



# General Assembly

Seventieth session

## First Committee

8th meeting

Friday, 16 October 2015, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom . . . . . (Netherlands)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

### Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

#### General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Chair:** The Committee will continue this afternoon with its general debate on all the disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it, with a view to concluding that segment of its work today, in accordance with the programme of work. Thereafter, we will hear from representatives of non-governmental organizations, also in keeping with the programme of work, which encourages wide participation from civil society at this stage of our proceedings. Later this afternoon, we will also consider the indicative timetable for thematic discussions.

Before I open the floor to speakers, I would once again like to remind all delegations to kindly observe the agreed time limit of a maximum of 10 minutes when speaking in a national capacity. That will enable the Committee to make the most efficient use of the time remaining to it for the general debate.

**Mr. Niyazaliev** (Kyrgyzstan): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventieth session of the General Assembly. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. You can count on my delegation's full support and cooperation in discharging your responsibilities.

I will read a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which has been circulated via the PaperSmart portal.

Seventy years have passed since the first nuclear-weapon test, carried out in New Mexico in July 1945, and since the first use of nuclear weapons, against the two Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those events had a grave impact on human lives, the environment and international peace and security, and represented a threat to humankind's very survival. As a result, 45 years ago the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was agreed on almost 20 years ago.

Have we succeeded in our efforts to eliminate the threat? Yes, humankind has managed to prevent a recurrence of the use of nuclear weapons. But, regrettably, we have still not reached our goal of a world free of weapons of mass destruction. Kyrgyzstan has always regarded the NPT as a cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as well as of that of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We deeply regret that the 2015 Review Conference of the States parties to the Treaty was unable to adopt an outcome document, despite the efforts of many delegations. However, that should not stop us from pursuing the implementation of all provisions of the Treaty in good faith and with impartiality.

My delegation notes with regret that we have still been unable to convene a conference on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

15-31817 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



systems. The conference could be a milestone for disarmament and help to establish peace in a region of heightened tensions.

Nineteen years after its adoption, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force. I would therefore like to join other colleagues in urging all States that have not yet ratified it, particularly those listed in its annex 2, to do so as soon as possible.

Kyrgyzstan is hoping to see the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which continues to make little progress in its work, thereby delaying negotiations on a number of key issues such as nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. It is also regrettable that the Disarmament Commission has failed to produce any final documents for a long time. We encourage all States to demonstrate the political will needed to enable the disarmament machinery to fulfil its mandate.

It is also important to acknowledge that a number of new opportunities for advancing disarmament goals have arisen, and I would like to highlight some of them. Kyrgyzstan welcomed the recent proclamation of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and the announcement that the United Nations would convene a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament no later than 2018 to review the progress made in that regard. We also recently witnessed the successful completion of the long-standing negotiations between Iran and the P5+1, which culminated on 14 July in the finalization of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We believe its full implementation will make a positive contribution to regional and international peace and security.

My delegation regards international safeguards and the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities as a first line of defence against nuclear terrorism. We therefore strongly endorse the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to strengthen the international safeguards system, and we also support efforts to strengthen the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in order to address the proliferation challenges posed by non-State actors. We look forward to the comprehensive review next year of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

We also take positive note of the growing emphasis on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Kyrgyzstan has endorsed the humanitarian pledge and is ready to support a draft resolution on it.

Kyrgyzstan welcomes Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention and its subsequent destruction under international supervision of its chemical-weapon stockpiles.

We have taken many steps and measures to ban illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty is a milestone achievement.

We firmly support the importance and urgency of ensuring the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the promotion of its use solely for peaceful purposes. In 2005, Kyrgyzstan made a voluntary political commitment that it would not be the first to deploy weapons of any kind in outer space. We would welcome a draft resolution on the subject of no first placement of weapons in outer space, and we believe that we should use every possible platform under the auspices of the United Nations to promote that initiative. In our view, the formulation of any agreement on the use and exploration of outer space should be done in a format of inclusive and consensus-based multilateral negotiations within the framework of the United Nations and its mandate.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributes to every aspect of disarmament and non-proliferation. Kyrgyzstan is proud of the fact that the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia entered into force in 2009. Article 18 of the Treaty designated Kyrgyzstan as its depositary. On 25 December 2014, the Kyrgyz Republic assumed the chairship of the Treaty, and we hosted a consultative meeting in Bishkek earlier this year. Kyrgyzstan welcomed the signing on 6 May 2014 of a Protocol on negative security assurances to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia by nuclear-weapon States. France, the United Kingdom, Russia and China have already ratified this instrument, and we call on the United States to do so without further delay. As the depositary of the Protocol, the Kyrgyz Republic stands ready to faithfully carry out its functions.

In conclusion, we reiterate that we look forward to cooperating with you, Sir, and with all delegations, in order to obtain good results in our work and to achieve general and complete disarmament and security for all our peoples, as well as stability and peace throughout the world.

**The Chair:** I would like to apologize to the representative of Kyrgyzstan for the noise in the room during the early part of his statement, and I call on all delegations to go outside to conduct any consultations, out of respect for the speaker who has the floor.

**Mr. Albatayneh** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. I also would like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, wishing them success in administering the Committee's proceedings. I also would like to express my country's appreciation to the former Chair and the members of the Bureau for their efforts during the sixty-ninth session.

We align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

The adverse socioeconomic and security consequences of the use of all types of weapons without exception and the harm emanating from their use by terrorist groups constitute for Jordan a cause for grave concern. As a country that opens its doors to refugees from the different conflicts in the Middle East, we are well aware of the destructive humanitarian consequences caused by these weapons, overburdening us as they do and depriving us of a decent way of life. Accordingly, I would like to reiterate our support for all initiatives and efforts designed to achieve security and stability throughout the world, particularly those that seek to strengthen collective action in favour of disarmament and prevention of transfer of weapons to terrorist groups.

International efforts to establish a world free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, stems from the firm, universal belief that these weapons are dangerous and lethal and that their use leads to disastrous humanitarian consequences. We would like to reiterate that the sole and absolute guarantee that such weapons are not used is to eliminate them altogether. In this context, we welcome the designation of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We also

welcome the holding of the three conferences in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna on the adverse effects of nuclear weapons.

Jordan calls for support for an international nuclear-weapons convention that would include provisions on preventing the smuggling of nuclear substances. We also call for strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We express our deep regret over the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on the outcome document. The credibility of the Treaty is at stake. The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference is added to numerous previous setbacks relating to the non-implementation of the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference which echoed the decision of the 1995 NPT Review Conference calling for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We are still waiting for its implementation.

We call upon all signatory States of the NPT to shoulder their responsibilities and implement the relevant resolutions and fulfil their obligations stemming from the Treaty as soon as possible and transparently. We reiterate our call upon Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear activities and installations to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in accordance with Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991), as well as IAEA resolution 17 (2009).

We emphasize the fact that what ensures safety and security for States is justice, the rule of law, avoidance of exclusionary or repressive policies — not weapons of mass destruction. Jordan emphasizes the right of States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with article IV of the NPT. We emphasize the need to facilitate all aspects of that right, while opening all installations and activities to IAEA supervision, taking into consideration the highest internationally agreed safety and security standards, in the light of the increasing number of conflicts and the growth of the phenomenon of violent extremism and radicalism, with unprecedented conflicts in the Middle East leading to an extraordinary arms race and fostering the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which has in turn fuelled and prolonged conflicts. We would like to emphasize our full commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All

Its Aspects. We call upon the international community to deploy further efforts and endeavours to control this situation, including reaching binding international agreements that take into consideration the legitimate concerns of all States.

The colossal technological progress witnessed by the world today constitutes a challenge with regard to terrorist groups' ability to use this progress to serve their own interests. We therefore call for intensifying international efforts to develop an effective joint mechanism to counter the universal danger of the misuse of information and communications technologies.

With regard to the use of outer space, we stress the need to prevent an arms race in outer space and to allow for it be used by all for peaceful purposes. Therefore, any international effort to codify or organize this right must not restrict it.

In Jordan, a State seeking to help the achievement of international peace and security and taking into consideration the specificities of the Middle East, we have taken specific tangible steps towards reaching that goal by acceding to numerous international treaties and conventions on disarmament, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and by fulfilling our obligations thereunder. In addition, we are members of the IAEA and party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and other relevant international treaties.

In conclusion, I would like to state that my delegation will work with the Chair and with all Member States to bring about the success of the work of the Committee in this session.

**Mr. Ndong Ella** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to express the great pleasure of my delegation at seeing you, Mr. Chair, guiding the work of the First Committee. I can assure you of our support and full cooperation throughout your term as head of the Committee.

The Gabon aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

For several decades, the issue of disarmament has been one of the highest priorities for Gabon. My country has always called for general and complete

disarmament. As the Committee is aware, the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remains a major concern of the international community. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery poses a real threat to international peace and security. It is our responsibility to ensure that nuclear technology and other components do not fall into the hands of terrorists. The Pelindaba Treaty, to which Gabon is a State party, is aimed at strengthening the global nuclear safety regime. My country also welcomes the proclamation of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Gabon, like other countries, regrets the ongoing impasse in the disarmament negotiations. My country is convinced that the ongoing threat posed by the excessive accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, can find a solution only within the framework of multilateral mechanisms, such as the Conference on Disarmament. Gabon reaffirms its commitment to the international non-proliferation regime, enshrined by such relevant instruments as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We therefore welcome the recent agreement between the international community and the Islamic Republic of Iran on its nuclear programme.

While the devastating nature of weapons of mass destruction has already been acknowledged, it has been borne out that conventional weapons have also become weapons of mass destruction, based on the number of victims that they claim throughout the world. In fact, most conflicts taking place in several regions of the world, and particularly in Africa, are fuelled and exacerbated by the irresponsible, lawless and immoral trade in conventional arms — mainly small arms and light weapons — with tragic consequences for populations, particularly women and children. Gabon remains concerned about the humanitarian consequences resulting from the use of those weapons. Accordingly, we believe that the humanitarian dimension should play a central role in discussions on nuclear disarmament.

As we know, Central Africa, which has long been destabilized by numerous conflicts, has fallen prey to a terrorist threat that is most often funded by, among other things, the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. In that regard, my country welcomes three workshops that were held in Libreville. The first took place from 28 to 30 January 2014. Its objective was to



develop an integrated strategy against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons in Central Africa. The conclusions reached at that workshop recommended the implementation by Central African States of a series of measures with a view to confronting the terrorist threat and the threats arising from the links between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, money-laundering and transnational organized crime.

The second workshop, held from 19 to 21 May 2015, was organized around the theme of the fight against terrorist financing and money-laundering. The workshop enabled Central African countries to harmonize their views on the measures to take in the security, financial, fiscal and customs areas with a view to strengthening preventive and enforcement measures against the financing of terrorism.

The third workshop, held from 29 September to 2 October 2015, focused on the development of an integrated strategy in the fight against terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons in Central Africa. It was organized by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, in cooperation with the Government of Gabon. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the important contribution of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa — in particular, in the framework of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa — in efforts aimed at prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the subregion. I also note that Gabon will host the ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa from 23 to 27 November in Libreville.

Finally, we must continue to support ongoing disarmament efforts and free up negotiations from the current virtual impasse, which encourages the resilience of emerging threats to international peace and security, including terrorism, poaching and intra-State wars, to name but a few.

**The Chair:** I thank the representative of Gabon for the brevity of his statement, which helps the Committee hear all speakers in accordance with the agreed timetable.

**Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia): Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on everyone's election to guide the work of this Committee. My delegation assures you and the other Bureau members of its full cooperation and support. I would like

also to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports on the agenda items under the Committee's purview.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statement made by the representatives of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

It would perhaps not be much of an exaggeration if we were to say that these are dangerous times. It is during times such as these that we ought to consider all aspects of the potential sources of mortal challenges. The continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use poses an existential threat to humankind. What is more troubling to comprehend is that those deadly and destructive weapons continue to be modernized and upgraded. To make matters worse, they remain the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited under international law. Curbing the escalation of the nuclear arms race and reducing the stockpile of other weapons of mass destruction are tasks that should be accomplished without further delay. The threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is more menacing today than ever before, because of the possibility that they might end up in the wrong hands.

But that is only part of the problem. When we consider the deficit of wisdom in so many areas and the capacity of States to commit acts of folly, we can appreciate the challenge we face. Therefore, the need to take concrete actions to conclude a legally binding and effective treaty to curtail the illicit trade and transfer of such weapons, in particular to non-State actors, is critically urgent. The step-by-step approach has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We must exert all efforts to secure the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

We welcome the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the E3+3 and Iran. The agreement proves that diplomacy works to resolve seemingly insurmountable challenges. We also welcome the unanimous endorsement of the plan by the Security Council enshrined in resolution 2231 (2015) and call on the parties to implement the plan in good faith.

It is regrettable that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to reach a consensus on a final outcome document. However, that will not put into question that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The three pillars of the NPT still represent an unparalleled framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and stability.

We have endorsed the humanitarian pledge issued at the conclusion of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. The endorsement of the pledge by 119 countries demonstrates that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are a fundamental global concern. We must exert all our efforts to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in the light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.

My delegation would like to stress that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We further reiterate our call for unconditional negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States, pending their total elimination.

The African continent has shown its commitment to regional peace and security through the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by a large number of its member States. The Pelindaba Treaty reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of those weapons among others. Ethiopia remains committed to the Treaty.

Ethiopia supports the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, we call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call upon the States listed in annex 2 to the CTBT and whose ratifications are crucial for the Treaty's entry into force. As a CTBT signatory, Ethiopia has been working

towards the realization of the purposes and objectives of the Treaty in close cooperation with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in the field of disarmament. Ethiopia joins other Member States in reaffirming the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and expresses its concern about the impasse that has prevented the CD from fulfilling its mandate.

We share the concern expressed by several delegations towards the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and call on all stakeholders to proactively engage in that process in a spirit of mutual understanding. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East is essential for global peace and security and for the stability of the region.

Conventional weapons, particularly illicit small arms and light weapons, are causing havoc and mass suffering across the world, including in our subregion, in the Horn of Africa. The unauthorized use of those weapons by non-State actors and the widespread and uncontrolled access to them indeed remain a source of threat and great concern for the States in the region. It is precisely for that reason that the implementation of international and regional commitments and Treaty-based obligations with respect to combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is critical. We are always ready to continue to work with regional States and the international community to monitor, control and put an end to the illegal trade and transfer of those weapons.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate once again Ethiopia's unreserved commitment to discharging all its Treaty obligations, as well as to upholding the pertinent United Nations resolutions relating to various issues of general disarmament.

**Mrs. Rajaonarivelo** (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in this Committee, I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee, a difficult task indeed. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I assure

you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in carrying out your work. I also take this opportunity to congratulate and thank His Excellency Mr. Courteney Rattray for the excellent work of the Committee during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Madagascar aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/70/PV.2)

Like all those who have spoken before me, I reaffirm my delegation's concern about the slow or even non-existent progress being made on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the ongoing deadlock on nuclear disarmament. Those are the main problems facing all of us because they are very complex challenges to address. Therefore, for us, the non-nuclear-weapon States, the threat to humankind remains ever present and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences posed by nuclear weapons no longer have to be proved. They threaten us, and the threat of the use or possible use of those weapons is concerning to us. Unfortunately, despite the unparalleled capacity of nuclear weapons to completely destroy humankind and its environment, they are the only weapons of mass destruction that are not prohibited. Indeed, some seek to modernize them.

My Government has done its utmost to contribute to nuclear security. It has ratified the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, among others, and it is one of the 119 States that supported the Austrian commitment to fill the legal vacuum on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. My delegation believes that it is high time to initiate negotiations on a new legally binding international instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, including prohibiting the development, production, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, deployment and threat of use or use of nuclear weapons, as well as the assistance, financing, encouragement or incitement to those prohibited actions.

Madagascar welcomes the second meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. While we await the achievement of that objective, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to comply with their obligations and take concrete steps to achieve nuclear

disarmament. My delegation appeals to the non-nuclear-weapon States to not be discouraged and to continue to seize every opportunity to support the humanitarian commitment to a legal instrument to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons and to support the proposals and resolutions for the negotiation of a new treaty on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Madagascar welcomes the historic agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue that was concluded last July in Vienna and is to be adopted soon. It encourages the parties concerned to implement it as they should.

Meetings and events have been held to discuss disarmament issues. Progress has been noted, such as with the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and the holding of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty; the NPT Review Conference, although no consensus was reached on its outcome; and meetings on activities in outer space. Nonetheless, we regret the fact that the conference to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has still not been convened. In that regard, my delegation would appeal to the States in the region that have not become party to the NPT to do so as soon as possible, to show flexibility and to comply with the various resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in order to create the conditions conducive to organizing that long-awaited conference.

My delegation believes in the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy, and in that regard would like to express its conviction that our approach to disarmament and international security issues such as the negotiations on a code of conduct for outer space activities should be a multilateral one, conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. On that subject, my delegation believes firmly in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and is opposed to any attempt to start an arms race in space.

As far as possible, my country will continue to fulfil its responsibilities in the fight against terrorism, and we remain committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba. We would like to emphasize the importance of the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes and the role of the IAEA in providing technical assistance and cooperation for social and economic development and thus in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

The insecurity and violence resulting from the proliferation of small arms and light weapons

has reached an uncontrollably high level in several countries, particularly in Africa, including in mine, and that is why my delegation can only rejoice at the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. It gives us hope that its implementation and that of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects have come just in time and can enable us to strengthen regional and international cooperation in order to halt the illegal trade, transfer, manufacture and possession of arms. Madagascar participated actively in the negotiations leading to the Treaty's adoption and signed it in the first year it was opened for signature, and our ratification of the Treaty is under way. My delegation therefore calls for universalization of the Treaty so that its implementation can begin and we can establish a control system that will enable us to monitor the illicit sale and acquisition of such weapons by non-State groups, terrorists and other perpetrators of the unrest and instability that can damage a country's socioeconomic situation.

Still on the subject of conventional weapons, in 2008 Madagascar signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and our ratification process is under way and is waiting only for the promulgation decree.

Regarding weapons of mass destruction, Madagascar ratified and has been party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction since 2008.

We deplore the use of chemical weapons in Syria, which has killed hundreds of civilians and prompted the Security Council to call for the destruction of Syria's chemical arsenal and the equipment used to produce it. Madagascar welcomes the Council's unanimous adoption in August of resolution 2235 (2015), aimed at identifying the perpetrators of the attacks in Syria using chemical weapons that have resulted in multiple civilian casualties. My delegation ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in 2004. Madagascar is dismayed by the growing numbers of displaced people fleeing atrocities, leading to a refugee crisis, and we concur with France's proposed initiative on the non-use of the Security Council veto in cases of mass atrocities.

**Ms. Pajević** (Montenegro): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of

the Bureau on your election. You can count on my delegation's full support and constructive cooperation in your discharge of your important duties.

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier in the debate by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.2). In addition, we would like to stress certain points of particular importance to my country.

Montenegro remains committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and we will play our part in the efforts to reach our common objective of building peace and security. While it is unfortunate that reaching agreement at this year's Review Conference of the States parties to the Treaty was too challenging, we are firmly convinced that this international instrument should continue to be seen as a road map for a world free of nuclear weapons.

As a State party to all the most important international agreements related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, Montenegro is particularly active in the area of preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons. We have built a national legislative framework and administrative capacities designed to enable us to fully implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), including through the adoption of a national action plan for implementing that important instrument. I should mention that in affirmation of our coordinated and comprehensive approach to the issues related to resolution 1540 (2004), and with the aim of providing support to our national authorities, in June of this year Montenegro organized a national round table on the resolution's implementation, with the support and participation of the Conflict Prevention Centre of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Montenegro is also developing its institutional capacity to address chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks. We have prepared a national action plan on the subject and expect it to be adopted by the end of the year. We would like to acknowledge the campaign to raise awareness of the possible catastrophic humanitarian consequences that the potential use of nuclear weapons could have for humankind. We



welcome the conferences on the subject held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, which we attended, and we look forward to further activities and discussions in that field.

We commend the successful outcome of the First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Cancún this year. We believe there is a solid basis for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to make an important contribution to preventing the uncontrolled arms trade fuelling armed conflicts, and thus to making a real difference in the lives, livelihoods and human rights of millions worldwide. Montenegro will dedicate itself to achieving full and effective implementation of the ATT, and to upholding the principles and standards enshrined in the Treaty on a global scale. Our existing legislative framework is aimed at ensuring full compliance with our international obligations and commitments, in particular the ATT and the relevant restrictive measures adopted by the Security Council and the European Union, as well as with the human rights situation in the countries concerned.

Montenegro strongly supports the efforts being made to fully implement and universalize the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We welcomed the adoption of the Dubrovnik Action Plan at the Convention's First Review Conference, which will guide further activities, with the aim of achieving a full ban on the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of such inhuman weapons. In the first five years after the entry into force of this important international humanitarian instrument, Montenegro destroyed its entire stockpile of cluster munitions, made all the necessary efforts to explore and clear contaminated areas and established a legislative framework for victim assistance.

Montenegro is committed to working through the challenges that we all face in a time of growing uncertainties, and to continuing to take steps to build a more peaceful world.

**The Chair:** I would like to thank the representative of Montenegro for the brevity of her statement, which will help the Committee to hear all speakers within the agreed timetable.

**Mr. Eloumni (Morocco):** I am speaking today on behalf of our Permanent Representative, who for the past three days has been trying unsuccessfully to find the time to deliver his statement himself. The written text is in French and I will be delivering a short version. The full version will be posted on the PaperSmart portal.

*(spoke in French)*

Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I would first like to heartily congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the work of the First Committee and to assure you of our full cooperation. I would also like to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Jamaica. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, for his statement to be delivered to the Committee.

The delegation of Morocco associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

Our deliberations are being held in an international climate marked by deteriorating international security and a worsening of the terrorist threat, especially in the Middle East and in the Sahelo-Saharan region. The situation is also marked by lethargy in nuclear-disarmament mechanisms and a lack of real progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. At the same time, collective security also requires the renunciation of nuclear proliferation and a commitment to disarmament. It is no longer viable to make this statement year after year to the First Committee.

The Kingdom of Morocco is a party to all international instruments on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and is firmly committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which are the only weapons of mass destruction that are not universally prohibited through a binding instrument. It is in that spirit that Morocco participated in the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The irreversible impact of the use of nuclear weapons on the environment and human life challenge us to proceed unwaveringly towards the prohibition of those weapons.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a key instrument for the preservation of peace and global security. The Kingdom believes it imperative that the provisions of the NPT, as well as the obligations under it, be respected by all States. Similarly, the measures recommended by the decisions of the Review Conferences constitute contracts whose full respect will allow us to move forward together towards achieving the objectives of the Treaty.

Given the failure of the 2015 Review Conference and the absence of substantial progress in the implementation of agreed measures, we believe that, despite the efforts made, we are far from starting a disarmament process leading to a world without nuclear weapons. We share the view that disarmament is a gradual process. At the same time, the concept of the process requires a comprehensive approach, which consists of a common clear goal and with interlinked stages and measures aimed at substantial reductions to foster irreversible progress. Such a process should also be transparent and internationally verifiable. The cessation of the modernization of nuclear arsenals and the reduction of their role in defence doctrines and negative security assurances to non-States parties to the NPT would build confidence in the disarmament process.

The prohibition of nuclear tests should also be irreversible and verifiable. That will be possible only with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Morocco also regrets the delay in its entry into force and calls on all States, especially the nuclear Powers that have not yet done so, to ratify the Treaty to facilitate its entry into force.

It is indisputable that the universality of a Treaty as important as the NPT serves the common goal of our collective security. Morocco emphasizes the importance of adherence to the NPT and the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency for all States of the Middle East region, including Israel.

It is regrettable that a decision was not reached at the NPT Review Conference to advance international efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, pursuant to the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. An international conference on that issue could be a historic opportunity to initiate a process that would allow us to rid the region of weapons of mass destruction and strengthen international and regional peace and security.

Morocco is fully convinced that the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons depends on the efficiency of the United Nations mechanisms responsible for disarmament, in particular the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which depends on the political will of States and respect for the obligations and commitments taken. We share the view that the problems of the CD are actually political. We call for flexibility to allow the

Conference to agree on a balanced programme of work enabling it to fully play its role. In the same vein, the First Committee is called upon to continue discussing the means to strengthen the effectiveness of its work. Our delegation has submitted several proposals in that regard and will contribute actively to the informal consultations that you, Mr. Chair, intend to conduct during the current session.

The Kingdom of Morocco attaches particular importance to the exchange of information and experience, as well as to strengthening international, regional and subregional cooperation in the field of nuclear security and in the fight against the illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials. To that end, the Kingdom is participating in several international initiatives, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit process. The expertise and experiences exchanged in the context of those international initiatives will strengthen multilateral action on non-proliferation and nuclear security.

In that context, Morocco has organized several activities and will co-organize, with Spain and the International Atomic Energy Agency, an international exercise on the security of maritime transport from 27 to 29 October. Moreover, since 2011, Morocco has hosted, in Rabat, the regional secretariat of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centre of Excellence Initiative of the States members of the African Atlantic Facade. In cooperation with the United Nations and the European Union, the aim of the Centre is to strengthen the capacity of countries in the region in terms of a response to and mitigation of the risks posed by chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) agents. In cooperation with Georgia and the Philippines, Morocco has established a group of friends to analyse the reduction of CBRN threats.

Beyond the human suffering and disasters they cause, the uncontrolled circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons are a real challenge to the stability, unity and territorial integrity of States, as well as to their economic development, especially in Africa. Morocco believes that regional and subregional cooperation are essential tools in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms. The worrying situation that prevails in the Sahelo-Saharan region owing to all kinds of illegal trade, including in small arms, and the connections that exist between arms trafficking networks and terrorist groups, demands, more than ever,

an increase in efforts to strengthen cooperation among the States of the region on the basis of an inclusive approach. It is also in that spirit that the Kingdom of Morocco strongly supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument.

Morocco welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and the successful holding of the first Conference of States Parties. For that instrument to achieve its objectives, Morocco remains convinced that it is essential to ensure its transparent and fair implementation, with full respect for the legitimate rights of States to obtain the means to defend their independence, unity and territorial integrity.

We will provide further details on other issues in the framework of the thematic debate.

**Mrs. Adhikari (Nepal):** First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, and through you to congratulate the other members of the Committee's Bureau on their respective elections. Let me also commend the role of outgoing Bureau members for their contribution in the last session. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered in that regard by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

This year, we are celebrating the seventieth year of the founding of the United Nations, the Organization established to maintain peace and security in the world. This year is also the seventieth year of the use of atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The devastating effect of the use of the atom bomb reminds us to redouble our efforts with collective political will for complete and total disarmament. While we are commemorating those anniversaries, this may be an opportune moment for us to ponder in retrospect to see whether multilateralism has lived up to our expectations to maintain the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Last month, our leaders adopted the ambitious 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (resolution 70/1), at a time when the world was witnessing an increasing

trend of military expenses, which are estimated to be more than \$1.7 trillion a year. If that amount of money could have been spent on development activities, the bottom billions of people on Earth could have lived better lives. The time has come to invest resources and efforts with strong commitments to socioeconomic development and cutting the military expenditure if we are to address the root cause of conflicts and poverty and leave no one behind as we collectively envisioned in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

International peace, security, disarmament and non-proliferation have always been at the top of our foreign policy. As a country with an unwavering commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, Nepal consistently stands for nuclear disarmament and strictly adheres to the principles of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and reaffirms its steadfast support to a time-bound, general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including the nuclear weapons.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and as a signatory of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Nepal is concerned about the very existence of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their potential use or threat of use. Nepal believes that negative security assurances by all nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States through a legally binding instrument will be an important step in achieving nuclear disarmament. We must focus our attention on a permanent ban on nuclear-weapon testing and reject the policy of nuclear deterrence. To that end, there is an urgent need to start negotiations on a legally binding document granting security assurances by the nuclear powers to non-nuclear-weapon States. Nepal regrets the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach a consensus on the final outcome document.

Nepal fully supports the effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Nepal also hopes that the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty will certainly ensure international regulatory mechanisms in the trade of conventional arms as the legally binding instrument with greater transparency and accountability. The international community should

work collectively to strengthen oversight mechanisms on small and light weapons to prevent their pervasive abuses by criminal elements.

Nepal attaches high importance to the multilateral negotiations in disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to promoting collective ownership, effective deliberations and responsibility for collective global action. Nepal stands for an early conclusion of the fissile material cut-off treaty. To that end, the Conference on Disarmament must be revitalized as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum under its mandate without any delay.

Terrorism has become a continued threat to the maintenance of international peace and security and presents multifold problems. There is an urgent need to address this problem collectively with a holistic approach, as the foundation of durable peace can be erected only on strong pillars of economic and social justice. My delegation reaffirms its unreserved condemnation of terrorism anywhere in all its forms and manifestations and calls for an early conclusion of the negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

We recognize the legitimate rights of every sovereign State to pursue the development of nuclear technology solely for peaceful purposes under effective international supervision and support nuclear-weapon-free zones. Nepal reiterates its support for the prevention of an arms race in outer space and underlines the importance of keeping it free of weapons for the benefit of humankind.

Nepal supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions as critical steps forward to give disarmament genuine meaning and welcomes any efforts towards establishing weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zones in the Middle East. Nepal welcomes the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, which was adopted in July.

Nepal has actively participated at the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna, and fully supports the initiative of holding conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We hope that it will lead our common efforts to the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and the eventual removal of the deadly weapons from the planet.

Nepal is a host to different United Nations and other regional entities, including the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). Nepal is of the view that regional mechanisms are of great help in integrating national perspectives into the regional dynamics for collective prosperity in the region through constructive engagement. We expect that the UNRCPD, which was the only United Nations Office to be temporarily relocated by the Secretariat to Bangkok after the earthquakes of Nepal earlier this year, will resume its work in Kathmandu as soon as possible.

Nepal will soon submit a draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific at the current session of the Committee, and expects the continued support received from all the delegations for the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, as has been the case in the past years.

In conclusion, we hope that this year the First Committee will continue to devote its time and energy to broadening understanding, creating consensus and building confidence among Member States, with a view to making a safer and more stable and peaceful world.

**The Chair:** The Committee will now hear from the observer of the Holy See.

**Mr. Corden (Holy See):** My delegation extends congratulations and full cooperation to you, Mr. Chair, as you lead the Committee in its pursuit of world peace.

Pope Francis's recent address to the United Nations (see A/70/PV.3) can provide a leitmotif for our work, as he set out principles for the world to achieve lasting peace and universal fraternity in our common home. That fraternity must rest on the sacredness of every human life. He appealed to everyone to "work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and between peoples", for war is both a "negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment." Therefore, as the Charter of the United Nations proposes, we must diligently pursue negotiation, mediation and arbitration as the only way to develop international norms for the protection of all peoples.

The work of the First Committee covers a wide range of arms issues — small arms and light weapons, landmines, chemical and biological weapons, cluster munitions, armed drones, nuclear weapons, the arms trade and keeping weapons out of outer space. In all of



those areas there have been mixed results, but it cannot be said that the world is even approaching a state of disarmament. The resources spent on militarization and weapons development continue to rise, while the funding for all the United Nations programmes for peace and development put together pales in comparison.

Civilian deaths from the use of explosive weapons continue to increase. Arms such as cluster munitions and chemical weapons, though prohibited, still find their way into conflicts. The conflicts scarring landscapes and driving people from their homes to perilous deserts and seas — indeed, to cemeteries — testify to the lack of the political will that is needed if we are to stamp out the gun culture that still stands as an obstacle to the peaceful development of peoples. There will never be sustainable development without peace. Governments must resolve to take sincere action to reduce the manufacture, sale and use of weaponry of all descriptions and reduce their dependency on arms for power. As the twenty-first century unfolds, it is becoming ever clearer that war does not and cannot resolve conflict. Preventive means, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are the most useful tools in our hands. We must employ them much more fully than we do at present.

The parlous state of nuclear-weapons negotiations is a prime concern for the Committee. The failure of the Ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to agree on a final document is dissipating the political will for negotiations aimed at fulfilling the promise of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the same time, the modernization of nuclear weapons continues. In his address to the General Assembly, Pope Francis expressed the anxiety of so many around the world, stressing the urgent need to work

“for a world free of nuclear weapons by implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in letter and in spirit, until such instruments are totally banned” (*A/70/PV.3, p. 5*).

The Pope thus reinforced the message he sent to the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in December 2014, in which he said that

“[n]uclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence”.

Nuclear deterrence is indeed an obstacle to real and lasting peace. Indeed, true and lasting peace among nations cannot consist in the possession of a matching supply of equally destructive armaments, but only in mutual trust. We must therefore build trust among nations. That is only possible when all nations submit to the same rules. *Pacta sunt servanda*. The NPT is not just a set of legal obligations; it is also a moral commitment based on trust among the parties. Yet its central premise, of nuclear disarmament in exchange for nuclear non-proliferation, remains a distant dream. If commitments to nuclear disarmament are not complied with, thus constituting breaches of trust, then the proliferation of nuclear weapons is a logical corollary, threatening not only the credibility but ultimately the very existence of the NPT.

The efforts now under way to build public understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons deserve our full support. A United Nations open-ended working group to identify and formulate effective measures for the full implementation of article VI of the NPT, including legal provisions aimed at achieving a world without nuclear weapons, would be a good first step. The rule of consensus should not be applied to block such efforts. While no stone should be left unturned to make this an inclusive process, the recalcitrance of some must not hinder the expression of the will of the international community in moving forward on this paramount issue of peace and security.

Pope Francis has called for a worldwide dialogue, which would include both nuclear and non-nuclear States and the burgeoning organizations that make up civil society, aimed at ensuring that nuclear weapons are banned once and for all to the benefit of us all. If we give negotiations, political goodwill and full verification a chance to work, the world will not be doomed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As Pope Francis noted in his address to the General Assembly,

“The recent agreement reached on the nuclear issue in a sensitive region of Asia and the Middle East is proof of the potential of political goodwill and the law, when exercised with sincerity, patience and persistence” (*ibid., p. 5*).

Let us listen to the overwhelming call of the international community for urgent progress to be made towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, because

the only guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used is their complete elimination.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

**Mrs. Christory** (International Committee of the Red Cross) (*spoke in French*): The celebration this year of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations is an opportunity to reflect on the progress that has been made in advancing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, as called for in the Charter of the United Nations. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) brings a particular perspective to the issue as a humanitarian organization mandated to aid and protect victims of armed conflicts and to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening international humanitarian law, also known as the law of armed conflict or of war.

One of the features of the armed conflicts of the past 70 years — indeed, of the past century — has been the use of long-range weapon systems capable of delivering massive explosive force over a wide area. High-explosive bombs and missiles, indirect weapon systems such as mortars, rockets and other types of artillery and multi-barrel rocket launchers have served armies well in open battlefields. However, when used against military targets located in populated areas, they are liable to produce indiscriminate effects with consequences for civilians that are often devastating, as we have seen in various ongoing armed conflicts. The use of improvised explosive weapons by non-State armed groups in populated areas also creates terrible suffering.

In addition to their immediate effects through injuries, destruction and lives lost, explosive weapons in populated areas have significant subsequent indirect effects on civilians that are only exacerbated by protracted hostilities. Collateral damage to basic civilian infrastructure, such as supply networks and water and electrical facilities, severely disrupts the essential services that the civilian population depends on for survival, including the provision of health care. Such situations add to the threats to civilians' health and lives and can lead to their displacement.

It therefore seems clear that the use of wide-impact explosive weapons in densely populated areas should be avoided due to the significant probability of indiscriminate effects. The issue concerns all States, not just those currently engaged in armed conflicts,

since most armed forces' arsenals include these types of weapons. In the light of the extensive harm being done to civilians in conflicts today, it is important that States explain how they are ensuring that their armed forces make use of weapons that comply with international humanitarian law when they conduct hostilities in populated areas. The ICRC urges them to make their relevant policies and practices known, including any restrictions on the use in populated areas of certain explosive weapons based on their intrinsic inaccuracy or other potentially indiscriminate effects. Such information would help to advance dialogue on debates about this important humanitarian issue and help the parties to conflicts who are genuinely want to respect the law to improve the protection of civilians in populated areas.

The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, nearly 70 years ago, aspired to

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

However, 70 years later, nuclear weapons remain the only such weapon not yet subject to a total ban, unlike chemical and biological weapons, whose use has been categorically forbidden. This status quo is all the more unacceptable when we consider that we have never had such heightened awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, in whatever form it might take, as we do today, as was explicitly recognized in 2010 by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the three international Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, evidence was given of the unimaginable scale of the suffering that nuclear weapons would cause in terms of immediate and long-term effects on people, societies, health-care systems and the environment. The ICRC and the Japanese Red Cross have just published a disturbing report about the fact that, 70 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Red Cross hospitals are still treating many thousands of survivors for long-term effects of radiation exposure.

When the international context is threatened with instability, some States may be tempted to view nuclear weapons as a means of ensuring their security. But we cannot seriously view weapons with such disastrous

and irreversible humanitarian consequences as a way to protect civilians, let alone the whole of humankind. A large majority of States today are agreed that it is time to face up to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and make it the basis for all nuclear disarmament efforts. This year, Peter Maurer, President of the ICRC, requested that all States establish a timetable for negotiating a legally binding agreement banning the use of nuclear weapons and providing for their complete elimination, and consider the form that such an agreement could take. He also asked nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with existing commitments, to begin to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their military policies and the number of such weapons held on high alert, in order to lower the risk of their intentional or accidental use. We repeat those requests here today.

The threat of nuclear weapons raises other concerns about the weaponization of outer space. While the Outer Space Treaty formally prohibits putting weapons of mass destruction into orbit, it does not expressly extend that prohibition to other types of weapon, although all or almost all States claim to support the prevention of an arms race in outer space. What is certain is that any use of outer space for hostilities within an armed conflict — that is, any use of means and methods of warfare in, from, to or through outer space — must comply with international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attacks. It is important to stress in that regard that in making that assertion, the ICRC in no way condones the weaponization of outer space, which several General Assembly resolutions have sought to prevent. The point being made is that warfare in outer space should not occur in a legal vacuum.

Complying with international humanitarian law in a putative war in outer space would be extremely difficult, however, because most space-based satellites or other systems used for military purposes also have non-military functions. A cyber or other attack on such highly integrated mixed-use systems could have significant humanitarian consequences for millions of civilians, for example by disrupting health and other essential services that depend on satellite communications systems. It is also likely that cyberattacks on space objects would produce tons of debris that could remain in orbit for decades and become a risk to peaceful activities in space. States should carefully weigh the many wide-ranging consequences

that a war in space could have for civilian populations and take them into consideration in determining the limits that should apply to the militarization of outer space.

Once again, in insisting that cyberwarfare should comply with international humanitarian law, the ICRC is absolutely not encouraging the use of cyberspace for hostilities in armed conflicts. We simply insist that if cybermeans are ever used, they must comply with international humanitarian law. In that regard, the ICRC welcomes the fact that the 2015 report (see A/70/174) of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security notes the relevant established international legal principles, including, where applicable, the principles of humanity, necessity, proportionality and distinction. As with space systems, the omnipresence of technology based on cybernetic networks in the daily life of civilian populations means that any attack on such networks could have serious humanitarian consequences.

The development of weapon systems capable of selecting and attacking targets without human intervention is another concern. There is a wide range of such weapon systems, lumped together under the generic term of “autonomous weapon systems”, sometimes referred to as “lethal autonomous weapon systems”. Discussions conducted by Government and independent experts, within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, of the legal, military and ethical implications of such weapons show broad agreement on the importance of maintaining human control over the critical functions of such weapon systems. In view of the rapid pace of progress in military robotics, it is now urgent that States consider what constitutes genuine, appropriate and effective human control over the use of force. The ICRC urges States to focus on fixing limits on the autonomy of weapon systems’ critical functions in order to ensure that they can be used in accordance with international humanitarian law and within the bounds of what is acceptable to the public conscience.

Every State has a duty to ensure that its development plans for new weapons and decisions on arms transfers comply with international humanitarian law. That is expressly recognized in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which, in requiring States to consider respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, and to take steps to prevent the diversion of weapons, aims

to ensure that weapons do not fall into the hands of those who would use them to commit war crimes, serious violations of human rights or any other serious crimes. That will ultimately help to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which is why the ICRC urges all States that have not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty and scrupulously respect its provisions. While weapons continue to circulate, whether through legal or illegal transfer or through diversion, fuelling some of the world's most violent armed conflicts, particularly those in various parts of the Middle East and Africa, it is crucial that we close the gap between law and practice, and in so doing, to fulfil the promise of the regulation of armaments made by the Charter of the United Nations 70 years ago.

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

**Mr. De Macedo Soares** (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean): On behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee, and to extend our greetings to the members of the Bureau and the secretariat. As a State party to Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Netherlands is associated with the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I thank you for allowing me to participate in this general debate, since it is appropriate that the First Committee should hear the views of international organizations that specialize in disarmament and international security issues and be kept informed about their status and activities. There are not many of them, just a handful, in fact. Perhaps that is a reflection of the paucity of achievements and the timidity of action in the field of disarmament.

Next Monday, 19 October, as every year, a panel in this conference room will examine the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in that field. The panel will be made up of representatives of the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament and three international organizations. I would like to call the Committee's attention to the absence on the panel of OPANAL, a fully fledged international organization established 48 years ago

by the Treaty of Tlatelolco that focuses exclusively on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and has 33 member States representing the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean, with an area of application of more than 90 million square kilometres, a population of about 625 million people and a permanent secretariat headquartered in Mexico City, of which I have the honour to be Secretary General. Moreover, of the five treaties creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, only Tlatelolco and Pelindaba created institutions, and we hope that the African Commission on Nuclear Energy will soon be fully operational.

OPANAL's exclusion is not a trivial organizational matter — first, because OPANAL member States find it difficult to understand why their agency is not considered on a footing with others, and secondly, because the situation shows how averse some States are to any change whatever in the frozen world of nuclear-weapon politics. I am sure that under your guidance, Sir, the Committee's consultations will result in a good decision and inspire your successor.

This year, OPANAL took an active part in the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), submitting a working paper containing 16 elements that would necessarily have been included in the final document and contributed to the Conference's success. That gauge for measuring its outcome could not be applied, however, since there was no outcome. That cannot be considered a mere misfortune. Since the NPT is the touchstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, the absence of a final document complying with past decisions taken in 2000 and 2010 and including new agreements on actions for promoting the regime is a matter of grave concern. While there was a specific reason for the Conference's failure to adopt a final document, the fact that there was no final document is inescapable. No agreement or conclusions were reached. In any case, the impossibility of progress on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was reason for dismay on the part of OPANAL member States, as expressed in their official communiqué, dated 15 June.

Latin America and the Caribbean, the oldest of the nuclear-weapon-free zones, deplored the lack of results at the third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, held here at United Nations



Headquarters on 24 April. Since its launch 10 years ago, this initiative has shown itself to be a promising instrument for strengthening the zones themselves, as well as for increasing their influence in efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The setback of the Review Conference cannot halt the progress towards better communication and cooperation among the five nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia. At that last failed Conference, OPANAL suggested an informal mechanism for contact among the zones that would enable them to meet, for example, on the margins of the First Committee, and that suggestion is ever more valid. In particular, OPANAL is willing to open new possibilities for working with the other zones and Mongolia through their institutions or focal points, in order to ensure the continued progress of their periodic conferences.

Born outside the United Nations, the movement aimed at confronting the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has been growing in substance, following and influence. The fact that no acronym is attached to it shows that it is distinguished by content and political meaning rather than form, and since the holding of three successful Conferences resulted in the Humanitarian Pledge, the movement has been gathering strong and widespread support among the States Members of the United Nations, including all the members of OPANAL. We believe that humanitarian considerations have brought a new dimension to the debate on nuclear weapons and are drawing increasing attention among world public opinion. That is extremely important, because despite all the setbacks and paralysis of various aspects and mechanisms relating to the issue, the States Members of the United Nations are opening paths for new initiatives in the relentless struggle for the abolition of nuclear weapons, which represent the most imminent risk to our survival and the greatest obstacle to a truly democratic international system.

In that regard, I would like to make special mention of General Assembly resolutions 68/32 and 69/41, which represent a tool that could lead us out of the quagmire into which nuclear disarmament efforts have fallen over the years. Among other things, we should invest in preparing for a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, to take place not later than 2018. That question, and many other central items on the agenda of the First Committee, are clearly and carefully described in the annex to

document A/C.1/70/2, circulated with a letter from the Permanent Representative of Mexico, who is the current coordinator of OPANAL in New York. The document contains the declaration of OPANAL member States on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, celebrated on 26 September. There could be no better contribution by OPANAL to the success of the current session of the General Assembly.

The Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States represents a region at the forefront of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That has been amply demonstrated by the special declarations adopted by our Heads of State and Government last year in Havana and this year in Belén, Costa Rica. The summit recognized OPANAL as the region's specialized body for the articulation of common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament. Our peoples know that nuclear weapons are a loaded gun pointing at the head of humankind.

**The Chair:** I apologize to the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean for the noise in the room during his statement. I kindly request delegations conducting consultations to do so outside of the room, out of respect for the speakers and so that speakers may be heard clearly. I appreciate the cooperation of delegations on that matter.

We have heard from the last speaker on the list for the general debate. The Committee will now listen to statements by the representatives of non-governmental organizations. I would kindly request that they speak for no more than four minutes.

In keeping with the Committee's established practice, I will now suspend the meeting to enable us to continue in an informal setting.

*The meeting was suspended at 4:45 p.m. and resumed at 5:55 pm.*

**The Chair:** The Committee has now concluded the general debate segment of its work. We have also exhausted the time available to us for today's meeting.

The next meeting of the First Committee will be held on Monday, 19 October, at 10 o'clock sharp, in this Conference Room. At that meeting the Committee will begin the second phase of its work, namely, thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee.

We will first have a high-level exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the “current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field”, with a focus on the sub-theme of “Increasing capacities to address weapons of mass destruction”. The concept paper on the topic, prepared and circulated by the Secretariat, is now available on QuickFirst.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind all delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions to the Secretariat is Tuesday, 20 October, at 12 noon. Delegations are urged to adhere to the deadline to enable the Secretariat to process the documents in a timely manner, which will ultimately expedite the collective work of the Committee.

#### **Programme of work**

**The Chair:** Before proceeding further, we will now consider the one remaining issue concerning the indicative timetable for thematic discussions, namely, the introduction by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations

on possible aspects that could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The issue we are considering is whether or not a Chair of a group of governmental experts should introduce its final report to the Committee. We are not considering a matter of substance. This is a procedural issue. This and other relevant procedural and relevant issues can be discussed further within the framework of a method of work of the Committee. As such, the introduction we are currently discussing does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts or of its findings. It also does not affect or prejudice the outcome of the Committee.

Can I take it that with those considerations we can move forward with the proceedings of the work of the Committee?

I hear no objection.

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*