a manner that guarantees Iran and all countries in the region the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in accordance with the criteria and procedures of the IAEA and under its supervision. Furthermore, we would urge Iran to respond to such efforts and to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions by cooperating with IAEA inspectors seeking to monitor its nuclear facilities, in order to put an end to the crisis.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is of the view that all countries have the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. My country supports international efforts aimed at establishing a culture of universal security, sustainable and effective supervisory mechanisms, binding legal instruments and standard guidelines for the peaceful use of nuclear energy through the promotion of international cooperation and the exchange of best practices in the field. Moreover, the Kingdom calls for the universality of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, so as to include all countries that have nuclear-power programmes or that might seek to develop nuclear energy in future. We are nevertheless deeply concerned about the existence of regional

nuclear activities that are not subject to the relevant safeguards and international conventions.

In that regard, we support the Security Council, particularly the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), which seeks to provide assistance to States without chemical, biological or nuclear weapons or their means of delivery so as to stop the acquisition, manufacture, transfer or use of weapons of mass destruction, as well as to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of terrorists and to ensure that non-State actors do not have access to such nuclear materials or technology.

In that regard, my country has shown, on several occasions, that it calls for and supports international peace and security, and it has submitted its report to the 1540 Committee. In particular, we have organized three events in connection with the work of the Committee, such as a three-day workshop attended by officials from the United Nations and other relevant bodies. We have signed our Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its 2005 small-quantities protocol and have ratified the agreement, which entered into force in 2009.

Finally, I would like to welcome Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention and would like to call upon all States that have not yet done so to join the Convention, including Israel, as swiftly as possible. I would also like to appeal to the international community not to forget that the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria is not the end of the crisis for that brotherly people. We must not forget the thousands, perhaps even 100,000, people killed in Syria by other weapons, such as aerial bombardments, tanks, missiles and artillery. We call upon the international community to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and to remember the importance of achieving peace and security in Syria in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex 1), including the establishment of a transitional Government with full powers, which would begin its work immediately.

In conclusion, I emphasize that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will remain at the forefront of any international effort that seek to achieve international peace and security and to realize our aspirations with regard to security, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): First of all, I would like to express my congratulations, Sir, on your election as

Chair of the First Committee and to express Brazil's commitment to working with you and with members of the Bureau for a positive outcome to the sixty-eighth session.

I will read an abridged version of our statement. A full version of it will be circulated to First Committee members.

As the pioneering treaty establishing the first denuclearized zone in a densely populated area, the Treaty of Tlatelolco deserves special mention for its contribution to the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. At the recent General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Argentina last August, we reiterated our commitment to carry on with efforts towards the complete and irreversible elimination of such weapons.

We recognize that preventing the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons has been a relative success for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime. However, the same cannot be said of the nuclear-disarmament side of the bargain, where the compliance deficit on the part of nuclear-weapon States continues to exist. It is time for those States to carry out the nuclear disarmament-related measures that they have agreed to implement, pursuant to the Treaty and the action plans adopted by the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In that context, Brazil welcomes the timely convening of the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September (see A/68/PV.11). We were encouraged by the strong support expressed for firm action on eliminating nuclear weapons, as well as for beginning negotiations on a multilateral international nuclear disarmament instrument as a matter of urgency. During the Meeting, the Brazilian delegation stated the reasons for which we are convinced that the promotion of nuclear disarmament must be a top priority on the international community's agenda.

First, there is the humanitarian perspective. As the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo in March emphasized, nuclear weapons are at odds with international law, and particularly with international humanitarian law.

Secondly, there is the socioeconomic perspective. Twenty years after the end of the Cold War and in

spite of the current global financial crisis and its negative impact on social welfare, nuclear-weapon States continue to invest large sums in maintaining and modernizing their arsenals.

Thirdly, there is the security-related perspective. As long as nuclear arsenals continue to exist, the world will never be entirely free from the risk of a nuclear detonation, intentional or accidental. And as long as a limited group of countries consider themselves entitled to possess nuclear weapons, there will be a risk that other States and non-State actors may try to acquire or develop such weapons. That is one area where the example of the nuclear-weapon States is counterproductive. While we welcome bilateral agreements aimed at reducing the number of certain types of weapons, we must recall that such initiatives do not lead to permanent disarmament, which can be achieved only through irreversible, transparent and verifiable measures.

We voice our disappointment at the postponement of the proposed convening in 2012 of a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Successfully convening the conference represents an essential part of the NPT and the current review cycle. In our view, the conference should be held as soon as possible. We urge all countries of the region, without exception, to attend. We are ready to contribute to all efforts aimed at the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world. Brazil takes pride in having developed, together with Argentina, a successful model of cooperation and confidence-building in the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Material.

Brazil has always considered the Conference on Disarmament to be the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and therefore of the utmost importance. In our view, the problems that the Conference is dealing with are of a political nature and cannot be dissociated from other challenges facing the international peace and security agenda. Along with nuclear disarmament, the Conference should be provided with the political conditions allowing it to negotiate legally binding instruments granting non-nuclear-weapon States assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and preventing the placing of any kind of weapons in outer space. Brazil recently took part in the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, established by resolution

65/68. We are glad that the Group has recognized that the transparency and confident-building measures it is tasked with devising may constitute the basis for future legally binding measures. In that context, Brazil joins Russia in proposing that the issue of “no first placement of weapons in outer space” be addressed in a General Assembly resolution.

Brazil also stands ready to start negotiations on a fissile material treaty within the Conference on Disarmament. In our view, however, in order to have any impact, such an instrument must deal with past production and pre-existing material. We deeply regret that, almost two decades after the conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, its entry into force remains stalled. Brazil would like to urge all countries that have not acceded to the Treaty, particularly annex 2 countries, to do so as a matter of urgency.

I would like to reiterate Brazil’s firm commitment to the effective and efficient implementation of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We believe that its authority, impartiality and credibility must be preserved. Brazil participated actively in recent discussions in the Agency on safeguards implementation at the State level, the so-called State-level concept. We welcome the fact that, after consulting with members, the Director General will produce a document for consideration and action by the Board of Governors before the fifty-eighth session of the General Conference, providing further clarification and information for addressing the questions and issues raised. My country is fully committed to international efforts aimed at preventing non-State actors from gaining access to nuclear weapons and related material and technology. However, concerns about nuclear security cannot be invoked to preclude States’ legitimate right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Brazil is very concerned about recent revelations of the activities of a global network of electronic espionage aimed at indiscriminately intercepting communications and data from citizens, businesses and members of Governments. Such unacceptable practices constitute serious threats to national sovereignty and individual rights, in addition to being incompatible with democratic coexistence between friendly countries.

During this year’s general debate in the General Assembly, Her Excellency Ms. Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil, stressed that information and

telecommunication technologies cannot become the new battlefield among States. The time is ripe, she said, to create the conditions to prevent cyberspace from being used as a weapon of war through espionage, sabotage and attacks against the systems and infrastructure of other countries (see A/68/PV.5). Brazil cannot allow recurring illegal actions to take place as if they were normal, and we would like to work closely with all United Nations Members, as we have been doing with our Latin-American partners, to properly address that issue. During the sixty-eighth session, Brazil will engage in and support initiatives that, while preserving the free flow of information and the right to privacy, are aimed at improving multilateral norms and principles regarding information and communications technologies, including on matters of governance.

Brazil considers the use of chemical weapons heinous and unacceptable under any circumstances. My country was concerned by the confirmation by a United Nations mission of the use of such weapons on Syrian territory. In that context, we welcomed the decision of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to accede to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and to apply it immediately. Brazil expects that Syria’s accession to the CWC will foster the universalization of that instrument. We also welcomed the important decisions on that matter reached at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and by the Security Council on 27 September. We are confident that the measures agreed on will contribute to giving new impetus to the search for a negotiated solution that can put an end to the spiral of violence in that country.

I would like to express Brazil’s great satisfaction at the adoption and opening for signature of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and especially at the great progress we have achieved so far in obtaining signatures and ratifications. We encourage all countries that have not yet signed the Treaty to consider doing so as soon as possible. As it stands now, the ATT is certainly not a finished work. Brazil believes it would have been stronger and more effective if it had established a clear prohibition on arms transfers to unauthorized non-State actors and required end-use/end-user certificates for all transfers, and if ammunition had been unequivocally included in the Treaty’s scope. We look forward to filling those gaps in due time, within the review framework provided by the ATT itself.

Brazil will continue to strive for an international order guided by balanced, non-discriminatory and legally binding obligations applicable to all. We are convinced that we must work to establish an international order that promotes peace, stability and well-being. We shall work to make cooperation and diplomacy prevail over confrontation.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to extend to you, Mr. Chair, my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of my delegation's support and full cooperation. I also congratulate all the members of the Bureau.

Senegal aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

This time last year, despite the enthusiasm most delegations had shown during the negotiations on a arms trade treaty, my country deplored the fact that we had not reached an agreement to regulate the trade in conventional weapons. However, I would now like to express my satisfaction with the progress we have achieved in the space of one year.

I would like to highlight one such area of progress with respect to conventional weapons, that is, the holding of the second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which led to consensus on the full implementation of the Programme.

We should also welcome the General Assembly's adoption, on 2 April, of the resolution on a legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms (resolution 67/234 B).

Concerning the nuclear issue, we welcome the efforts of all stakeholders in the process that led to the convening of the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), held on September 26.

Such successes show that multilateralism is, now more than ever, the most appropriate approach to achieving concrete results. However, nuclear disarmament remains one of the most pressing collective security problems. The ultimate goal is to achieve a

world free from nuclear weapons, and that goal will be achieved only through complete disarmament. That is why we reiterate here our call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which would undoubtedly strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the region.

In addition, we support the call of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Conference on Disarmament for negotiations to begin as soon as possible on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that will focus on the prohibition, possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and destruction of such weapons. We therefore call on nuclear-weapon States to align themselves with the proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement in order to achieve the objective of complete nuclear disarmament and work towards the total elimination of their nuclear warheads.

Negotiations on an agreement on the prohibition of fissile-material production for military purposes, which is another essential pillar in disarmament and non-proliferation matters, have also been bogged down, despite the limited progress achieved. In the meantime, we should ensure that the fissile-material stocks scattered in various locations in 32 countries do not fall into the wrong hands and that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty comes into force without delay.

Meanwhile, the inalienable right of countries to engage in research and the production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the watchful eye of the International Atomic Energy Agency should be firmly established. To that end, it would be useful to strengthen the Agency's authority and capacities.

In addition, we reaffirm the exclusive role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament.

We also express our support for the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which began its most recent negotiations cycle, for the 2012-2014 period, under more auspicious conditions, thanks to new proposals.

What happened in Syria in August demonstrated the absolute obligation of all countries to sign and ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, in order for such carnage to never recur.

My country welcomes the invaluable contribution of non-governmental organizations in that field. In that regard, we reiterate that a fair place should be given to such organizations, including in our deliberations.

Finally, I appeal to all delegations to show flexibility and political goodwill during this session of the First Committee. For my part, I reiterate once again my delegation's willingness to participate fully and constructively in all our work.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Unfortunately, our Permanent Representative, Ambassador Samuel Moncada, is not able to be here today, so I will read our statement on his behalf.

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election and to wish you every success in your work. We would also like to thank the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Percaya, for the effort and dedication with which he led the work of the Committee at the previous session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3) and with the statement to be delivered later in the general debate by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Nuclear-weapon States currently possess approximately 20,500 nuclear warheads. More than 5,000 are deployed and ready for use, and 2,000 of them are on high-alert status. Owing to technological developments, a significant number have a yield of between 8 and 100 times greater than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

That is why we must move simultaneously towards general and complete nuclear disarmament and the fulfilment of the objectives of both horizontal and vertical nuclear non-proliferation. In that respect, the nuclear Powers should conduct good-faith negotiations aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the commitments undertaken at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT. We also support the need to establish an international convention banning the manufacture, possession, use and storage of nuclear weapons, under a strict multilateral verification system.

Nuclear disarmament, in particular the elimination of nuclear weapons, is a priority for CELAC. That is why Cuba, as President-in-office of CELAC, convened a meeting of senior officials in Buenos Aires on 20 August 2012, with a view to adopting a statement calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Venezuela resolutely calls on all nuclear-weapon States to eliminate from their security doctrines and military strategies the use or threat of use of such weapons against States that do not possess them. We reaffirm our wish to see the negotiation and conclusion of a legally binding universal and unconditional instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States in order to achieve the total elimination of all types of such weapons, wherever they may be situated.

Venezuela reaffirms its conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security and makes a significant contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament. In that context, our country regrets the failure to hold in 2012, as agreed, an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We reiterate that the holding of such a conference is an important and integral part of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We therefore urge the parties to convene such a conference as soon as possible. The agreements reached there will make a significant contribution to achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and represent a major step in the Middle East peace process.

Venezuela welcomes the high level of participation and the strong expressions of support for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons during the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on 26 September (see A/68/PV.11). That was a clear sign of the supreme importance of nuclear disarmament for peace and international security. In that vein, we fully support the road map presented by the delegation of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, to move towards nuclear disarmament.

Venezuela expresses its support for negotiations to begin as soon as possible in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive agreement on nuclear weapons, banning their possession, development,

production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, and use or threat of use, and for their destruction. It also endorses the designation of 26 September as the international day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We support the convening of a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament in five years to review the progress achieved.

Venezuela defends the inalienable right of States to develop research into and the production of and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with articles I, II, III and IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Venezuela, as a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, rejects the use of such weapons under any circumstances, by anyone. At the same time, we call on all States parties still possessing chemical weapons to ensure the complete destruction of remaining stockpiles in accordance with the established deadlines in order to preserve the credibility and integrity of that legal instrument. We also call on States parties to resume negotiations with a view to adopting a legally binding verification protocol on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Venezuela recognizes multilateralism as the most complete and effective means of achieving nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we emphasize the need for the Conference on Disarmament to devote itself as soon as possible to tackling such priority matters as the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative assurances and security, as well as a nuclear disarmament convention.

The Venezuelan Government also reiterates the urgent need to completely ban all nuclear tests and urges annex 2 States, whose ratification is necessary for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force, to accelerate the process of signature and ratification of that instrument as a matter of priority and as a demonstration of their political will and commitment to international peace and security.

Venezuela reaffirms the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects for multilateral, regional and national efforts aimed at effectively combating illicit trafficking in such weapons, the negative impact of which has problematic repercussions in various regions around

the world. The responsibility to prevent, combat and eliminate that illegal activity lies with States, in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legal framework of each country.

With regard to the public policies implemented by the Venezuelan State in that area, it should be underscored that the President of the Republic, Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, promulgated a law on disarmament and arms control on 15 June 2013, which was approved unanimously by our National Assembly. That legal instrument contains 126 articles and seeks to restrict the sale of firearms and ammunition to private citizens. It also establishes that those who unlawfully possess firearms shall be punished with a prison sentence of 7 to 20 years. The law also establishes a fund to assist victims of firearms, which will be funded by a tax of 5 per cent of the profits of companies that sell and manufacture arms.

In conclusion, we support efforts to build a multipolar international system serving peace, justice and development, based on full respect for the norms and principles of international law, and we reject undesirable practices that violate the principle of the legal equality of States.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming your very important post. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

Hungary fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.3). I would like, however, to make a few remarks from our national perspective.

Disarmament and non-proliferation efforts are fundamental in ensuring that our collective ambition for a world that is more stable and secure is fulfilled. This year we have witnessed certain events that have given some room for optimism. The resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 67/234 B) was a milestone on the path towards curbing illicit trade in conventional arms. Hungary signed the ATT on 3 June, and our ratification process is under way. We are pleased that a great number of countries have already signed the Treaty and have started, or already completed, their national processes to ratify it. The ATT has already become an important point of reference and has set high standards.

Regrettably, conventional arms are not the only types of weapons used in armed conflicts, as the recent example of Syria demonstrates. We therefore welcome Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the Executive Council decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the dismantling of Syria's chemical weapons. The implementation of those decisions is an important contribution to peace and security in the Syrian Arab Republic. We call on all countries to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. Such a step could bring us closer to the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East as well.

The initial changes in the tone of the discussion on Iran's nuclear programme is another development that makes us cautiously optimistic. We hope that the new rhetoric will be followed up by concrete steps.

Our consistently held view is that multilateral diplomacy and the strengthening of international organizations, regimes and cooperation frameworks, as well as active participation in their work, constitute the most important means of mitigating the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Hungary has always been willing to do its share of the work and promote novel initiatives.

That approach is reflected, *inter alia*, in our long-term leadership on the General Assembly's annual draft resolution on the Biological Weapons Convention, a fundamental pillar of the international community's efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is our honour to have chaired the August meeting of experts and to chair the coming meeting of States parties. The 2012-2015 intersessional work programme is ambitious and covers the full scope of the treaty. The theme of our chairmanship is to "Bring in more voices". At the recent meeting of experts in Geneva, we heard a wide range of perspectives, from a variety of agencies in both developed and developing countries, as well as from international organizations, academia and non-governmental organizations. It is clear that some of the matters discussed will require further attention and thought. Our aim is to implement the decisions of the seventh Review Conference and to ensure that the intersessional programme continues to be an effective tool for dealing with, and reducing, the risks posed by biological weapons.

Hungary remains committed to the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, a noble goal that is at the heart of United Nations disarmament activities.

We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and that it remains essential for pursuing nuclear disarmament. Hungary attaches equal importance to each pillar of the Treaty, and strives towards a balanced implementation of the Action Plan set forth in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference. We hope that further progress can be made during this review cycle.

We consider nuclear security to be an increasingly important aspect of non-proliferation efforts. We were greatly honoured by the fact that the Hungarian Foreign Minister served as President of the International Atomic Energy Agency's first-ever high-level International Conference on Nuclear Security, held in July. We sincerely hope that the results of the Conference will contribute to a safer world.

As an annex 2 State, Hungary not only attaches great importance to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty but, together with our fellow article XIV coordinator, Indonesia, we will make every effort to bring us closer to that goal. We strongly believe that the CTBT is a uniting force in the multilateral system and that its entry into force will strengthen global peace and security. We are pleased that the Article XIV Conference on 27 September, held under the co-presidency of Hungary and Indonesia, was a success, and we welcome the ratifications by Guinea-Bissau and Iraq, announced shortly before the Conference. We are also pleased that, as incoming co-presidents, we could contribute to launching the initiative of the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to set up a group of eminent persons. We are confident that the activities of that group and those of the article XIV coordinators will complement one another and that our joint efforts will inject new energy and dynamism into the entry-into-force process.

Hungary regards the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty as an indispensable step towards a world free of nuclear weapons and as an important contribution to non-proliferation efforts. In response to the Secretary-General's call, Hungary submitted its views on the various aspects of such a treaty and is prepared to participate in the work of the group of governmental experts to be set up. We stress the importance of commencing negotiations on such a treaty at the earliest possible time. Recent developments, in particular the decision to set up an informal working

group of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to develop a programme of work, should also be explored in good faith in order to end the continued deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament.

Hungary was the first of the six Presidents of the CD to assume that role in 2013, and we made an honest attempt to revitalize the Conference. The very first step towards that would have been the adoption of a programme of work. Our proposal has often been referred to as an innovative attempt at breaking the long-standing deadlock in that body. Unfortunately, we did not succeed, but we remain committed to finding a way out of the impasse in the CD. We are grateful to our 5+1 colleagues, who have been equally active and ambitious in finding a way towards consensus on a programme of work, which, despite our collective efforts, once again eluded us this year. The CD is at a crossroads with regard to the way forward, and we will follow the debates about the Conference's future here in the First Committee very closely.

In conclusion, let me refer to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention. In early 2011, Hungary discovered a previously unknown minefield along the Hungarian-Croatian border, which was left over from the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Hungary immediately notified the Convention's States parties of its findings and promptly acted to eliminate the danger. By the end of September 2013, Hungary had completed demining work along its border with Croatia, which is now free of all known mine fields. A formal declaration of completion will be presented at the thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties, which will take place in Geneva in December.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now give the floor to representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind delegations that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes, for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention.

Mr. Kim Ju Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): In exercise of our right of reply, I would like to explain a few things about the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

As is already known, the United States is the originator of the hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the country that introduced the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula. It also constantly issues nuclear threats

against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We were forced to acquire our own nuclear deterrence force in order to protect our sovereignty and our very existence.

Recently, the United States and South Korea signed a so-called tailored deterrence strategy at the annual security consultative meeting and adopted a joint statement calling for using their armed forces to do harm to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That tailored deterrence strategy is a dangerous nuclear-war scenario that emphasizes a pre-emptive attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and involves the mobilization of all military means, including nuclear weapons.

Such facts prove that the United States is still the country that destroys peace and stability and heightens tensions in the Korean peninsula. In that regard, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea invariably holds that, if the United States Administration wishes the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and is interested in peace and security in the region, the United States, not the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, should make the first move, because the United States itself adopted an extremely hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, spawning the nuclear issue on the peninsula and posing a constant nuclear threat to the region.

Regarding the Security Council resolutions, we have officially announced several times that we neither accept nor recognize any of those resolutions.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic): It seems that the representative of Canada does not closely follow developments regarding the true and honest commitment of the Syrian Government to its international obligations, including those entailed under its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Many international officials have spoken of the record time in which the elimination process started, while simultaneously crediting the Syrian Government for its cooperation. We call on the representative of Canada to pay more attention to developments in that regard.

While the majority of countries in the world are opting for diplomacy and peaceful solutions, regrettably we notice that a minority continue to refrain from joining the proponents of peace. We call on the Canadian representative and her Government, as well as the countries in that minority, to play a positive, diplomatic role in the quest for a political solution to the crisis in Syria.

Mr. Rouzeh Gir Qaleh Noee (Islamic Republic of Iran): This morning, unfortunately, we heard a fake name in reference to the Persian Gulf. I would like to make it clear that the use of such fake names, or the invention or use of any other name other than the Persian Gulf — the only true geographical designation, historically established and universally recognized referring to the sea area between Iran and the Arabian Peninsular — can only create confusion and misunderstanding. It is therefore rejected and devoid of any legal significance.

Mr. Lim Sang Beom (Republic of Korea): North Korea is again blaming others for its illicit activities and provocation. Needless to say, the tension in the region has its roots in the North Korea's continued missile launches and nuclear tests. The North Korean argument is nothing more than an irresponsible and ridiculous pretext.

Under the relevant Security Council resolutions and the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement, North Korea has the obligation to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, including its uranium-enrichment programme. The most recently adopted Council resolution on the issue (resolution 2094 (2013)) further states that North Korea should clearly understand that nothing can be obtained by developing its nuclear programme and continuing its provocative acts.

Finally, let me point out that the Republic of Korea-United States alliance is defensive in nature. Its purpose is to deter the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's threat on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Kim Ju Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to refer to the comments just made by the South Korean representative asserting that we are blaming others.

As has been reported, the United States Navy nuclear-powered carrier strike group aggression forces entered the port of Busan at dawn on 4 October. It participated in joint naval manoeuvres targeted against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which had been secretly under way in the Eastern Sea of Korea since 30 September. That fact is not something ridiculous.

Secondly, the United States and South Korea are trying hard to put political and military pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to destroy our

image of favouring dialogue and peace and to escalate tension through frantic nuclear-war provocations in order to attain their aggressive aims. That will only heighten the indignation of the army and people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Should the United States and South Korea opt for the provocation of a nuclear war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in defiance of its warnings, it will resolutely counter them.

Mr. Lim Sang Beom (Republic of Korea): As everyone knows, the Republic of Korea's joint exercises with the United States are legitimate drills in defence against North Korea's provocations and threats against the Republic of Korea. The joint exercises are designed to enhance our combined readiness against North Korea's military actions. They are purely defensive in nature.

Contrary to the argument of the representative of North Korea, the exercises have contributed to the deterrence of war for the past several decades against the threats posed by North Korea. North Korea repeatedly rejects the resolutions of the Security Council and claims that it is not bound by any of the obligations set forth therein, obligations by which the rest of the States Members of the United Nations abide in a faithful and consistent manner.

According to Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States should accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. Article 48 of the Charter states,

“[t]he action required to carry out the decisions of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security shall be taken by all the Members of the United Nations”.

As resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013) were adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, all Member States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, must carry out their obligations under those resolutions. Article 4 of the Charter clearly restricts membership in the United Nations to peace-loving States that accept and carry out their obligations under the Charter. The United Nations Charter is not an à-la-carte menu. North Korea cannot accept some obligations while rejecting others.

Let me also stress that, in the addition to the Security Council, more than 80 States Members of the United Nations have issued national statements condemning

North Korea's third nuclear test and urging it to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions. I would like to ask the representative of North Korea to name even one country that defends North Korea's position.

North Korea receives more than \$10 million in assistance from the United Nations every year. It is a great pity that North Korean authorities have abandoned their basic duties to their people by squandering scarce

resources on nuclear-missile development. North Korea should use its limited resources to improve the lives of its people, rather than wasting them on the development of nuclear weapons and missiles. We urge North Korea to use the vast resources it is wasting on nuclear-weapon and missile development to save its people from the circumstances they face each day.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.