



General Assembly

Seventieth session

First Committee

10th meeting

Tuesday, 20 October 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair: First, we will first hear an introduction by Ambassador Elissa Golberg of Canada, 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. After the introduction by Ambassador Golberg, the Committee will continue listening to statements on the “Nuclear weapons” cluster.

I now give the floor, via video teleconference from Beijing, to Ambassador Golberg.

Ms. Golberg (Canada), 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: I appreciate the Chair’s invitation to address the Committee this evening — or rather this morning for my colleagues in New York — and encourage a focused discussion on the work 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. I am honoured to do so.

I would also like to highlight the excellent collaboration of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, including its flexibility in arranging my virtual participation this evening.

My remarks today constitute my own impressions of the Group’s work and its report, which was released by the Secretary-General on 17 June (see A/70/81). That report should be read on its own merits and — I would urge colleagues — in its entirety. Indeed, the true value of the Group was in the depth and breadth of its discussions, the key points of which the experts sought to summarize in the body of the report itself.

In the time I have today, I would like to focus on some of the key issues outlined by the Group, in particular in relation to the dynamic correlation between a future treaty’s scope, definitions, verification requirements, and associated legal obligations and institutional arrangements. The Group recognized that no issue can be addressed — nor should it be — in complete isolation from the others.

For context, let me remind members of the Committee that, at its sixty-seventh session, the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General establish a Group of Governmental Experts on the subject. That was because the General Assembly overwhelmingly believed that the subject of a potential treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices

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remained vital to global peace and security, and that a Group of Governmental Experts could help refine the parameters of the discussion and, ideally, encourage forward momentum. I believe that the Group fulfilled that mandate.

Indeed, the Group, which was comprised of 25 remarkable experts selected on the basis of equitable geographic distribution, was committed to ensuring a serious and substantive discussion on a potential future treaty. In order to ensure a diversity of views, resolution 67/53 established an unusually large Group of Governmental Experts, which met over four two-week sessions. At the outset of the Group's work in 2014, I challenged the experts to be open-minded and to pursue technical, fact-based discussions on the potential aspects of a future treaty, where nothing would be off the table. That approach guided our work throughout and provided a model for analysis and thoughtful dialogue in a multilateral context on difficult issues that, frankly, go to the core of national and global security concerns. It effectively ensured that we moved away from the sterile discussions that have characterized debate on the treaty in recent years and, instead, identified substantive approaches to likely treaty elements.

As the Group was not itself involved in negotiation, we did not have to reconcile the various perspectives on individual issues, but instead focused on ensuring that critical issues were thoroughly considered so that they could inform future treaty negotiators on the key issues that they would need to address, and provide them with what we referred to as sign posts for consideration. For example, the report outlines considerable areas of convergence on key treaty aspects, and also offers proposals on ways that negotiators might address divergent perspectives. It also identifies issues where further technical or scientific work could be pursued, or other ancillary confidence-building measures and/or evolutionary clauses might be developed to assist with any negotiation.

There are two things to note that are particularly important for the General Assembly. First, there was a consensus in the Group that a treaty should establish a legally binding, non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Second, there was also consensus that document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein — often commonly referred to as the

“Shannon Mandate” — remain the most suitable basis on which future negotiations should proceed in the Conference on Disarmament. The Group reaffirmed that, under that mandate, negotiators could raise for consideration all aspects of a treaty, including its scope.

With respect to the scope of a treaty, the Group agreed that it should set out the basic obligations that States parties would be required to meet, and that they should be laid out in the form of prohibited, as opposed to permitted, activities. Experts also discussed how the scope of a future treaty is closely linked to the general objectives that it will seek to achieve, whether non-proliferation and/or disarmament in nature. The Group made important headway on that issue by unpacking the hitherto contentious question of the so-called stocks, factually assessing whether, or to what extent, the scope of a future treaty should extend to fissile material produced by a State party prior to its entry into force, and then assessing the implications of its doing so.

Overall, it should be noted that the positions of experts on the scope of a treaty really fell along a spectrum from addressing future production in order to prevent an increase in the amount of fissile material available for use in nuclear weapons, to addressing different elements of past production of fissile material as defined by a treaty. That is a really important nuance, notably as discussions have until now tended to misrepresent the range of perspectives on the matter as being polarized.

Elements of past production identified and assessed by the Group included civilian stocks, naval fuel, stocks assigned to nuclear weapons, and fissile material declared by a State as being in excess of its weapons needs. For me, that was one of the most significant outcomes of the Group of Governmental Experts. The experts' willingness to explore the range of various types of past production while dealing with an otherwise sensitive topic, including a useful dialogue between nuclear-weapons States and non-nuclear weapon States, will go a long way toward helping negotiators bridge differences on the issue of scope in the future. The evolution on the issue of past production and the methodology that was advanced by the Group was already apparent in the discussions that occurred this summer in the Conference on Disarmament, which can be understood as a positive development from a Chair's perspective. I personally hope to see that dialogue continue here in the First Committee and beyond.

On treaty definitions, the Group's experts agreed that definitions would need to be practical, scientifically and technically accurate, and tailored to the specific objectives of the treaty. In other words, treaty definitions would need to be crafted in a way that clarifies the obligations of the treaty, while allowing for viable implementation and verification. With that in mind, our Group focused in technical details in various options for the treaty's definition of fissile material, fissile material production, and fissile-material production facilities and the various implications for each. That will provide a useful foundation for future negotiators.

For instance, four different options were considered for the definition of fissile material. Some experts preferred a model based on the definitions in article XX of the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in particular definition of "special fissionable material". Another group advocated in favour of the term "un-irradiated direct-use material" as defined in the IAEA Safeguards Glossary. There were a few experts who preferred a narrower approach to definitions, focusing only on weapons-grade uranium and plutonium. Another expert did not believe that those three models captured all the relevant alternatives and cited the need to consider a scalable range of definitions options that could be adapted to the treaty's scope. A common thread across all of those models was the belief that highly enriched uranium and plutonium were the core materials that should be at the heart of the treaty's definitions, on the basis of their weapons applicability.

The Group's detailed discussions on treaty verification have laid essential groundwork for the successful negotiation of a future treaty's verification regime. And for me, that was one of the most compelling aspects of the Group's work. It reaffirmed that a fissile material cut-off treaty must be internationally and effectively verifiable. To experts, that meant that a treaty would deter and detect non-compliance in a timely manner, provide credible assurances that States parties are complying with their treaty obligations, and guard against frivolous or abusive allegations of non-compliance. As a means to achieve that goal, there was broad agreement that the verification regime must especially guard against diversion risks and undeclared production and facilities. The Group also explored the verification implications of the various definitions proposed for fissile material and the implications

of different functional categories for future and past production.

The Group analysed various approaches to verification, including a focused approach whereby verification would largely target activities directly related to enrichment and reprocessing, and a comprehensive approach that would cover a broader range of upstream and downstream activities and facilities. There was agreement that a diverse verification toolbox should be created for the treaty, the core of which would be composed of existing verification approaches, tools and techniques that are currently being employed in other multilateral and bilateral forums. Those and other tools that could be developed specifically for the treaty would enable the verification regime to provide credible assurance that States parties were complying with their treaty obligations.

The Group identified a number of challenges to effective verification, including those relating to national security, non-proliferation and commercial proprietary concerns. It was clear to me that those verification challenges presented an area that the Group probably had too little time, or was insufficiently specialized, to fully address, and in which the Group could, frankly, benefit from further study before or during negotiation. I would highlight that many of those challenges are the same as those posed in broader nuclear disarmament verification. Therefore, work carried out in either context would have reciprocal benefits. In that regard, I am hopeful that the United States-led International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification will usefully delve into some of the verification issues identified in the Group's report as needing further scientific and technical study.

Finally, I would like to note that the Group of Governmental Experts explored questions related to the legal arrangements and institutional structure of a future treaty, which will be important for its ultimate credibility and effectiveness. Experts identified numerous factors that negotiators will have to consider when designing legal and institutional provisions, including the importance of accounting for the experiences encountered by existing international treaties and institutions, and the imperative of ensuring that a treaty is placed and vested in the broader international security context. Against that backdrop, the Group addressed and provided its perspectives on, among other things, issues such as treaty governance

structures, duration, withdrawal, entry into force and concerns relating to compliance.

The Group of Governmental Experts was established by the General Assembly to create a space where serious, substantive discussion on all possible elements of a treaty could occur, notably in the absence of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament despite the overwhelming will of member States for 20 years. I would argue strongly that the Group succeeded in that task, conducting a robust, fact-based assessment where no issue was off limits. The commitment to genuine dialogue apparent within its unique membership provides a model for other multilateral nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament forums. The continued value of the treaty, one that remains a logical counterpoint to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, has been amply demonstrated by the Group's work.

We can only hope that the renewed interest and momentum generated by the Group of Governmental Experts will translate into action and the commencement of negotiations without further delay. It is my hope that the Group's report will enjoy wide readership, foster greater understanding of the key issues at play, and assist in generating the momentum and political resolve necessary to bridge any existing differences.

While the Group's discussions reinforced the expectation that the negotiation of such a treaty will be complex and lengthy, it also demonstrated that there is nothing substantive preventing the commencement of fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations, and that positions are not as divergent as originally thought or often portrayed. The time is therefore right for the Conference on Disarmament to overcome its obstacles and get to work negotiating a treaty that will genuinely contribute to making practical progress towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons and to non-proliferation in all its aspects. In view of that, I trust that delegations will support the draft resolution being advanced on this issue at this session (A/C.1/70/L.25), which, among other things, welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts and urges the commencement of negotiations without delay in the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me thank the Chair and colleagues once again for allowing me the opportunity to provide an overview of the Group's work. I hope it can positively contribute to the important deliberations that are taking place

under the Chair's able leadership of the First Committee and also, of course, in the Conference on Disarmament. I wish the Chair well in his work.

The Chair: I thank 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 for her statement. I would also like to thank technical services and the Government of Canada for making that introduction from across the globe possible.

In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting so as to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the introduction we just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 10.15 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

The Chair: The floor is open for the remaining speakers on the "Nuclear weapons" cluster, and I urge all speakers once again to kindly observe the time limit, in the collective interest of the Committee, namely, five minutes when speaking in the national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

Mr. Al Towaiya (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to reiterate once again, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, my confidence in your leadership, Sir, and your ability to successfully bring our Committee's work to a conclusion.

I would like to also express the support of the Group of Arab States for the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

The Arab Group welcomes the designation of 26 September as the International Day for the Complete Elimination of Nuclear Weapons as a tangible step towards achieving the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We also call upon the international community to begin negotiations on a comprehensive non-discriminatory treaty to prohibit the use, acquisition, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. A high-level international conference to review the progress achieved on nuclear disarmament must be held no later than 2018.

The Group of Arab States will continue its positive contributions to the global pursuit of nuclear

disarmament. We have actively participated in all multilateral disarmament forums, and all States members of the Arab Group have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subjected their nuclear facilities to the Comprehensive Safeguards System of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Group of Arab States expresses concern over the continued inability to achieve tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and the repeated failure to implement Decision 2 of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference on the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the 13 steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Nuclear-weapons States have avoided committing to any schedules or time frames to implement their international obligations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Our Group rejects the ongoing military mindset of the nuclear-weapons States, which allows for the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear States. In that context, our Group reiterates that the complete and final elimination of nuclear weapons, pursuant to article VI of the NPT, is the only safeguard against the use of those weapons.

The failure of States parties to the NPT to agree on an outcome document at the recent 2015 NPT Review Conference and the failure of nuclear-weapons States to uphold their commitments in the area of disarmament demand that we step up our collective efforts aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In that context and owing to the lack of implementation of the consensual decisions of the 2010 Review Conference, the Arab Group tried, during the recent Review Conference, to find a solution to the current situation through a proposal presented in the Arab working paper, which was also sponsored by the Non-Aligned Movement. However, that positive approach was not successful. The decision taken by the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada in that connection was, in fact, disappointing and violated the international consensus and prevented the adoption of an outcome document that included the Middle East.

We affirm that ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons is a collective and global responsibility. The Group of Arab States has upheld its part of the responsibility in that regard, and it now falls to other

parties to do the same. If they do not, the credibility of the NPT will be at risk, which will jeopardize the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

The Arab States support the necessity of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in all areas of the world, including the Middle East. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of taking practical and immediate measures aimed at ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. That is the objective of the annual Arab draft resolution entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”.

The Group of Arab States also expresses its concern with regard to the impact on the environment and security of Israel’s continued refusal to accede to the NPT.

Finally, our Group calls for universal accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the main pillar of the multilateral disarmament regime and crucial for achieving security.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): South Africa fully associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

As long as nuclear weapons exist, humankind will continue to face the threat of a catastrophe. Experience demonstrates that the immense, uncontrollable capability and indiscriminate nature of a nuclear-weapon detonation reach well beyond national borders, leaving a trail of death and destruction. That impact — including the longer-term humanitarian, environmental and socioeconomic consequences — will be with us for generations, together with the ever-increasing risk of a nuclear-weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design. The international community has overwhelmingly voiced its concern at this grave threat.

South Africa therefore welcomed the three International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons — convened respectively by Norway in March 2013, Mexico in February 2014, and Austria in December 2014 — and the compelling evidence presented at those Conferences. In addition, we also welcome the increasing number of States that have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge, which in particular urges all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under its article VI, and calls upon all States to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap with regard to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve that goal. We call upon all States to join the Humanitarian Pledge in order to achieve that ultimate goal.

The vast public resources diverted to nuclear weapons stand in stark contrast to the delivery of development assistance. Today, the costs associated with the maintenance of nuclear arsenals amount to roughly more than double the development assistance provided to Africa. Clearly, that state of affairs is neither acceptable nor sustainable in a world where the basic human needs of billions cannot be met.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, vertical and horizontal proliferation will persist. The continued development of new categories of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, together with the fact that nuclear weapons remain entrenched in the security doctrines of nuclear-weapon States and their allies, provides a clear indication that some countries continue to harbour aspirations for the indefinite retention of such weapons, contrary to their legal obligations and commitments.

All efforts must therefore be exerted to eliminate those threats. The only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination and the legally binding assurance that they will never be produced again. All States have a legitimate stake in and responsibility for nuclear disarmament. Therefore, South Africa believes that all of us — developed and developing, nuclear-weapon or non-nuclear-weapon States — have a contribution to make towards the construction of a framework for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, which should include clearly defined benchmarks and timelines backed by a strong system of verification.

South Africa is gravely concerned by the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference in 2015 to reach consensus on an outcome document. That has raised questions regarding the commitment of some States to the implementation of the agreements reached in 1995, 2000 and 2010 and of the legally binding obligations under the Treaty, particularly those related to the implementation of article VI, which calls for negotiations in good faith on legally binding effective

measures. Those obligations also include, among others, the commitments made towards deeper reductions in the number of nuclear weapons, reducing reliance on nuclear weapons in military doctrines, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the provision of legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. In that context, without a substantive outcome, the 2015 NPT Review Conference missed an opportunity that could have contributed to strengthening the Treaty. States parties should therefore redouble their efforts and implement their solemn commitments, including those made by the nuclear-weapon States, to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that nuclear weapons have no place in today's security environment. Instead of deterring conflict and war, as some allege, those weapons have remained a constant source of insecurity and a driver of proliferation. The humanitarian imperatives that underpin the need for their complete elimination demand a renewed commitment and determination of all to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. South Africa stands ready to contribute towards that end. Nuclear disarmament is not only a legal obligation, but also a moral imperative. In that regard, South Africa will be submitting a draft resolution entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", which we hope will be supported by all delegations.

The Chair: I would kindly ask all delegations conducting consultations in the Conference Room to kindly do so outside the Room so that speakers can be heard clearly. I thank delegations for their understanding. It is also a matter of respect.

Before proceeding further, members are kindly reminded that, as indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions is today at 12 noon. Delegations should make sure that they have submitted their draft resolutions and decisions by noon.

I now call on the representative of Australia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.46.

Mr. Quinn (Australia): Australia is committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, pursued in an effective, determined and pragmatic way.

For Australia, reducing the numbers of nuclear weapons in the world is not only consistent with international obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but is also a key requirement for making the world a safer place. It is unequivocally in all our security interests and in the interests of the very survival of humankind.

The disagreements among us are mainly over how best to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons. Australia has consistently argued that short-term fixes that do not engage those States that possess nuclear weapons are no substitute for the hard work necessary to achieve our shared goal of global zero. Attaining that goal will require high-level political will on the part of all countries, but in particular we need to find ways to get those States that have nuclear weapons to come to the table in a spirit of genuine compromise and with a preparedness to negotiate away those weapons in a process that contributes towards undiminished peace and security for all.

All States, especially the States with nuclear weapons, have a responsibility to help create an international environment where accelerated progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament is possible. We can help that process through concrete and practical measures, building block by building block, so as to ensure that real progress is achieved.

Australia and its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, regret that the 2015 NPT Review Conference, after so much hard work by many delegations, was unable to produce a consensus outcome. But we must not forget that previous consensus outcomes remain valid, including the final documents of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences and, most importantly, the 2010 NPT action plan. Their implementation in good faith by all States parties to the NPT is more crucial today than ever. In particular, as a key pragmatic step forward, Australia has consistently argued that transparency on the part of the nuclear-armed States with regard to their nuclear arsenals and related developments is crucial for building confidence and setting baselines from which progress on nuclear disarmament can be measured.

Australia welcomes the renewed focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. It is in recognition of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons that Australia has been so active in promoting effective disarmament and non-proliferation

over many years, and we must continue to work tirelessly for that cause.

We take a pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament, which is why we do not support a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Such a treaty simply would not result in the elimination of nuclear weapons. States will get rid of their nuclear arsenals only when they feel it is safe to do so, which is why we also need to address the security dimensions of why States possess nuclear weapons. Eliminating such weapons requires much greater trust, as well as new and more effective nuclear disarmament verification processes. In moving towards a world free of nuclear weapons, States will need assurance that those weapons have actually been eliminated and that their capabilities for developing new weapons are not being used to renew their arsenals.

We are collectively following a long and hard road. There are no short cuts to achieving our goal of eventual nuclear disarmament. The three logical next steps, however, are the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), addressing the technical problems of verifying nuclear disarmament, and beginning negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), as we discussed earlier this morning.

In that connection, Australia is pleased to introduce, together with Mexico and New Zealand, this year's draft resolution on the CTBT (A/C.1/70/L.46). With the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty just around the corner, it is more urgent than ever that it enter into force. Australia also welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT (see A/70/81) and looks forward to implementing its recommendations. The Group, in which Australia was privileged to participate, also constituted a useful confidence-building measure. Further work on an FMCT should also be viewed in that light.

Penultimately, let us also call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile development programmes. Those activities pose a threat to regional and international peace and security and are in defiance of Security Council resolutions and the other international obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Australia attaches great importance to the First Committee as a universal forum where we can harness positive developments and build support for practical and concrete steps to strengthen efforts on nuclear

disarmament and non-proliferation. Only through such efforts will we achieve the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Sierra Leone to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.55.

Mrs. Strasser-King (Sierra Leone): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. The Group aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on the threat posed to humanity by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. It therefore reiterates the urgent need for our world, including outer space, to be free of nuclear weapons, as their presence constitutes an existential threat to the planet, global peace and the future survival of humankind. Africa supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament as the utmost prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security.

It is the view of the African Group that nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority in the international community's efforts to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the overall objective of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Group therefore regrets the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference in 2015 to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite the concerted efforts of the non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly those in Africa.

In that context, the Group remains deeply concerned over the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament and the lack of progress by nuclear-weapon States towards accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their legal obligations, as provided in relevant international treaties and conventions. The Group will continue to highlight the threat posed to humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of the Treaty.

The Group welcomes the fact that the General Assembly has held plenary meetings for two years in a row to commemorate the International Day for the

Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and underscores the importance of resolution 69/58 as an integral part of the multilateral effort aimed at nuclear disarmament. The full implementation of that resolution, particularly through the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, will ensure concrete progress towards the objective of eliminating such weapons of mass destruction.

The African Group acknowledges the useful purposes served by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT and in addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. They enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament. The status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone provides a shield for the continent, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on its territory and by prohibiting the testing of those destructive weapons.

In that regard, the African Group restates its deep concern at the fact that the commitments and obligations of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the action plan set forth at the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have not been implemented as agreed. The Group is unequivocal in its disappointment at the failure to convene the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which should have been held in 2012. The 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package and was the basis upon which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. The Group therefore wishes to underscore the validity of those commitments and obligations and looks forward to their full implementation.

The African Group also stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States in that regard. The CTBT offers a hope of halting the further development or proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Group supports the international community in its commitment to promoting the CTBT, a treaty that could serve as a threshold for promoting

the process of nuclear disarmament, and encourages the remaining annex 2 countries, both nuclear-weapon States and those yet to accede to the NPT, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

The Group recognizes that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the sole competent authority for the verification of compliance with obligations under the respective safeguards agreements of member States. The Group expresses confidence in the impartiality and professionalism of the IAEA and rejects any attempt, in violation of its Statute, to politicize the Agency's work, including its technical cooperation programme.

In that context, the Group underlines the importance of the strict observance of the IAEA Statute and the relevant comprehensive safeguards agreements in conducting verification activities. Bearing in mind the Agency's responsibility to protect safeguards confidential information and given the unfortunate incidents in which such information has been leaked, the Group stresses the need to strengthen the regime for the protection of safeguards confidential information.

While we agree that the inalienable rights of all States party to the NPT to develop and research the production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be protected, the Group also calls upon all States to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, to accede to the Treaty without preconditions or any further undue or tactical delay, to promptly place all existing nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards and to conduct nuclear-related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime. The Group stresses the need to de-emphasize security dependence on nuclear weapons and considers any doctrine justifying their use to be unacceptable. The Group further supports, as a high priority, the call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to all non-nuclear-weapon States, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The African Group further reiterates its serious concern about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and continues to call on States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among others, and to take necessary measures to dismantle and renounce

the use of those weapons. The Group calls on the nuclear-weapon States to honourably respect their commitment to our collective pledge to protect and sustain our planet for succeeding generations. In that light, the Group welcomes the three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, convened in Norway, Mexico and Austria, to highlight the dangers of nuclear weapons to humanity. It is in that context that the Group strongly supports the call for a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, the only weapon of mass destruction not yet prohibited by an international legal instrument.

We appreciate the support of delegations for the African Group's draft resolution on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (A/C.1/70/L.55). The Group will remain constructively engaged with all Member States with a view to accomplishing the goal and objectives of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Chair: May I remind delegations to kindly limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking in their national capacity, and to seven minutes when speaking on behalf of groups of countries.

Mr. Al-Hajri (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to express anew our appreciation to the Chair and to participating delegations for their efforts. We affirm our continued cooperation with the Chair in our joint effort to achieve the results that we all desire.

Qatar subscribes to the statement made by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/70/PV.9) and to that to be made on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Nuclear disarmament has been a priority since the inception of the United Nations. That can be seen in the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 1(I)) and the outcome document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and, of course, the importance accorded by the international community to that subject.

The adoption in 1968 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was a landmark, as the Treaty is now a non-negotiable international legal instrument on nuclear disarmament. Fifty years have elapsed since that time, and yet the world has yet to draw benefit from the NPT. That is due to the inability of the NPT States parties to set a time frame for nuclear disarmament, in accordance

with article VI of the Treaty, and to the insistence of some intent on acquiring nuclear weapons, with all of the ensuing global dangers.

We concur with the majority of other delegations that the international aim of nuclear disarmament will never be achieved unless we create a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The adoption by the General Assembly by consensus of an annual resolution on the topic seems to confirm that premise. The resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference considered that issue to be a key pillar for the indefinite extension of the NPT. The continued imbalance in the area of nuclear weapons owing to the refusal of certain States to join the NPT and subject their nuclear arsenal to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards system makes the attainment of that goal a collective responsibility at the international level.

The challenges facing the Middle East demonstrate that the attainment of peace and security in the Middle East can be achieved only through the cooperation of all the States in the region and through international resolutions. Undoubtedly, the creation of a zone free of all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East will contribute to the achievement of the aforementioned goal. That is why we reiterate our disappointment that the 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to agree on a final document, and that the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has not yet been achieved. That disappointment is compounded by the phenomenon of terrorism and the danger that those frightful weapons might be used by terrorist groups, making it incumbent on us all to intensify international cooperation in order to avert that danger.

During the general debate in this Committee, we spoke of the importance that we attach to nuclear disarmament (see A/C.1/70/PV.5) as we continue to fulfil our legal obligations under the various international nuclear disarmament instruments, the NPT foremost among them, and to bolster international efforts aimed at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons.

Aware of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, we have endorsed the pledge declared by the Republic of Austria, host country of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We are keen to participate in all efforts aimed at curbing the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. As a part of our policy to achieve peace and security

in our region and the whole world, we will continue our efforts and our participation in all international, regional and national endeavours aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament.

We would also stress the responsible and peaceful development of nuclear energy programmes, as well as the need for comprehensive safeguard measures in cooperation with the IAEA. We attach great importance to the highest degree of peace and security, and to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in a world where such weapons pose a threat to all countries.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): We have had a turbulent year in the realm of nuclear diplomacy. It was Winston Churchill who said that success is not final and failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts. In 2015 we have seen successes, and we have seen setbacks. Right now we are casting our eye on ways forward.

To begin, let me draw the Committee's attention to a success. This summer marked a truly historic event—the E3+3 and Iran agreed on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran signed a Road Map for the Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues regarding Iran's Nuclear Programme. The fact that the parties managed to find a solid solution through negotiations shows the importance and strength of multilateral law and diplomacy in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. The final success of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action can be measured only by its full implementation, which is necessary to reassure the international community that Iran's nuclear programme is indeed of an exclusively peaceful nature. We therefore urge all parties to carry out their obligations under the agreement in a timely and diligent manner. It is important that Iran cooperate fully with the IAEA regarding the possible military dimension of its nuclear programme, as agreed in the Road Map. To facilitate the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Netherlands has committed to contributing €600,000 to the IAEA,

Unfortunately there were not only successes this year. The fact that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was unable to reach consensus on an outcome document was a great disappointment and a setback, especially as agreement seemed to be within reach and the nations involved seemed to agree on the ultimate objective of a world free of nuclear

weapons. However, that does not change the fact that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament structure and continues to deserve our full support. That also means the Netherlands remains fully committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Nuclear disarmament has been a long-standing priority for the Netherlands and will remain so. In our view, a step-by-step process, and the taking of practical and concrete measures while also pairing ambition with realism, constitute the best path towards a world without nuclear weapons. Realism does not imply taking a step back; in our view, it can also mean working harder and taking multiple steps at the same time. We share the disappointment with regard to the slow pace of nuclear disarmament and want to see more progress. The broad attention to the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons and the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna underline the need to do more.

Humanitarian considerations not only reinforce our objective of global zero, they also compel us, until we reach this goal, to do everything we can to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. For us, the key lies in integrating the findings of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons into nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation structures. To achieve those goals, international security and stability considerations cannot be dismissed. But that does not mean that the current international security situation is a reason to stop nuclear disarmament. In the past, there have been many instances when progress on disarmament was achieved under difficult circumstances, and when it was needed the most. The agreement with Iran showed once again that progress can be made in troubling times and between countries that have been adversaries for years.

Another piece of good news is related to the fissile material cut-off treaty. We are very pleased that 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 managed to produce a substantial consensus report (see A/70/81). We should continue to build on the momentum created by that report. The next logical step would indeed be the start of negotiations, preferably in the Conference on

Disarmament. Negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty is more urgent than ever as, after years of shrinking global stocks of fissile material, we may, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, again witness growth.

The new United States-led International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification is a constructive and necessary initiative that can help us to deal with important verification issues. Verification is a crucial element in nuclear disarmament, and the Netherlands will actively contribute to make this partnership a success.

A crucial factor in making further progress is establishing a dialogue; we have to discuss our differences with a view to finding a common way forward. With our Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) partners, we are committed to seeking such a dialogue, starting in the weeks and months to come with other groupings, individual countries and civil society.

The NPDI further wants to enhance reporting on nuclear disarmament and verification. We support the option of setting up a wider dialogue on nuclear disarmament by establishing an open-ended working group, as was also proposed at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Apart from possible further steps in nuclear disarmament, it would also be a good forum to discuss the humanitarian aspects of the use of nuclear weapons. We realize that this issue has inspired diverging views, but we hope that this option can fuel a constructive and honest dialogue on how to move forward.

A zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East remains a desirable goal. We regret that the zone was behind the failure to reach consensus at the Review Conference and urge States in the region to continue consultations on ways forward. All States with nuclear weapons, inside or outside the NPT, can take immediate concrete disarmament measures —

The Chair: I apologize to the representative of the Netherlands, and would kindly ask him to adhere to the agreed time limit in the interest of all present.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): I will conclude. Nuclear-weapon States can start reducing and ultimately eliminating all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. Significant progress has been made with regard to nuclear security. However, much

work remains to be done, and we look forward to the final Nuclear Security Summit in the United States to further deal with the issue.

As the current coordinator of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Netherlands is planning to host a high-level meeting to celebrate the tenth anniversary of that successful initiative in the first half of next year in order to discuss current developments and future initiatives. The courage to continue counts. We will make every effort to make progress and stand ready to work with others.

Mrs. Hrdá (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic expresses its enduring support for universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and to full compliance with the obligations under the Treaty. Although we were rather disappointed with the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons earlier this year, we are convinced that the NPT remains indispensable for our collective security and that it will continue to serve as a fundamental instrument for the advancement of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The consensual 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan includes a number of important tasks that have yet to be completed. The validity of the action plan remains unchanged and unchallenged. Its implementation is our collective responsibility, which should be honoured by all States parties.

While we regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on an outcome document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, we strongly hope that work towards the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East will be resumed in a constructive, inclusive and consensus-based manner. It is necessary to identify opportunities for regional dialogue and to encourage a solution that takes into consideration the legitimate interests of all States in the region. We appreciate the efforts of the facilitator, Mr. Jaakko Laajava, and those of his team in that regard.

We call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so without delay. Bearing in mind the outcome of the latest Article XIV Conference and the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature, we would like to reaffirm our support for the Treaty's entry into force.

In parallel, we need to advance on our non-proliferation objectives, including strengthened

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. We welcomed the historic agreement of 14 July between the E3+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Its full implementation, facilitated by the Additional Protocol to Iran's safeguards agreement, will provide the international community with the necessary assurances as to the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. It is also important to ensure that Iran cooperates fully with the Agency on the clarification of all outstanding issues, including a possible military dimension, as agreed on in the road map signed by the IAEA and Iran.

The Czech Republic has repeatedly condemned the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as its threats to carry out other such tests. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes and to return to the principles of the NPT and IAEA safeguards without delay. We support the essential role of the IAEA in verifying the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Czech Republic has been a steadfast supporter of the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We have actively participated in and contributed financially to the Peaceful Uses Initiative under the auspices of the IAEA, which is a central institution for this area. We are convinced that the responsible exercise of the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy can yield numerous societal benefits in non-energy nuclear applications, such as advancements in cancer therapy, disease control, water treatment, food safety, nutrition and so forth.

Like the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations, we consider that launching and concluding negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices should be a high priority. Our expert participated actively in 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, and contributed to the adoption of its substantive consensus report (see A/70/81). We are confident that the recommendations presented to the Secretary-General on all the key aspects of a treaty will make the future negotiators' task much easier, and we

welcome the fact that the Chair of the Group was given the opportunity to present the outcome of the Group's work to the members of the First Committee today.

In his 2009 "Prague agenda" speech, President Obama set out an ambitious vision of a world without nuclear weapons, which was followed by the signing of the New START Treaty in Prague in 2010. In the past five years, Prague has established itself as a venue for taking stock of issues related to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, nuclear security and arms control. Among other things, the fifth Prague Agenda Conference, which took place just last week with the participation of High Representative Kim Won-soo as a keynote speaker, explored the issues of lessons learned from the NPT and its future prospects, emerging nuclear Powers, nuclear deterrence and the Humanitarian Initiative. The Czech Republic will continue to host these conferences in order to provide a space for the discussion of topical issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria): Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in the Committee, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair, as well as the other members of the Bureau. I would also like to commend the previous Chair, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray of Jamaica, for his excellent stewardship. Mr. Chair, you can count on my delegation's full support in your efforts to steer our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

This year has been marked by many developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I would like to start with the historic agreement reached by the E3+3 and Iran on 14 July. The adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action created a new opportunity for improving regional stability and international security. We look forward to the implementation of its provisions, in which the International Atomic Energy Agency will play an indispensable role in verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments.

This year also marks the forty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Despite the inability of States parties to reach consensus on a final document during their 2015 Review Conference, the Treaty remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the framework for nuclear

disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The continuing efforts to focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons are closely linked to concerns about the consequences for humankind of a nuclear weapon detonation or a terrorist attack involving fissile material. That is why it is important to spread awareness of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons across the board. At the same time, the elimination of nuclear weapons will be possible only through the substantive and constructive engagement of all States that possess them. Advancing nuclear disarmament requires our joint efforts.

A shared understanding of the necessary steps can be built only through an inclusive and comprehensive discussion and with the substantive participation of the nuclear-weapon States. All these steps will strengthen the NPT regime in line with the obligations set out in article VI of the Treaty, and will contribute towards achieving its ultimate goal — a world without nuclear weapons. We must act in a sustainable, realistic and responsible manner. Creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons requires that we take both humanitarian and security considerations into account. In that regard, we align ourselves with the statement on the issue of humanitarian consequences to be delivered tomorrow by the representative of Australia.

Bulgaria supports a constructive, realistic and gradual approach based on practical and implementable measures, building-blocks that can strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Such practical steps could include overcoming the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, including through its enlargement; starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty; and bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force. In that regard, we welcome the report 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 (see A/70/81), and we hope that it will help to advance the prospects for commencing negotiations.

We remain convinced that ensuring that the CTBT enters into force as soon as possible is a crucial step in furthering the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. That was emphasized by all the participants in the Conference on Facilitating the

Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which took place less than a month ago here in New York.

Finally, Bulgaria trusts that shared efforts driven by the political will of all United Nations Members have the potential to bring us closer to the ultimate goal, a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Chair: Elsewhere in this building, there is a beautiful mosaic by Norman Rockwell that says “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. I would like to ask all the delegations that are currently conducting consultations in this conference room to do so outside, out of respect for the next speaker.

Ms. Nolan (Ireland): I will read an edited version of my text, the full version of which has been posted.

Ireland aligns itself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC). As a member of the NAC, Ireland wants to see real momentum injected into the nuclear disarmament pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We recognize the call for action that has been voiced by an overwhelming majority in the First Committee. The NAC’s draft resolution on ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world (A/C.1/70/L.40) gives expression to our hope for future meaningful progress towards disarmament objectives.

Ireland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Charles Flanagan, addressing the General Assembly at its seventieth session (see A/70/PV.22), reaffirmed our abiding commitment to full implementation of the NPT. He also conveyed our deep disappointment at the lack of an outcome at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, held in May. Not one nuclear weapon has been disarmed under the NPT or as part of any multilateral process, and there are no structures or effective measures in place for that to happen. In the circumstances, it is only natural and right to seek new approaches than can enhance our understanding, stimulate debate and provoke action.

That the humanitarian issue has come to the fore again now should not surprise anyone. Indeed, the only mystery is why it has not always remained our guiding principle. The humanitarian imperative was, after all, what lay behind the initial adoption of the NPT itself. It is the reason the NPT exists. What is “humanitarian” but that which relates to all humankind? What should

our greatest driving force be if not the preservation and protection of life itself?

Our understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian impact associated with any use of nuclear weapons has developed considerably in recent years. I would like to once again pay tribute to our colleagues in Mexico, Norway and Austria for the conferences they have hosted on the subject. Ireland also values the role played by civil society, particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross, in this broadening and deepening of our understanding. Furthermore, the impossibility of any realistic response capacity at either the national or international level has been cast into stark relief. We would therefore like to ask Member States to give favourable consideration to the draft resolution on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/70/L.37) that was introduced by our European Union colleague Austria (see A/C.1/70/PV.9) and of which Ireland is pleased to be a sponsor.

In line with our desire to be constructive and to look forward rather than back, my delegation is also pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.13, introduced by Mexico (see A/C.1/70/PV.9), on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. As a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, it is only right that the open-ended working group that the draft resolution proposes should operate by its rules of procedure and not be bound by consensus. However, we are confident that all parties can work towards a successful outcome. We would welcome the active involvement of civil society and academia to bring fresh thinking and expertise to the discussion, and, of course, we need and value the engagement of the nuclear-weapon States.

I would like to say how heartening it was to see so many NPT States parties united in agreeing to a Humanitarian Pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons at the recent Review Conference. I would like to draw attention to draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.38 on the subject, introduced by Austria (see A/C.1/70/PV.9), of which Ireland is pleased to be a sponsor. I hope that delegations will once again demonstrate our shared commitment to that pledge and support it by adopting the draft resolution.

During our general debate, I took careful note of the moving and powerful messages conveyed by representatives of many developing countries and of countries of the Group of African States. I share their

concerns about the impact of any potential detonation on their already fragile circumstances, and their dismay at the vast financial resources allocated by some States to the modernization of their nuclear arsenals, at a time when 850 million people are still suffering from hunger, 8,000 children die every day of malnutrition, and 800 women die each day of causes related to pregnancy or childbirth. Is it not worth asking ourselves that if the resources currently devoted to the modernization and maintenance of nuclear weapons were freed up, what greater good might they be used for in the world?

I warmly commend the South African delegation for introducing at our 9th meeting a draft resolution that highlights the ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world. That ambitious draft resolution, of which we are a sponsor, matches the ambition of the vast majority of States to look beyond narrow interests and doctrines and instead to prioritize the advancement of human development globally. My delegation would like to highlight the draft resolution's explicit recognition of the vital role that women should play in disarmament negotiations, a welcome and consistent theme during this session.

Given a rapidly changing world, the pace of innovation and a level of connectivity across the planet that is greater than ever before, surely the time has come to recognize that all challenges are now global in nature and that what happens to one affects all. The potential for a nuclear detonation — whether on purpose or by accident — can only add to the threat to human security and the safety of our planet. If we want the best future for our people, we must work constructively together to secure the peace, safety and security of our world, and the best way to do that is to fulfil our joint obligations and start implementing the NPT as originally intended. Every time we defer that goal, we fail our peoples and continue to put them at risk. Knowing all that we know now, let us redouble our efforts to ensure that such weapons are never used again under any circumstances, and that the process begins in earnest to put all nuclear weapons beyond use for good.

Mr. Sætre (Norway): A world free of nuclear weapons is a vision that Norway shares with a majority of other States. Seventy years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we must recognize that this vision cannot be realized without real commitment from the world community, from those States that have nuclear weapons and those that have none. We need a realistic, constructive approach to the issue. We should make full

use of the opportunities and tools at our disposal. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the fundamental cornerstone of those efforts.

There have been a number of positive developments. We congratulate the P5+1, Iran and the European Union on reaching a historic and verifiable long-term agreement. We are pleased to see that the outcome of the 2013 Oslo Conference on a facts-based approach to humanitarian consequences has become a key component of the global disarmament agenda. The progress on developing tools for nuclear disarmament verification adds another important dimension to the discussion on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Nuclear Security Summit process has contributed substantially to nuclear security and to preventing terrorists from acquiring fissile material, and we welcome the continued implementation of the New START Treaty by the United States and the Russian Federation.

However, there have also been some very disappointing developments, and we are seeing stalemates in certain areas. This spring, the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT was unable to reach consensus on an outcome document. The Conference on Disarmament still has not agreed on a programme of work and has in reality ceased to function as an arena for advancing nuclear disarmament. The prospects for the formal entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty do not look good. Russia has not yet responded positively to the proposal of the United States to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads by an additional one-third, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing its highly regrettable development of nuclear weapons and missiles.

One of the trends underlying those negative developments seems to be a continued and growing polarization of the global debate on nuclear disarmament. The goal of the debates in the multilateral forums must be to bring us closer to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is important to ask ourselves what it is that serves our common security. From a Norwegian perspective, our common security would be best served by adhering to the fundamental non-proliferation and disarmament norms enshrined in the NPT. We consider the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to be a road map to a safer world without nuclear weapons.

All nuclear-weapon States have a particular responsibility when it comes to nuclear disarmament and preventing further proliferation. Without their constructive engagement, we will get nowhere on those issues. Nevertheless, every State in the world has a responsibility to work to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons, and Norway will continue to do its part in conceptual and political terms, as well as practically and financially.

Our debates here in the First Committee take place against a backdrop of continuing international tensions, making the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation all the more pressing. Many of the instruments and legal frameworks aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and preventing further proliferation are already in place. We must make sure that they are adhered to and implemented, and we urge those States that have not yet signed and ratified them to do so, which would be a very concrete step towards the ultimate goal of a safe and secure world without nuclear weapons.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): While the international community continues to face nuclear-related security challenges, most of them are rooted in a lack of confidence and compromise, making progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues increasingly difficult and overshadowing the positive developments that do continue to occur.

It is deeply regrettable that a lack of compromise caused the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to end without an agreed final document. While unfortunate, however, it in no way represents a weakening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which continues to form the bedrock of the international regime aimed at advancing nuclear disarmament. Nor does it invalidate the 2010 action plan, which remains our single best path to strengthening all three pillars of the NPT. Canada is committed to continuing to work with all of its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) to advance those commitments.

(spoke in French)

Regional and international security continue to be imperiled by a lack of respect for their nuclear non-proliferation obligations on the part of North Korea and Syria. It remains to be seen whether those States will fully and verifiably respect their commitments while cooperating transparently with the International

Atomic Energy Agency. North Korea's proliferation activities continue to represent a serious threat to regional and global peace and security. We call on every State to ensure that the relevant United Nations sanctions are fully implemented and to put pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. The world will be a significantly safer place when North Korea is once again a State party to the NPT and respects its safeguards agreement.

Regarding Iran, Canada appreciates the efforts of the P5+1 to reach an agreement aimed at ensuring that the Iranian nuclear programme serves exclusively peaceful purposes and that Iran is prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons. However, we will judge Iran by its deeds rather than just its words.

With regard to European security, Canada reiterates its condemnation of Russia's annexation of Crimea and its current military presence in eastern Ukraine. We also call on Russia to end its development of cruise missiles banned under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

(spoke in English)

While the number of nuclear warheads has been drastically reduced from their levels at the height of the Cold War, much more can be done to bolster international confidence in nuclear-weapon States' commitments to further reducing their nuclear arsenals, their alert levels and the role of such weapons in defence doctrines. We strongly encourage all NPT States parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to increase their transparency concerning their fulfilment of their NPT commitments. The NPDI's draft reporting forms for both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States can help to achieve that goal. The launch of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification is also a welcome effort to increase transparency and confidence among NPT States parties.

Canada remains convinced that progress on nuclear disarmament requires that we take into account both the humanitarian and strategic dimensions of nuclear weapons. Disarmament, however, does not and cannot take place in a vacuum. We need to remain mindful of the security context and the challenges that must be overcome to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Canada is convinced that a fissile material cut-off treaty would represent a tremendous leap forward for

both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is vital that the international community immediately launch negotiations to make such a legal instrument a reality. Canada will once again introduce a draft resolution on the subject this year, and we welcome constructive views from all delegations. We hope we can count on broad support.

Diplomacy and compromise are the tools we have to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is incumbent on us now to take up both those tools in order to overcome the remaining challenges and achieve the greater peace and security that we all desire and that the world deserves.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): The global struggle to regulate nuclear weapons by legal, normative and political means has been largely perceived as unsuccessful. Despite the reductions that have taken place in the number of nuclear weapons since the end of the Cold War, the pace has been slow and the scale modest. Progress towards multilateral nuclear disarmament is being resisted by a handful of nuclear-weapon States. Instead of fulfilling their legal disarmament obligations, those States have pursued non-proliferation almost exclusively. That gap in legality and reality has eroded the world's faith in the mutually reinforcing nature of those processes.

Close to 30 States that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and that are members of nuclear-armed alliances continue to rely robustly on nuclear weapons, some of them even housing tactical nuclear weapons on their territories. Even as they enjoy the shelter of the nuclear umbrella, they call on others to eschew such means to defend themselves in the face of real security threats. Some of them have concluded discriminatory nuclear cooperation agreements and helped to grant waivers from long-held non-proliferation principles. Such policies and actions are obviously driven by self-serving strategic, security, political and commercial considerations. Not surprisingly, the pursuit of such double standards has engendered a wide sense of dissatisfaction in the international community, including my country.

Pakistan shares the concerns and anxieties associated with the potential humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We have therefore participated in and contributed to the discourse during all three conferences that have been held on the subject. We also believe that the subject of nuclear weapons, while

relevant and important, cannot be exclusively reduced to the paradigm of the humanitarian dimension. It is important to recognize the context and motivation of each State possessing nuclear weapons. In the case of Pakistan, our security was qualitatively challenged by the introduction of nuclear weapons in our region. We were left with no option but to acquire a credible nuclear deterrent capability to defend ourselves, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. I would also like to remind the Committee that for nearly a quarter of a century Pakistan advocated for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. This very Committee adopted resolutions to that effect until they were defied, without any cost, and our region was nuclearized once again.

Pakistan believes firmly in the universally acknowledged principle of the right of every State to equal security. It is also vital to address the motives that drive States to acquire weapons, including nuclear weapons, to defend themselves. The members of the Non-Aligned Movement prefer, and we support, a direct and comprehensive approach to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

Progress towards nuclear disarmament is being delayed by some who wish to divert the focus of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to partial non-proliferation measures such as a fissile material cut-off treaty. The claims of some delegations that such a treaty would put a quantitative cap on nuclear weapons are false. The reasons are self evident, because the vast stockpiles of such material, coupled with its continued unsafeguarded production for civilian and non-explosive military purposes, provide a ready reserve of fissile material that can be weaponized at will. There is no provision in the treaty favoured by those States that would constrain a quantitative or qualitative increase in nuclear weapons.

We wish to reiterate that the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty was an ill-conceived experiment. It failed to produce any consensus recommendation worth any substance, including on the very objectives and scope of the treaty. The Group simply duplicated the CD's work in a non-inclusive body, without bringing any added value to that issue. Pakistan therefore is not in a position to accept any conclusion or recommendation produced by the Group, including the assertion that the report can form the basis for further consideration of the fissile material cut-off treaty issue by the CD.

Pakistan recently presented a working paper in the CD on the elements of a fissile material treaty that reflects the required balance between the disarmament and non-proliferation goals of such a treaty. I invite all Member States to consider this paper, which can provide a way forward for furthering nuclear disarmament agenda. To highlight a few elements, I would like to underscore that we stated in our paper that a balanced fissile material cut-off treaty should be rooted in the established principles of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, including and especially that of undiminished security. The treaty should cover past production or existing stockpiles of fissile materials in order to address the asymmetries in fissile material holdings. It should be non-discriminatory in nature. All States parties should assume equal obligations under the treaty without any preferential treatment for any category of States. The treaty should provide for a robust verification mechanism. It should promote both regional and global stability. It should not effect in any way the right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It should be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

We wish to reiterate that the CD should not be made hostage to one issue. Equal attention is essential for the commencement of negotiations on other issues on the Conference's agenda, including nuclear disarmament — the *raison d'être* of the CD — negative security assurances and the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. We await hearing any argument against negotiations on those agenda items based on the security interests of States. We and many others believe that the issue of negative security assurances is ripe for negotiations at the CD and will contribute to easing current strains on the wider disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

During this session, Pakistan will be presenting its traditional draft resolution on negative security assurances on behalf of a large number of sponsoring countries. We look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution with the widest possible support.

Mr. Varma (India): India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

We support the Non-Aligned Movement proposal for a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention to be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that achieving nuclear disarmament requires a step by step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. There is a need for dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

As a responsible nuclear Power, India has a policy of credible minimum nuclear deterrence based on a no-first-use posture and the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. India's position on the NPT is well known and needs no reiteration. There is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a fissile material cut-off treaty that meets India's national security interests.

The three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo, Nayarit in Mexico, and Vienna, generated considerable interest in reinvigorating international efforts to address the most serious threat to the survival of humankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons. India participated in those meetings in the hope that they would help generate momentum for increased restraints on the use of such weapons and thereby correct an imbalance in the international legal discourse that has focused almost exclusively on restraints on possession.

In that regard, we would like to recall that, in 1962, there were two resolutions before the General Assembly: one on restraints on the use of nuclear weapons, which was supported largely by countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the other on the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons, which was supported by Ireland. The second resolution attained support and ultimately became the basis for the NPT, but we would like to emphasize that there is nothing in the NPT that refers to restraints on the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, it has been our consistent position that the process should be inclusive and do no harm to the international disarmament machinery and, in terms of substance, promote genuine progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. Current indications are that on both counts the results are far less than expected, and it is a matter of regret that some of the proposals submitted

to the Committee this year have deepened differences instead of bridging them.

India would like to present, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.21, on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. First introduced in 1982, this is one of the long-standing resolutions in the First Committee and reflects our belief that a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons will contribute to the process of the step-by-step delegitimization of nuclear weapons and create a favourable climate for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. As such, it is firmly anchored in the humanitarian tradition of nuclear disarmament and has for many years enjoyed the support of a vast majority of Member States in this Committee.

However, some Member States, which have taken the lead on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, continue to vote against this text. There is a serious credibility gap in the positions of those who are quick to embrace the humanitarian discourse but, strangely enough, oppose restraints on the use of nuclear weapons by voting against the text. We appeal to them and urge them to reconsider their position and narrow the yawning gap between the precept and practice that is currently difficult to ignore. The First Committee will be watching how those five or six delegations vote on the Indian resolution this year.

Draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.20, on reducing nuclear danger, highlights the need for a review of nuclear doctrines and the need for steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through the de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. We welcome the greater resonance in the international community on the objectives of the draft resolution of avoiding the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

Draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.19, entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”, which has enjoyed strong support and a large number of sponsors, reflects the continuing concerns of the international community with respect to the risks posed by terrorists gaining access to weapons of mass destruction and sensitive materials and technologies. The draft resolution enumerates a number of measures at the national and international levels to address that threat. We hope that the First Committee will adopt that draft resolution by consensus.

We also request that the full text of our statement be posted on QuickFirst.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): The discussion of nuclear disarmament and proliferation issues is of essential importance to peace and security for all of us. We should remind ourselves time and time again of our joint goal: a safer and more secure world with fewer and, ultimately, no nuclear weapons. One very good example of what can be achieved if all parties concerned demonstrate the necessary political will is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between Iran and the E3+3 in July. Diplomatic solutions do work.

Unfortunately, with regard to the other major non-proliferation crisis, there is no progress to report. Germany condemns in the strongest possible terms North Korea’s ongoing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. Also, Syria must be urged to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

With regard to this year’s Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is our view that even though we did not agree on a final document, the NPT remains the indispensable cornerstone of the international security architecture and a source of peaceful cooperation between its members. Few treaties have contributed in such a substantial manner to making this world a safer place. While it is not perfect, it continues to be the best solution for pursuing nuclear disarmament. Therefore, throughout the work of the First Committee we should refrain from any action that could diminish the value of the Treaty.

The 2010 action plan remains valid and should be fully implemented. It is obvious that the plan still offers benchmarks for the years to come by providing concrete guidelines for the next steps to take.

Germany shares the assessment that more should and could be done. Given that there are still more than 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world, we need to push harder for progress to achieve the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, in line with article VI of the NPT. Against this backdrop, Germany welcomes the ongoing successful implementation of the New START Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation. However, a new disarmament round between the United States of America and the Russian Federation should begin as soon as practicable. This new round should include substrategic nuclear weapons. Germany appreciates that the offer made by

President Obama in Berlin is still on the table, despite the changing security environment. Germany calls upon the Russian Federation to respond constructively to President Obama's nuclear arms control initiative.

Germany shares the concern of those who want to see the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enter into force sooner rather than later. In the twenty-first century, there is neither space nor any reason for nuclear tests. The existing moratoriums on testing are welcome, but a legally binding treaty is urgently needed.

Germany supports efforts to launch negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, preferably in the Conference on Disarmament, but we are also open for the use of other forums. Germany agrees that negotiations should begin without further delay. The work of the Group of Governmental Experts provides an excellent basis. Furthermore, the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification provides us with the opportunity to advance knowledge and develop skills that will be essential for verifying multilateral nuclear disarmament.

In the context of non-proliferation, Germany supports the valuable work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its safeguards system. Germany calls upon all States that are working with nuclear energy and have not yet done so to negotiate and ratify an additional protocol with the IAEA as soon as possible.

Germany welcomes the debate on the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The three conferences, in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna, reminded us, as did the commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of the many reasons why a nuclear weapon should never be used again. It is these humanitarian considerations that underpin all our efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

At the same time, events over the past year have led to harsher security environment and reminded us that nuclear disarmament does not take place in a vacuum. Nuclear weapons can be abolished only as a result of negotiations leading to a verifiable action on the ground. Mutual trust between partners is the necessary condition for further progress. It is not realistic to expect nuclear disarmament to advance without engaging those States possessing nuclear weapons.

The debate about nuclear weapons has a humanitarian, but also a security dimension, which

cannot be ignored. We should take every opportunity to resume dialogue and engage constructively. This could be achieved, inter alia, by establishing an inclusive, open-ended working group.

Mr. Kang Myong Choi (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The twenty-first century arms race has been characterized by a qualitative improvement in weapons rather than a quantitative superiority. A policy of world domination through the development of highly advanced technology and the indefinite possession of nuclear arsenals is being blatantly pursued. The nuclear doctrine implying pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons is getting close to the red line in a manner that is historically unprecedented, even when taking into account the Cold War era.

Today's reality is that the threat of pre-emptive nuclear attack against other countries is being translated into practice; it is not just confined to words. That fact is clearly evidenced by the designation of certain countries as targets of a nuclear pre-emptive strike and the undisguised conduct of continuous military exercises in the context of a nuclear-war plan, in defiance of opposition worldwide. In particular, the modernization of nuclear weapons and the accelerated deployment of global missile-defence systems by the world's largest nuclear-weapon State give rise to a new nuclear arms race.

More than this, there have been irregular and manipulative attempts in the international disarmament arena to scuttle nuclear disarmament, which heretofore has been the highest priority, and to focus on nuclear non-proliferation instead. Some nuclear-weapon States are against the total elimination of nuclear weapons and seek to possess such weapons indefinitely, while attempting to use the non-proliferation issue as a pretext to attack sovereign States. One nuclear-weapon State has even dismantled the façade of its commitment to building a world without nuclear weapons by resorting to hostile attempts to overthrow other countries' social systems under the pretext of non-proliferation.

It is indisputable that nuclear disarmament is the highest-priority task directly related to world peace, security and the survival of humankind and that the best guarantee of nuclear non-proliferation is the accomplishment of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Proceeding from this, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea supports the calls of a majority of States Members of the United

Nations for the urgent commencement of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The goal of nuclear disarmament will be realized only when complete and total elimination of all nuclear arsenals on the globe is accomplished.

In order to create conditions conducive to accomplishing the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons, the countries that possess the largest nuclear arsenals should take the lead in abolishing nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible manner. The commitment of nuclear-weapon States to giving negative security assurances is important to ensuring the survival of non-nuclear-weapon States and accelerating progress in nuclear disarmament.

Non-nuclear-weapon States demand that nuclear-weapon States commit to the non-use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances through unconditional and legally binding security assurances. Such demands are legitimate, and non-nuclear-weapon States have the right to unconditional security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reaffirms its position that nuclear-weapon States should refrain from nuclear threats and give unequivocal negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States. For the present, nuclear-weapon States should put into practice such measures and actions as relinquishing any nuclear doctrine that implies the use of a pre-emptive nuclear strike, the elimination of nuclear threats to other countries, the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons deployed in foreign territories, and the removal of the nuclear umbrella for their allies.

The nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea serves the purpose of deterring aggression and attack against the Republic, safeguarding the security of the nation and defending regional peace and security. The nuclear deterrent does not therefore constitute any threat to non-nuclear-weapon States that do not take part in acts of aggression or attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Out of its noble sense of responsibility, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will engage actively, as it has in the past, in the global efforts aimed at realizing nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Jinga (Romania): Mr. Chair, since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor in the current session, I would like to congratulate you on assuming

the chairmanship of the First Committee and to extend our congratulations to our other colleagues in the Bureau. I can assure you of Romania's full support as you continue to ably steer our debates in the coming weeks.

In the interest of time, I will limit my remarks to a few points of particular interest for my delegation.

Romania remains strongly committed to effective multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms. Consequently, we believe the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the foundation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. In order to guarantee security for all, the entire international community must recommit itself to fully respecting and implementing international law, particularly the provisions of the still-indispensable NPT.

As a member of the Bureau of the 2015 NPT Review Conference and Chair of Main Committee II, Romania tirelessly worked together with States parties and the other members of the Review Conference Bureau to ensure the adoption of an outcome document on the 22 May this year. The Review Conference fell short of doing that, but the result should not overshadow the process. It allowed for substantial exchange among the States parties, including by identifying an important middle ground for future compromise, as was apparent in the working documents that were presented by the respective Chairs of each of the three Main Committees. There is real room for common understanding and compromise, which might not signify a perfect outcome, but it is one that all of us together can work with and use constructively to bridge divisions.

In the same vein, we are concerned about the developments intended only to broaden the gap in approaches towards a common goal, such as achieving nuclear disarmament while strengthening the non-proliferation regime. The NPT charts a clear path, and we fail to see any other viable options. The NPT is important to all of us.

As set forth in the final document adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), the only disarmament negotiations forum is the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Besides the CD, the only other nuclear disarmament forum to be created by an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations is the NPT. In this context, we have yet to be convinced

of the existence of a so-called legal gap, while, it is true, we are quite aware of the existing and widening political gap.

Romania aligns itself for the first time with the statement made earlier by the representative of Australia on the humanitarian consequences, and we would like to reaffirm our deeply held conviction that nuclear disarmament discussions and negotiations cannot be successful unless they are truly inclusive and take into consideration concerns of all States involved in the process, as well as the security dimension.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

Like others, we also believe that the entire international community shares the responsibility for producing concrete results in achieving the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore strongly support all initiatives intended to kickstart the work of the CD or which support such a course of action in any way. We are reluctant to endorse proposals and resolutions that will only harden divergent views, forge discord and give rise to misunderstandings.

Only good faith and continuous dialogue can bring about progress. We firmly believe the First Committee has the potential to engender a constructive spirit and to elaborate practical, pragmatic measures for nuclear disarmament in an inclusive manner and in full respect of the sovereignty and security concerns of all States, and keeping in mind their obligations.

In the meantime, we are looking forward to greater reductions in nuclear arsenals, and we welcome the initiatives that have been proposed in this respect. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Romania will continue to do its part through practical steps to support the international security architecture and the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Romania has always been guided by its international legal obligations and will continue to fully abide by international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We welcome the developments earlier this year that led to a historic agreement forged in Vienna, among the E3+3, the European Union and Iran, namely, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as well as the road map between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran. Both the JCPOA and the road map are concrete evidence that diplomacy and negotiations are effective tools for ensuring enhanced security for all. In this regard, it is also important that

Iran continue to fully cooperate with the IAEA to bring to light the possible military dimension, in order to reassure the international community of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

I would like to restate in this forum our conviction that the developments over the past several years have underscored the critical role of the Additional Protocol and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements in contributing to the strengthening of the IAEA's capacity to detect and respond to non-compliance with safeguards obligations. Romania fully supports their universalization without delay. Romania also supports the right of any State to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, provided that non-proliferation principles are upheld and that safety and security conditions are entirely met. Maintaining the balance between rights and obligations envisaged in the NPT is essential.

In terms of our national nuclear programme, we count on solid domestic legislation regarding nuclear security, as Romania is party to all relevant legal instruments in the field. Romania also participated in the Nuclear Security Summits held in Seoul in 2012 and in The Hague last year, which set forth important steps to take towards securing nuclear material in the world.

In conclusion, I assure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's desire to be an active participant in all relevant discussions with the aim of strengthening multilateral cooperation in this forum and with a view to further consolidating the international security architecture.

Ms. Grinberga (Latvia): First of all, we would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We would like to assure you of the full cooperation of the Latvian delegation.

Latvia welcomes the historic agreement between the E3+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in conformity with the principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The agreement demonstrates the power of the international community's joint diplomatic efforts. Latvia believes that if the agreement is implemented completely and in a timely manner, it will strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts in the long term.

Latvia would like to strongly highlight the NPT as the cornerstone of our approach to global nuclear

non-proliferation and disarmament. The NPT has led the way towards progress in the past through the Treaty's three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The overall goals of the three pillars of the Treaty are and will continue to be relevant. At each of the NPT Review Conferences, States parties have agreed on complementary documents that provide detailed analyses of the overarching goals of the three pillars and give us somewhat concrete guidance on what steps should be taken.

Of the documents that have come out of past NPT Review Conferences, we would like to highlight the 2010 NPT action plan, which is substantive, balanced and extensive. The goals of the 2010 action plan are still relevant and can be achieved only through the comprehensive implementation of the steps outlined in the plan. Latvia urges States to continue to follow step-by-step implementation of the plan. We would therefore like to stress that a step-by-step approach does not mean that an action can be implemented only after another has been concluded. The process is dynamic and multidimensional.

We believe that efforts must be dedicated not only to fostering the substantive implementation of the Treaty but also to strengthening the NPT's intersessional process. While we understand that political factors contributed to a great extent to the inability to reach consensus on an outcome document for the 2015 Review Conference, a more effective intersessional process could perhaps contribute to dealing more effectively with substantive challenges in future. Latvia believes that there is added value in discussing possible ways to strengthen the link between the Preparatory Committees and the Review Conference. A stronger intersessional link could help decrease the accumulated pressure related to the amount of substantive work to be carried out by the Review Conference at the end of a cycle.

As outlined previously, Latvia would support a discussion on strengthening the NPT intersessional process. We also support bilateral and multilateral efforts that advance the substantive goals of the NPT. These efforts include but are not limited to the P5 process, the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and others.

We place particular importance on the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We also support the immediate commencement

of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material, as well as, in general, the renewal of multilateral efforts and negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, we would like to encourage current and possible future States participating in the NPT to bear its past merits in mind and to continue step-by-step efforts to achieve the goals enshrined in the NPT in all of its three pillars. We strongly believe that a continued substantive and balanced implementation of the provisions of the NPT and the 2010 action plan, as well as work on confidence-building measures and transparency, will eventually lead to the creation of a safer world with undiminished security for all.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Despite being criticized for failure to deliver concrete results, the disarmament community achieved a landmark success on 14 July. The conclusion of the agreement between the E3+3 and Iran on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in full conformity with the principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is an encouragement to forge ahead with our joint diplomatic efforts. Italy welcomes the agreement, as well as its unanimous endorsement by the Security Council, and calls on the international community to strongly support its implementation.

We share the utmost concern about the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapon use. Indeed, it is awareness of the continuing nuclear risks to humankind and a desire for a peaceful world for future generations that underpin our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is crucial that all States fulfil their disarmament commitments and work to ensure the non-proliferation and non-use of these weapons.

Italy is committed to seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT, in a way that promotes international stability and that is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. At the same time, we firmly believe that it will be possible to eliminate nuclear weapons only through substantive and constructive engagement with nuclear-weapon States. The hard, practical work necessary to bring us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons must be advanced and centred not only on humanitarian, but also on security, considerations. We are convinced that this action should focus on practical and effective measures. We deeply regret that consensus could not be

reached at the ninth NPT Review Conference. Yet we trust that the efforts made to bridge different positions will serve as a good basis for further progress in the achievement of the objectives of the Treaty, including through the full implementation of the 2010 action plan.

As I stated during the general debate (see A/C.1/70/PV.5), the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material within the Conference on Disarmament remain our top priorities. Italy also strongly supports the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and is fully engaged in it by making available relevant expertise.

We welcome the nuclear arsenal reductions carried out by most nuclear-weapon States. We value the indications of progress in implementation of the New START Treaty by the Russian Federation and the United States and strongly encourage them to continue their efforts to promote strategic stability, enhance transparency, and further reduce their nuclear weapons.

We support the inalienable right of all States parties to the NPT to carry out research on and production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with the Treaty. That right should be exercised according to the highest standards of safeguards, safety and security, to which we attach the utmost importance. Strengthening nuclear security is a priority for us. We highly value the global dialogue on this topic in different forums, notably within the Nuclear Security Summit process.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to participate in this thematic debate on this important issue which has, rightly, taken hold of the attention of the entire international community.

At the outset, the delegation of Senegal associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States and that by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

This year's debate coincides with the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the victims of the first and most consequential nuclear attacks in the history of humankind and invite

those in possession of nuclear weapons to do their utmost towards the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

Indeed, it is time for reflection and inquiry into the persistence of such weapons. According to certain sources, there are 15,000 of them distributed among nine countries. They therefore pose a serious threat to our planet, its inhabitants and their living environment. Given the significant costs involved in the manufacture and development of nuclear weapons, as well as the expansion of military nuclear programmes, these weapons remain a cause for genuine concern. That is why my country is an advocate for the total elimination, rather than the mere reduction, of nuclear activity for military purposes. That is the only guarantee that the world has against the devastation and misery that result from the use of nuclear weapons. Their total elimination will surely guarantee the survival of our planet, in particular the survival of future generations, allowing them to live in a peaceful, secure and prosperous world, rather than in fear of the detonation of atomic bombs.

We reiterate our support for the Humanitarian Pledge, previously known as the Austrian pledge, made at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in New York in May. The pledge was endorsed by 119 countries, reflecting their will and that of civil society to find other effective ways and means to eradicate these types of weapons, which pose a constant threat to humankind. We are aware of the many efforts made by some Member States, non-governmental organizations and other interest groups to encourage nuclear-weapon States to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear warheads. However, the total destruction of those stocks should be the ultimate goal of States that possess them.

Despite our common desire, which has been reaffirmed on several occasions, it is clear that the nuclear disarmament to which we aspire is increasingly becoming a fantasy. Indeed, the treaties provide for the destruction only of carrying missiles, not nuclear warheads, creating a reversible nuclear potential. And yet, to our understanding, the concept of deterrence, which justifies possession, should guarantee peace. It is therefore essential to strengthen the authority of the NPT, the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, through its universalization and compliance with previously agreed commitments.

In that context, the International Atomic Energy Agency has a leading role to play in the adoption of effective measures to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, the Agency will be able to properly carry out its duties if we agree to endow it with the resources and tools necessary to enable it, among other things, to strengthen its verification and monitoring capacities. Similarly, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices would contribute effectively to strengthening efforts towards general and complete disarmament.

We express our regret once again over the lack of consensus at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, and we reaffirm that the holding of a conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would be a decisive step towards nuclear disarmament.

Peace is a matter of conscience and collective consciousness. It is certainly very good to talk about it, but without the development of that consciousness and the means to develop it, it will remain nothing more than pretty words. Therefore, the political will to advance or make use of it should further guide our discussions if a world free of nuclear weapons is still the greater goal that all States want to achieve.

We have the opportunity to promote concrete actions to achieve a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Senegal welcomes the holding in 2018 of a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, as set forth in resolution 68/32. The implementation of the resulting recommendations will no doubt contribute to achieving that goal. In addition, let us nourish the hope that we will make full use of our session this year to take action and achieve the only goal able to guarantee the maintenance of international peace — the total elimination of nuclear weapons — to avoid any risk of proliferation.

Ms. Wairatpanij (Thailand): A full version of our delegation's statement will be available on the QuickFirst website.

Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia yesterday (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

Thailand shares the common aspiration and objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. Despite

the mix of disappointment and optimism stemming from recent events, we are hopeful that this session will give the agenda a push forward. Thailand is pleased to join over 100 States in endorsing the Humanitarian Pledge. We are enthusiastic about those paradigm and normative shifts, as well as the increasing momentum, support and involvement of more interested stakeholders in the Humanitarian Initiative on the Impact of Nuclear Weapons. In addition to the regional roundtable on the same subject that we co-hosted in Bangkok in March, we are keen to join forces for future action to advance that Initiative.

Almost 20 years from the date of the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons (A/51/218, annex), the time is ripe to address gaps in the existing international legal regime on nuclear weapons. Thailand calls for discussions to consider the options seriously and looks forward to contributing support or any available legal and technical expertise to that defining step for disarmament. The humanitarian conferences have not only revisited and reshaped our collective thinking on the disastrous impacts of nuclear weapons, but more importantly they served as a stark reminder that those impacts fall on nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. The conversation needs to be expanded and, in this current global state of persisting insecurities, deserves due and urgent attention.

Despite the disappointing result of the Review Conference, Thailand affirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will continue to enhance its relevant implementation. Nuclear safety and security, in accordance with safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is an important priority for Thailand. Our amended draft nuclear energy act is soon to be considered by the legislature. That will better align Thailand's technical, institutional and educational commitments with international obligations and allow for benefiting more fully from the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology pursuant to the NPT. As this draft legislation also covers nuclear testing, Thailand will be closer to being able to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and in that regard, we support its universalization.

Thailand reaffirms its cooperation with the IAEA, whose work is highly commendable. With the recent conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,

we call on all sides to cooperate fully with the Agency in order to ensure its effective implementation.

Thailand would like to recognize regional initiatives regarding nuclear security, safety and safeguards, with particular note of the Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). We are currently exploring ways to formalize the relations between the Network and the IAEA. Beyond technical coordination, we trust that the Network will also play a role in helping to raise awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation issues to bridge national, regional and global efforts.

The South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is ASEAN's regional commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The Bangkok Treaty establishes an ambitious and distinctive nuclear-weapon-free zone, expressly extending its coverage to the exclusive economic zones and continental shelves and seeking to commit nuclear-weapon States not to use nuclear weapons against the States parties. We hope that nuclear-weapon States will sign and ratify the Protocol to the Treaty to ensure vital nuclear strategic balance and a functional nuclear-weapon-free zone for a region active in global interconnectivity.

Thailand's efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) have continued, especially through the interagency subcommittee on weapons of mass destruction and the interagency subcommittee on non-proliferation coordination, which are now active in establishing standard operating procedures for weapons of mass destruction-related situations and effective interdiction. Additionally, Thailand's dual-use regime also has been revitalized through the reappointment of a ministerial-level committee and promulgation of more comprehensive regulations. Thailand also acknowledges other multilateral non-proliferation and security initiatives, in many of which Thailand is a member. They enrich our discussions and offer broader methods and tools for action.

We are under no illusion that the road ahead, even one that merely begins a substantive conversation in concrete terms, will be easy, but we refuse to be deterred for the simple fact that we believe in the power of working towards a common cause, no matter how far apart the perspectives may seem. We therefore welcome all positive new inputs into disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We are especially keen to explore in more concrete terms the Humanitarian

Initiative and prospects for a ban on nuclear weapons, and we appreciate that a more diverse and extensive conversation on realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world is in process. We pledge our active engagement on the issues and hope to play a constructive role in that process.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Due to time constraints, I shall read out an abbreviated version of my statement. The full text of the statement will be distributed through the secretariat.

China firmly adheres to a path of pursuing peaceful development and adopts an open, transparent and responsible nuclear policy. China has consistently advocated and promoted complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. In recent years, China has voted for important nuclear disarmament resolutions in the General Assembly and supported the Conference on Disarmament in its efforts to start substantive work on related agenda items, such as nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances, in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

China respects and supports international efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. In April, the National People's Congress of China ratified the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. China has resolved all outstanding issues relating to the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone with States members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations and is ready to sign the Protocol at an early date. China respects and will continue its support for Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

China supports the purposes and principles of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. China has strictly abided by its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions and is dedicated to promoting the Treaty's early entry into force. China supports the conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty as early as possible in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the Shannon mandate. China has actively conducted research on verification measures and related technical tools for nuclear arms control and engaged in extensive exchanges with relevant parties.

China attaches importance to the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures. In recent years, China has issued several white papers and

submitted to the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) its national reports, elaborating China's nuclear strategy, policies and related efforts. As an important outcome of P5 cooperation, China played a leading role in the establishment of the P5 Working Group on the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms and submitted the Glossary to this year's NPT Review Conference.

China believes that to further advance the international nuclear disarmament process, efforts should be made by the international community in the following areas. First, universal security should become the guiding principle. Secondly, nuclear disarmament should be pursued through an incremental approach. Thirdly, the role of nuclear weapons in national security policies should be effectively reduced. Fourthly, strategic balance and stability must be safeguarded.

As the three pillars of the NPT, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be promoted in a balanced manner. Efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons should not jeopardize the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; meanwhile, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be taken neither as an excuse for disregard of nuclear security, nor as a pretext for nuclear proliferation.

Over the years, Japan has accumulated a huge amount of sensitive nuclear materials, giving rise to grave risks both in terms of nuclear security and nuclear proliferation. At present, Japan possesses about 1,200 kilograms of highly enriched uranium and about 47.8 tons of separated plutonium, among which 10.8 tons are stored on Japanese territory, enough to make 1,350 nuclear warheads. The current stockpile of nuclear materials of Japan far exceeds its legitimate needs. That situation not only contravenes Japan's proclaimed policy of no excess plutonium and its own proposal to reduce the use of highly enriched uranium, but also violates the relevant rules and guidelines of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the purposes and objectives of the Nuclear Security Summit. Obviously, such a situation is a cause of concern for the international community.

Twenty years after the announcement of its no-excess-plutonium policy, Japan's total amount of separated plutonium has doubled rather than been reduced. Against that background, instead of taking any serious steps to reassure the world, Japan is taking

the following actions, which further aggravate the situation. First, Japan restarted its first nuclear power unit this August. Secondly, Japan plans to begin, in March 2016, operations at Rokkasho reprocessing plant, with a capacity designed to produce 8.9 tons of separated plutonium annually. Given the lack of feasible ways to consume those materials, it can be predicted that the imbalance of supply and demand of nuclear materials in Japan will further aggravate the situation.

On top of that, despite the fact that in March 2014 Japan promised to return 331 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium and part of its highly enriched uranium to the United States, we have seen no progress reported in that regard so far. Meanwhile, we have also noted with concern that over the years some political forces in Japan have continuously clamoured for the development of nuclear weapons, claiming that Japan should have nuclear weapons if it wants to be a Power that could sway international politics.

In light of all these developments, we strongly urge the Japanese Government to respond to the concerns of the international community in a responsible manner and take concrete measures to address the existing problems. For this has a significant bearing on the international non-proliferation system, nuclear safety and security, as well as the prevention of the threat of nuclear terrorism.

China is ready, together with the international community, to continue its unremitting efforts for the realization of the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

The Acting Chair: I would like to remind delegations to stick to the time limit provided for their statements.

Ms. Nguyen Khanh Toan (Viet Nam): Our delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.9) and wishes to make some comments from its national perspective.

Over the past 70 years, tremendous efforts have been made to prevent nuclear weapons from being used again. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been the cornerstone of that global endeavour. We are of the view that the three pillars of the regime — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — should be implemented in a balanced manner.

Viet Nam welcomes all ongoing efforts and initiatives vis-à-vis nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including bilateral and multilateral agreements and the Nuclear Security Summits. We note with appreciation the agreement reached on 14 July between Iran and the P5+1 on the Iranian nuclear programme. That agreement once again showed that political and diplomatic means are the only effective way to overcome differences among States. We should now move towards a full and effective implementation of the agreement.

Viet Nam particularly applauds the outcomes of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, especially the Humanitarian Pledge adopted in Vienna. We welcome the renewed interest and resolve of the international community to address the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons, and believe that the best way to prevent such catastrophe is the total elimination of those horrendous weapons.

Much more, however, remains to be desired and needs to be done. We regret that nearly 20 years after its adoption, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet come into force, that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty have not begun in earnest and that the Conference on Disarmament still cannot break the two decades-long stalemate to commence substantial work on nuclear disarmament. We also regret that, despite intensive consultations, the 2015 Review Conference of the NPT was not able to adopt its final declaration.

That is the reason why we urge all Member States to overcome their current differences and to take further steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We call on nuclear-weapon States to honour and take concrete steps to implement their commitments on nuclear disarmament. In the meantime, we note the important role of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones in providing non-nuclear-weapon States with the necessary security assurances, and in this connection we urge nuclear-weapon States to soon sign and ratify relevant protocols to the Bangkok Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Viet Nam looks forward to working with all others Member States to achieve these common goals.

The Acting Chair: I shall now call on those who have requested the floor to exercise the right of reply.

Mr. Sano (Japan): I would like to exercise the right of reply to a statement made by the representative of China. Since some countries may have a similar concern about the Japanese plutonium issue, let me go into a little detail.

First of all, all nuclear materials in Japan, including plutonium and highly enriched uranium, have been under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for over a half a century. The IAEA has concluded that all nuclear material in Japan is used for peaceful purposes.

Secondly, with regard to plutonium bans and plutonium management, according to the new strategic energy plan, which was decided by the Cabinet of Japan earlier this year, the Japanese Government committed to the principle of not possessing reserves of plutonium without specified purposes. In order to effectively carry out that policy, we have been very careful about the balance between the separation and utilization of plutonium.

Thirdly, I will touch upon the transparency of our activities. As part of our own voluntary efforts, Japan has been publishing information on the situation of plutonium management voluntarily, which is more detailed than the information required in international guidelines. Also, Japan totally disclosed the situation of the highly enriched uranium to the IAEA. Therefore, it adequately ensured the transparency of the situation of nuclear materials.

Fourthly, at the latest Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, Japan, in cooperation with the United States, announced that it would remove all highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium from one of the research reactors in Japan — Fast Critical Assembly — and that process is ongoing.

Fifthly, we believe that those efforts of Japan have been widely recognized, not only by the IAEA but also by the international community.

Lastly, Japan also calls on the countries concerned to make further efforts to ensure the transparency of nuclear materials.

Mr. Fu Cong (China): I would like to respond to the reply that the Japanese Ambassador has given us. I would like to say that, despite whatever the Japanese Ambassador said, some basic facts remain unchanged, and I would like to alert the world to those basic facts.

First, Japan is the only non-nuclear-weapon State with a complete nuclear fuel cycle facility. Secondly, Japan has a huge stockpile of weapons-grade nuclear materials, and the stockpile is still increasing. Thirdly, Japan has no plausible civilian use for all those materials. Fourthly, there is a portion of the Japanese population, including some prominent politicians, that has been clamouring for nuclear weapons for many years. Indeed, Japan has a history of failed attempts to develop nuclear weapons. Fifthly, in view of its level of technology and its massive accumulations of fissile materials, once a policy decision is taken, the breakout time for Japan to become a nuclear-weapon State would be extremely short. I hope the world can keep that in mind and pay due attention to that.

Just now the Ambassador of Japan mentioned that the process for sending Japanese material to the United States is under way. We would like to know more about the process. As I said in my statement, Japan has claimed that this is under way, but we have not seen any progress report. It has also claimed that it does not maintain a policy in which the supply of material may exceed the demand, but as I said in my statement, Japan now has a surplus of over 10 tons of separated plutonium on its territory. I would like to ask the Japanese Ambassador if he can give us any plausible explanation, with regard to legitimate uses, as to why Japan needs such a huge amount of separated plutonium. What purposes does it

serve? We know that the International Atomic Energy Agency has issued some reports, but we still remain concerned because we know that the breakout time for Japan to become a nuclear-weapon State could be extremely short.

The Acting Chair: I give the floor to the representative of Japan for a second intervention.

Mr. Sano (Japan): In addition to what I said previously, Japan has adhered to a basic policy of maintaining an exclusively national defence-oriented policy, of not becoming a military Power that poses a threat to other countries and of observing the three non-nuclear principles. Japan will continue to adhere to the course that we have taken to date as a peace-loving nation.

The Acting Chair: I give the floor to the representative of China for a second intervention.

Mr. Fu Cong (China): I do not think the Japanese Ambassador responded to my question. Japan has claimed to be peace-loving. We will take that at face value, but can he explain to us why Japan needs enough fissile material to produce over 1,000 nuclear warheads? That is the crux of the matter.

The Acting Chair: We have exhausted the time available to us this morning.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.