



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

First Committee

23rd meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

Action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: This afternoon, the First Committee will begin by hearing the delegations which had requested the floor to explain their vote after the voting on cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”, but which did not have an opportunity to speak by the time we adjourned yesterday.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): I have asked for the floor to express my country’s position on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”. Egypt fully supports this traditional resolution’s objective — general and complete disarmament aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons across the world. However, some of the paragraphs in the draft resolution fall short of our expectations for achieving that shared objective. Accordingly, we feel it essential to highlight the following related points.

First, within the framework of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Egypt firmly believes that nuclear-weapon States that have not done so should, as a matter of priority, accede to the CTBT before urging other States listed in annex 2 to join it. Unfortunately, paragraph 19 of the draft resolution does not affirm this widely held belief.

Secondly, with respect to paragraph 17, our main concern is ensuring that the international community does not lend any legitimacy to States possessing nuclear weapons if they are not signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Thirdly, in paragraph 27, we reiterate our firm position that the additional protocol is non-universal and voluntary in nature. It should be clear that the only binding mechanism in this context is the comprehensive safeguard system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We genuinely hope that in future General Assembly sessions, this important resolution will seriously take into consideration our legitimate concerns and reasonable reservations.

Mr. Varma (India): We have explanations of vote on a number of draft resolutions under cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”. I seek your indulgence, Mr. Chair, as I go through them one by one.

As a country that maintains friendly and fraternal ties with Mongolia, India welcomes the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.20, entitled “Mongolia’s international security and nuclear-weapon-free status”, without a vote. We know that Mongolia has taken many steps to reinforce its nuclear-weapon-free status and that it has received support and security assurances for that status from Member States, particularly those that possess nuclear weapons. India fully respects Mongolia’s decision and states unambiguously that it will respect Mongolia’s nuclear-weapon-free status.

With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.23, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons”,

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India voted in favour of previous iterations of the resolution, which is consistent with its participation in the three conferences, held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, respectively, on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Our participation in those conferences was premised on a shared concern about the serious threat that the use of nuclear weapons could pose to the survival of humankind, and in the hope of gaining international support for broader restraints on the use of such weapons, thereby correcting an imbalance in the international legal discourse, which has focused almost exclusively on restraints on possession.

Paragraph 1 of the draft resolution stresses that it is in the interest of humankind's very survival to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances. Paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.10, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", calls on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. This is one of the longest-standing resolutions of the Committee and is firmly anchored in the humanitarian tradition of nuclear disarmament. However, for reasons that are difficult to understand, some of the same States that are in the forefront of the humanitarian discussion, and that are lead sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.23, voted last year against the resolution on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons. We appeal to them to reconsider their position and narrow the credibility gap between precept and practice that is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

India abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.24, "Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons", although we participated in the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. We do not see the humanitarian pledge as an agreed outcome of these meetings. India shares the concerns about the serious threat to the survival of humankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons. India has been unwavering in its commitment to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, we are in agreement with the objectives of the resolution for the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. India has also supported some of the interim measures on reducing nuclear risks set forth in the draft resolution, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons. These measures are reflected in a separate

draft resolution, A/C.1/71/L.11, sponsored by India on reducing nuclear dangers.

However, we have not joined the humanitarian pledge and have abstained in the voting on the related draft resolution. There are inherent dangers in proposals that further fragment the disarmament agenda or splinter the established disarmament machinery. As has been the case with biological and chemical weapons, increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons have the potential to contribute to the progressive de-legitimization of nuclear weapons, which is an essential step for their eventual elimination. The draft resolution is silent on these aspects.

Furthermore, the pledge falls short of the requirements of a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention, which includes verification as well as prohibition and elimination. International verification will be essential to the global elimination of nuclear weapons, just as it has been for the Chemical Weapons Convention. When nuclear weapons are so deeply entrenched in security policies, seeking a short cut by stigmatizing them, without reducing their role and addressing the important aspects of verification, provides an illusion of progress rather than a realistic contribution to nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Finally, there appears to be a credibility gap in the voting pattern of some of the key sponsors of the draft resolution with regard to some of the other draft resolutions in the Committee, in particular A/C.1/71/L.10 and A/C.1/71/L.11.

Let me now turn to A/C.1/71/L.26, "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". India remains committed to the goal of global, verifiable, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament in a time-bound framework. We have stressed the need for a step-by-step process underwritten by universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework for achieving global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. In substantive terms, the draft resolution falls short of this objective. India voted against paragraph 5, as we cannot accept its call to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. India's position on the NPT is well known. There is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Nuclear weapons are an integral part of India's national security and will remain so pending

non-discriminatory and global nuclear disarmament. As India supports the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, the question of a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons does not arise. We therefore abstained in the voting on paragraph 20.

India also abstained in the voting on paragraph 27, as the concept of a comprehensive safeguards agreement is applicable only to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. India has concluded an India-specific safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and has signed and ratified an additional protocol to that agreement. As we marked the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, we acknowledged the leading role that Japan, the lead sponsor of the draft resolution, has played in promoting nuclear disarmament efforts.

In relation to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.33, "Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems", India is a sponsor of the annual resolution on reducing nuclear danger, which has been adopted by a large majority for more than a decade. This year's version, draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.11, was adopted just yesterday. When the resolution on decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems was introduced in 2007, and again in 2008, 2010 and 2012, India supported it, in view of the common objectives and congruence of the two resolutions. Unlike some of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.33, India's approach is to assess draft resolutions by an objective standard and on their merits. Despite the fact that some of the sponsors of A/C.1/71/L.11 voted against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.33, India voted in favour of it, in view of the importance we attach to de-alerting as a practical step in the process of reducing nuclear dangers.

However, we abstained in the voting on the eighth preambular paragraph. India's position on the NPT is well-known. India is not party to the Treaty and is not bound by its outcome documents. Furthermore, the issue that the draft resolution seeks to address is not limited to the context of a specific treaty, which is a point that some of our fellow sponsors themselves have made to us with regard to our draft resolution. We hope that the sponsors of the draft resolution will adopt an objective standard for voting the same way on similar draft resolutions, which is a reasonable expectation.

With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.35, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", India remains committed to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We are concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. India also shares the view that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. We continue to support to a time-bound programme for global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

We voted against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.35 as a whole, as well as its paragraph 14, since we cannot accept its call for India to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State. In urging India to accede to the NPT promptly and without conditions, the draft resolution negates the rules of customary international law enshrined in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which provides that a State's acceptance, ratification or accession to a treaty is based on the principle of free consent. India's position on the NPT is well known; there is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Nuclear weapons are an integral part of India's national security and will remain so pending global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

India attaches particular importance to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.36, "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", which was submitted for the first time last year, by South Africa, and which highlights the ethical dimension of nuclear disarmament. Here we would like to recall our support for a number of the previous proposals and resolutions mentioned in the draft resolution, including the first resolution of the General Assembly in 1946 (resolution 1 (I)) and the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/S-10/2). In fact, the draft resolution is a reminder of the long struggle for nuclear disarmament that has been waged within and outside the Assembly, in which India, along with other States of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), has played a leading role. India agrees with several provisions of the draft resolution, in particular its acknowledgement of nuclear disarmament as a global public good of the highest order.

We support the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that there exists a legal obligation

to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion the negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this regard, India has once again co-sponsored the relevant draft resolution, A/C.1/71/L.41, submitted by Malaysia, and has supported the NAM proposal for the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention in the CD.

Since the dawn of the nuclear age, the use of nuclear weapons has posed a deeply serious threat to the survival of humankind and the continuation of civilization. As such, they present fundamental ethical and moral dilemmas that should inform the international community's consideration of all matters relating to nuclear weapons and on nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons have been entrenched in the security policies of a number of States whose total population now exceeds those that do not have such weapons. The global elimination of nuclear weapons will require progressive steps towards reducing their military utility and their role in security policies, as well as a universal commitment to the global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework for nuclear disarmament. Until those objectives are accomplished by common agreement and are reflected in specific legal instruments, questions relating to the morality of nuclear weapons have to be balanced by the sovereign responsibility of States to protect their peoples in a nuclearized global order assembled on the pillars of nuclear deterrence. India's nuclear doctrine of credible minimum deterrence with a no-first-use posture seeks to strike that balance.

The illegality of nuclear weapons cannot just be a matter of *opinio juris*; it is necessary for the international community to negotiate and conclude specific legal instruments for that purpose. India has proposed a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and has supported the possibility of a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention. We remain prepared to take those proposals forward in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Chair: I would ask the representative of India to conclude, as he has gone well beyond the 10-minute time limit for explanations of vote.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. Chair, I was not aware there were time limits for explanations of vote.

The Chair: I would remind the representative that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. Varma (India): I will therefore rush through my remarks.

With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", India attaches the highest priority to nuclear disarmament and shares with the other sponsors of the draft resolution the widely felt frustration that the international community has not been able to take forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. We also share the deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. India's resolutions in this very forum reflect this concern and the need to take effective legal measures to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons, as well as other measures to reduce the salience of such weapons. However, my delegation felt obliged to abstain in the voting on this draft resolution for the following reasons.

Disarmament is a responsibility of the General Assembly under the Charter of the United Nations, and in exercise of this responsibility, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established the disarmament machinery of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Nuclear disarmament continues to be on the agenda of the CD. We are not convinced that the proposed conference in 2017 convened under General Assembly rules of procedure can address the long-standing expectation of the international community for a comprehensive instrument on nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, India did not participate in the Open-ended Working Group that met in Geneva during 2016 and therefore reserves its position on and support of the recommendations contained therein.

India has supported the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention that includes verification as well as prohibition and elimination. International verification is essential to the global elimination of nuclear weapons, just as it has been in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Progress on nuclear disarmament in the CD should remain an international priority. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the effort made by some of the sponsors to reach out to India to continue the dialogue and consultations necessary to bridge the current deep and substantive divides on nuclear disarmament.

I will pass on our draft explanations of vote to the Secretariat. We made a request to the Secretariat yesterday asking whether it would be possible to read an abridged version of our explanations of vote and were told that they would be put on record only if they were read out in the meeting. That is why we have taken this route. However, because we have been requested to do so, we will submit to the Secretariat our explanations of vote on draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.47, A/C.1/71/L.49, A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1 and A/C.1/71/L.65.

The last explanation of vote I shall make is on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65, on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It has been India's position that, without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate it contains. The establishment of a high-level expert preparatory group under this draft resolution should not replace the CD as the forum for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. In our view, therefore, the work of the proposed group amounts neither to pre-negotiations nor negotiations on such a treaty, which would take place in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate.

Furthermore, the proposed group would be constituted and would conduct its work in accordance with the established practices of the Group of Governmental Experts, including the principle of consensus. India supports the CD as the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and we hope that its member States will redouble their efforts to enable the Conference to commence substantive work at an early date.

I apologize for taking so much time, but obviously our rules are in need of improvement so that delegations can put their positions on record without time constraints. We will submit our written comments to the Secretariat in the hope that they will be included in the full record of the Committee.

The Chair: I have to remind the representative of India that these are the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I can read out the rule: "Explanations of vote should be limited to ten minutes." In any event,

delegations can put their explanations of vote on PaperSmart.

Mr. Herráiz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain wishes to explain its position on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.49, entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty". The entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa in 2009 represented an important contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security, which is a matter of great importance for all African countries.

Spain has therefore always voiced its unwavering support for the objectives and means of Pelindaba and welcomes its entry into force. Spain maintains close relations with African countries and, through our Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, has made considerable efforts to promote sustainable development in all African countries. Spain is also willing to take the action needed to ensure that the States parties to the Pelindaba Treaty have the necessary capacities to implement it in their respective territories.

After carefully studying the invitation extended to Spain to join the Third Protocol of the Pelindaba Treaty, my Government, in consultation with Parliament and taking into account the guidelines approved by consensus in the United Nations Disarmament Commission in its substantive session in 1999 on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones pursuant to freely agreed rules between the countries of the region involved, decided not to sign, which was made known to the Treaty depositary at the time. In this regard, I would like to highlight two issues: first, that the Pelindaba Treaty does not contain any provision, obligation, guarantee or safeguard with respect to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that Spain has not already adopted for its entire national territory. Pursuant to its membership of various international bodies, Spain has devised a series of measures and safeguards within the framework of the European Atomic Energy Community and the Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol it has signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which go beyond the content of the Pelindaba Treaty while complementing it.

Secondly, the entire territory of Spain has been totally free of nuclear weapons since 1976. The prohibition of the introduction, installation or stockpiling of nuclear weapons throughout Spanish territory was reaffirmed by Parliament when we joined

NATO in 1981, and was also approved in a consultative referendum held in March 1986. Spain has therefore taken all necessary measures to ensure that the content of the Pelindaba Treaty is applied throughout its entire national territory.

Spain has called for consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.49 since its first submission in 1997. Nevertheless, the Spanish delegation does not consider itself party to the consensus referred to in paragraph 5. For this reason, we are working with other delegations in order to arrive at a more balanced wording that is acceptable to all parties. We trust that the conversations on this draft resolution will offer satisfactory outcomes with a view to future sessions.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): I take the floor to explain New Zealand's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65, entitled "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". New Zealand has long supported all efforts, including those on the basis of the mandate established in CD/1299, of 24 March 1995, to advance negotiations on a fissile material treaty. Accordingly, we have again voted in favour of the draft resolution put forward under this agenda item.

However, this year's text contains a number of elements that are not favoured by my delegation, prime among which is the negotiation preparatory procedure set up under General Assembly auspices in paragraph 2. In empowering a small grouping of 25 countries to "make recommendations on substantial elements of a future treaty", the preparatory process set in motion is neither inclusive nor transparent. This regrettable departure from the time-honoured General Assembly rules of procedure, applicable also to treaty negotiations and their preparatory processes, is compounded by the requirement, also in paragraph 2, that the preparatory group operate only on the basis of consensus. New Zealand is disappointed by such an *à la carte* approach to the General Assembly.

Ms. Yoon Seoungmee (Republic of Korea): In addition to the remarks made yesterday by the representative of Poland on behalf of some delegations, including the Republic of Korea (see A/C.1/71/PV.22), my delegation would like to further explain our vote against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations".

The Republic of Korea supports the vision of a world without nuclear weapons and notes that progress

in nuclear disarmament has not met expectations. In this regard, we have actively participated in the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (OEWG) to discuss measures that could lead to effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. We regret that the OEWG could not reach consensus on how best to realize the ultimate goal we all share.

Our position is based on the stark reality on the Korean peninsula. We do not believe that simply jump-starting negotiations on a prohibition treaty will address that particular security landscape. It is our formal position that before beginning any discussions on a new treaty, the international community must start by fully implementing the obligations under existing international law, most importantly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Security Council resolutions. That is why, based on the outcome report (A/71/371) of the OEWG, we cannot support the commencement of negotiations on a prohibition treaty in 2017 or the pursuit of any new legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons in draft resolutions on such topics as the humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, set forth in draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.24, and nuclear disarmament, set forth in draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.47.

Mr. Robotjazi (Iran): I take the floor today to explain the position of my delegation on several draft resolutions. First, with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.5, "The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation", we again voted against this year's text because The Hague Code of Conduct is an offshoot of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), an exclusive and discriminatory export-control regime that imposes restrictions on many goods, items of equipment, technologies and know-how created for peaceful purposes. The Code of Conduct is not and cannot be considered to be an internationally negotiated text, because it was drafted and adopted by some MTCR participants outside of the United Nations in a selective, non-transparent and unbalanced manner. Even though other countries were invited to participate in the final stage of the process, hardly any of their views were taken into account. The result of that flawed procedure was therefore crystal clear — a totally flawed Code of Conduct with serious substantive shortcomings.

While the existence and development of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles are the main threat to regional

and global security, the The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation is totally silent about that threat and has failed to call for its possessor States to end the development of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles by possessor States. Accordingly, while the Code of Conduct specifically acknowledges the possession of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles by a few MTCR participants, it aims to discourage others from possessing conventionally armed ballistic missiles in the exercise of their inherent right to security and self-defence.

The message that the Code of Conduct sends is clear — certain States have the right to develop, possess and use ballistic missiles of any type, and other States, including those targeted by such missiles, must be prevented by all possible means from developing any type of conventionally armed ballistic missiles, while there is no internationally accepted legal norm against the development and acquisition of ballistic missiles.

Another major shortcoming of the Code of Conduct is that the right of all States to the peaceful use of outer space, including access to technology necessary for space launch vehicles, has been ignored in the text, including by restricting or arbitrarily conditioning assistance and cooperation on space launch vehicles for non-MTCR participants. It also deliberately fails to recognize the difference between space launch vehicle programmes and ballistic-missile programmes. Again the message is clear — certain States have such technologies and other States, at best, have the right not to be excluded from the peaceful uses of outer space. If they wish to exercise that right, they have no choice but to be dependent on those that have such technologies.

I will limit my explanation to those two major substantive shortcomings of the The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and conclude by stressing that the issues related to missiles, including ballistic missiles, have to be addressed comprehensively and in the overall context of general and complete disarmament, within which nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons remain the highest priority. The process begun through the draft resolution on missiles (A/C.1/71/L.59) is the best foundation for the ongoing consideration of this highly complicated and multidimensional issue.

On draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.24, entitled “Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons”, my delegation would

like to express its reservations about an incorrect phrase contained in the fifth preambular paragraph of the draft. The phrase “the lowering of the technical threshold for nuclear weapon capability” in the fifth preambular paragraph lacks clarity and is completely irrelevant to the context and purpose of the paragraph and to the draft resolution as a whole. Such a phrase does not exist in any consensually agreed document of the Review Conferences of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) nor even in any document of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Such ambiguous phrases and related concepts have been used to justify unlawful actions and measures aimed at constraining the inalienable right of the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to develop and use nuclear energy and technology, including a full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes.

The fifth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.24 covers the risk of nuclear weapons use. What it needs to address is the risk that has become apparent in recent years of lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons as a result of the design and development of new types of such weapons, a leading example of which is the development of the B61-12 nuclear bomb, which was tested by a nuclear-weapon State on 1 July 2015. These new types of nuclear weapon are designed to have enhanced precision, coupled with a new technology that enables the explosive force of the bomb to be adjusted before its use from an estimated high of a force equivalent to 50,000 tons of TNT to a low of 300 tons, and with it the increased likelihood that such nuclear weapons would be used. In the informal consultations on the draft resolution this year and last year, we proposed minor adjustments to that phrase in order to make it relevant to the fifth preambular paragraph. We urge the sponsor to incorporate this proposal into the draft resolution next time. I would also like to stress that the use of the phrase “States possessing nuclear weapons” in the fifth preambular paragraph and in paragraph six of A/C.1/71/L.24 should not be interpreted as recognizing nuclear-weapon status for any State that is not a party to the NPT.

Finally, it appears that there is a notable fluctuation and inconsistency in the voting pattern of the lead sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.24 in relation to it and the other draft resolutions of the First Committee on nuclear disarmament. We sincerely hope that this an inconsistency will cease when it comes to supporting

the goal of nuclear disarmament under all other resolutions of the Committee.

I now turn to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”. The Islamic Republic of Iran voted in favour of this draft resolution, in line with its principled position of support for all multilateral activities aimed at the promotion and realization of the nuclear disarmament objective. However, we would like to put on record our principal observations about its proposals and on the procedure envisaged to take them forward.

First, multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament should be carried out in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. We fully share the frustration over the two-decade-long stalemate in the CD and strongly believe that the main problem — namely, the lack of genuine political will on the part of certain nuclear-weapon States to achieve progress on nuclear disarmament — will not be solved by undermining the Conference’s authority.

Secondly, we take a principled position that — owing to the delicate multidimensional nature of disarmament issues, as well as their close link with the supreme national security interests of States — negotiations of any international instrument on such issues must be conducted based on consensus. We therefore strongly believe that in conducting its business, the proposed 2017 conference, as a principled rule, should exhaust every effort to reach agreement on substantive matters by consensus. Fortunately, that is not only allowed by the General Assembly rules of procedure, it was also the basic rule applied in the past by the United Nations in international conferences — and the proposed 2017 conference is not and should not be an exception.

Recalling that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly allow for voting on substantive issues but do not obligate Member States to resort to voting, my delegation would like to underscore the importance of taking that fact into account and call for avoiding any hasty or imprudent proposals to resort to voting at any stage of the work of the proposed conference. In this context, my delegation believes that we should not lose sight of the fact that what the international community of States has already achieved in terms of agreement on commitments and obligations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as in terms of the existing international instruments banning biological and

chemical weapons, has been the product of painstaking negotiations based on the rule of consensus. This has enabled us to hold accountable those who do not comply with the international commitments and obligations that they themselves have agreed to.

Thirdly, on the proposed legally binding instrument, we expect that, at a minimum, negotiations would lead to agreement on an international instrument that would comprehensively and forever prohibit research on nuclear weapons and their possession, development, production, testing, transfer, modernization and use or threat of use under any circumstances. Moreover, such an instrument in no way should legitimize the existence of nuclear weapons or their continued possession. The possession of nuclear weapons is unlawful and illegitimate today and must remain so in future under any proposed legally binding instrument.

In addition, the General Assembly resolution for adopting such an instrument should embody a clear decision to require that it be complemented by an identical instrument providing for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the negotiations of which shall be started immediately after the conclusion of the first instrument. As a country that is under the nuclear threat of the Israeli regime, Iran’s vital —

The Chair: I am sorry, but the representative of Iran has reached his time limit, so I will thank him for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on a point of order.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I was at the end of reading the last paragraph of an explanation of vote on behalf of my country, but I now have to seek clarification for the sake of clarity of everybody going forward.

This is the first time that I have seen a limitation imposed on reading explanations of vote. I have never seen such a limitation before. I therefore seek clarification because we have been making explanations of votes on more than one resolution; in fact, we are making explanations of vote on several resolutions — 15 draft resolutions, in my case. A single explanation of vote is limited to 10 minutes. How can we make our explanations of vote on 15 or 16 resolutions in only 10 minutes? That is not fair. It is a restrictive interpretation of a rule and one of which we were not aware until today.

The Chair: I strongly disagree with the representative of Iran. I am sorry, but there are rules, and we have to respect those rules. Let me respond. This is not my rule, by the way. These are the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. If delegations want to change them, that is fine. However, at the beginning, I said that statements would be limited to 10 minutes. It was not my decision. It is simply part of the rules of procedure. I read out the applicable language of the rules of procedure earlier. I invite the delegations to take a look at this rule, which stipulates 10 minutes for explanations of vote. If the representatives think that I should not uphold that rule, they know what is required: they can overturn the rules. It is up to them. Let me read annex V, paragraph 6 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to the Committee once again: "Explanations of vote should be limited to ten minutes."

If we accept the idea that explanations of vote should be allowed for all draft resolutions and 10 minutes are accorded to each one, keeping in mind that we are 193 countries, we will be spending the entire session on explanations of vote, and we will still not finish. It is therefore up to the Committee. Only three more meetings remain. I am therefore sticking to the 10-minute limit. If the Committee thinks I should do otherwise, delegations know the procedure to follow and they can overrule me.

I now give the floor to the representative of India on a point of order.

Mr. Varma (India): It was not my intention to get in your way, Mr. Chair, of conducting the business of the First Committee. We have indeed witnessed an extraordinary sense of leadership from you, Sir, and we have all benefited from your leadership and fully respect the fact that you are sticking by the rules of procedure and have clearly stated as much.

However, the issue that we and my colleague from the Iranian delegation have raised needs a practical solution. Explanations of vote are indeed limited to 10 minutes. We have clustered a number of resolutions because our working methods have evolved; we now conduct our work in terms of clusters. Yet clustering is never mentioned in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The clustering is a practical arrangement. The Bureau should have foreseen that clustering would have an impact on the way delegations put their positions on the record.

Putting on record the positions of the Governments of each of our delegations is not a matter of negotiation between a member State and the Chair. That is very clear. That is our sovereign right and we will act upon that right. What is a matter of consultation now is the practical solution that will give us the opportunity to put our positions on record in the remaining time available to us.

We approached the Secretariat yesterday to seek clarification as to whether we could read an abridged version of explanations of vote, give a full copy to the Secretariat and hope that our positions are reflected on the record. We were told that was not possible because what goes into the record of the Committee's meetings is what we say in the meeting. If that is so, then we will have to look at how we can adjust both the time constraint, which is a very real constraint, and the right of every delegation to put on record its national position. On that there can be no compromise, so this is only an appeal to the Chair. We are not raising the issue in a manner that should obstruct the Chair's work, but it is something that we need to look at in future.

Our suggestion is that we should allow delegations to make abridged versions of statements and give them the right to have the full version of their statements reflected in the record, which can be done by having the delegations submit a copy of their full statements to the Secretariat.

The Chair: First, I would say to the representative of India that he has had plenty of time to speak, so he should not complain. I have to mention once again that we have rules of procedure that we must implement and we must do so in an impartial manner, to be quite frank. If representatives believe that is not fair, they are able to overrule me. That is very clear. However, it is not my intention to go beyond the 10-minute time limit. If representatives think that is not fair, then it is not fair, but they must pursue the option to seek to overrule me and I encourage them to do so. I will be bound by any decision the Assembly makes in order to make the situation fairer.

This could be food for thought for the future. With a regrouped list of items, representatives have to reflect in crafting their explanations of vote. They have to be concise, especially in this situation, where we have just two hours left. We cannot go beyond 6 p.m. If all Member States wish to speak on all draft resolutions for more than 10 minutes, we will never finish. That is

my problem. Of course, I want to be fair. I will listen to representatives, but for today the limit remains 10 minutes.

I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan on a point of order.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): Without trying to belabour the point, our colleagues from India and Iran actually have a point. We also understand your predicament, Sir, in that you have to bring the debate to a conclusion. However, from my experience in working in the First Committee, I know that most of the delegations have a lot of explanations of vote to make under the nuclear weapons cluster. Therefore, if we could be a little patient with the delegations under that cluster alone, things would take care of themselves when we go on to the other clusters.

I offer that only as a point for consideration. You have been very fair to everybody, Sir, and we appreciate that, but our colleagues also have a point. I ask that you, Sir, consider allowing a little more time for this cluster, and I assure you that things will take care of themselves when we move on to the other clusters.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on a second point of order.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Sir, for your clarification and for reading out the relevant section of the rules of procedure.

Sir, we respect your leadership, and we respect the rules of procedure but only in terms of their exact meaning. I do not want to enter into a legal discussion about what a particular rule of procedure means. However, you clearly said, Sir, "explanations of vote", not "explanation of votes"; you referred to just one vote. It therefore remains to be seen whether or not the legal experts will agree with your interpretation of the rule.

Our colleagues from India and Pakistan have proposed practical solutions to the problem. Under the nuclear weapons cluster, delegations have important explanations of vote to make and they feel they must be recorded. While we can limit our explanations of vote under other clusters, it is nevertheless important for us and our capitals to have our explanations of vote under this cluster reflected in the record of the Committee. As there is no other possibility of having our positions put in the record of the Committee other than by reading

them out, we therefore request to be allowed to complete our explanation of vote under this cluster.

The Chair: I suggest that the delegations that have raised this issue also do so through their regional representatives in the Bureau. I can promise that we will have an urgent meeting of the Bureau and we will take a decision. If the Bureau thinks that we should act as proposed, we will then have to add one more session for the explanations of vote under the nuclear cluster. But unless a decision is taken by the Committee, I am not going to allow statements to extend beyond the limit of 10 minutes.

I just want to remind the Committee that I read out the relevant rule at the very beginning of the session. No one raised any objections at that time. The Committee's action on each cluster has been established for years now. It is a four-step process comprising a general statement under each cluster, explanations of position or vote before action, action on the draft and explanations of vote or position after action. No delegation has said that it disagreed with this process.

I give the floor to the representative of Cuba on a point of order.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Although we had not intended to speak on this subject, I realized that the decision we take now could have major implications in terms of setting a precedent for the future. First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the excellent job you are doing, Sir, at the helm of the First Committee, and I think all delegations should praise you for it.

The Assembly's rules of procedure, from which you were reading, Sir, clearly refers to the taking of decisions or actions with regard to one draft resolution or draft decision. The Assembly's rules of procedure make no reference whatsoever to the taking of decisions by cluster or group of subjects, which is the way in which the First Committee works. I have been sitting on the First Committee for more than 20 years and I can say that never before have I seen a delegation's microphone cut off or its right to take the floor withdrawn during explanations of vote or position.

I think that a practical solution can be easily found, perhaps through action by the Bureau, which allows for balance and enables delegations to exercise their legitimate right to have their explanations of vote and positions recorded in the minutes without it necessarily

resulting in a delay in the work of the Committee. I therefore commend your decision to take this issue to the Bureau, Sir, and we trust that a practical decision on it will be made — one that will be both acceptable to all delegations and, at the same time, consistent with the rules of procedure.

The Chair: I will take action. We will have a Bureau meeting as soon as possible, and a proposal will then be made to the Committee.

I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on a further point of order.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): It seems as if my question was not heard — it was certainly not answered — but we will wait for the Bureau to meet and take a decision. However, there is one important point to note. The Bureau can make a proposal but it cannot change the rules of procedure. The Committee can change the rules of procedure, and we are ready to do that if we decide to do so. In the meantime, if it is not possible to continue reading the remainder of our explanations of vote at this meeting, then I reserve my right to come back and read them after the decision that you, Sir, will take in consultation with the other members of the Bureau. I therefore request to have this position reflected in the record of this meeting.

The Chair: I would like to remind the First Committee that at our first meeting — the organizational meeting — I clearly said that explanations of vote would be limited to 10 minutes, and no one raised any objections at that time. Now members state that they have the right to raise questions at any time, so I am telling them we will have a meeting of the Bureau. I consider myself to be a Committee member like any other, but there is also a Committee representative within the Bureau and we will take a decision. If the Bureau thinks that I was wrong, then members will have the right to speak at length at our next meeting. We will make sure that anyone can speak at any time and for as long as they wish.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I too was tempted to join the discussion on a point of order in this very interesting discussion on the rules of procedure but I will limit my intervention to explanations of vote and state that my delegation has two explanations, on draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.26 and A/C.1/71/L.28.

Ecuador conducted a detailed analysis of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”. We clearly and sincerely share the goal heralded in the draft’s title. My delegation appreciates the fact that in paragraphs 14, 15 and 16, important concepts related to nuclear-weapon-free zones and negative security assurances were reintroduced. We also welcome the inclusion of provisions on the humanitarian initiative, although the humanitarian pledge, a document supported by 127 States, was not mentioned.

Nonetheless, as my delegation has stated on many occasions during this session of the First Committee, we believe that the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, which met in Geneva this year, and its recommendations (see A/71/371), adopted yesterday by the First Committee, have been the greatest steps forward in recent years — perhaps in decades — in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Regrettably, neither the Open-ended Working Group nor its recommendations were mentioned at all, even in passing, in draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26. Indeed, the draft resolution makes no reference to the Open-ended Working Group, which, since it welcomes the participation of all States, is truly inclusive. But the draft resolution does make mention of exclusive and exclusionary processes outside the ambit of the United Nations — which we will not comment on because we are not party to them — such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification or the nuclear safety summits.

How is it possible to reconcile that? An open-ended working group, which was established pursuant to a mandate from the First Committee to discuss how to take forward nuclear disarmament negotiations, does not receive the slightest reference in the draft resolution, but processes that have not arisen from within the United Nations, and that have restrictions on who may participate, do get mentioned in a draft resolution that claims to embrace all aspects of nuclear disarmament.

We have heard that the intention of the lead sponsor of this draft resolution is to build bridges between the various positions that exist on the delicate topic of nuclear disarmament. We admire such endeavours. However, those bridges have to take us from one point to another, not keep us in the same place. The status

quo should not be retained. It is unsustainable. That is why my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26. Nevertheless, we sincerely hope that next year we will see a draft resolution that includes each and every aspect of the progress made on nuclear disarmament, including the negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which would lead us to support such a draft resolution.

With regard to A/C.1/71/L.28, Ecuador has on many occasions stated that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) must enter into force as soon as possible. Ecuador's call is not merely declaratory, as we ratified the Treaty on 12 November 2001 and set up radionuclide and infrasound stations in the Galapagos Islands, in accordance with our obligations. We were also very careful to protect the delicate ecosystem and environment of those islands, which are a World Heritage Site. However, my delegation abstained in the voting on preambular paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28 because it contains a reference to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). For Ecuador, resolution 2310 (2016) represents serious interference by the Security Council in the workings of a Treaty that was opened for signature by the General Assembly and for which a Preparatory Commission and a Provisional Technical Secretariat were established with a view to universalizing it, with a mandate of establishing a verification regime, pending the Treaty's entry into force.

Resolution 2310 (2016) seeks to give the Security Council a right to interfere in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty that the Treaty itself does not provide for. Let us be quite clear. There is no provision in the Charter of the United Nations that gives the Security Council the prerogative of intervening in the functioning of international instruments — but that does fall within the competency of the General Assembly, pursuant to Article 13 of the Charter. In no way will resolution 2310 (2016) speed up the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, nor will it help its verification regime. The Treaty will enter into force when the Annex 2 States that have not yet ratified it — including some that, ironically, supported the adoption of resolution 2310 (2016) — finally do so. We do not accept distractions of this order. The eight Annex 2 States that have not ratified the CTBT have to sign or ratify it in order for it to enter into force.

I also wish to state once again that paragraph 4 of resolution 2310 (2016), one way or another, validated

the Joint Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty formulated by China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, on 15 September 2016, which contains erroneous statements purporting to create an entitlement to maintain their nuclear arsenals, which runs counter to their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty. We trust that the next time the draft resolution comes to a vote in the First Committee, no reference will be made to resolution 2310 (2016), which does not in any way contribute to the entry into force of the CTBT, and which, on the contrary, has sown discord.

The Chair: I would like to add one more point to our very interesting procedural discussion. I invite Committee members to take a look at rule 128 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which states:

“The Chairman may permit members to explain their votes, either before or after the voting, except when the vote is taken by secret ballot. The Chairman may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.”

I would emphasize that the rule speaks of “votes”, not “vote”. Members are asked to keep this point in mind.

Ms. Mac Loughlin (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina voted in favour of draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.26, A/C.1/71/L.35, A/C.1/71/L.36, A/C.1/71/L.41, A/C.1/71/L.47 and A/C.1/71/L.64. Argentina will spare no effort to work constructively and promote the broadest possible consensus in order to reach the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. This is a priority goal of my country's foreign policy, based on our historic position in support of general and complete disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Argentina continues to participate in all discussions, forums and negotiations dealing with this objective, with a view to eliminating nuclear weapons throughout the world in an irrevocable, transparent and verifiable manner, and in the conviction that the NPT is the cornerstone of the international legal framework for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

The international community should make an effort to bring about dialogue and fruitful negotiations between the five nuclear-weapon States of the NPT and

the non-nuclear-weapon States. The next NPT review cycle will be an auspicious context for promoting collaboration. It will provide a unique opportunity for overcoming the divisions that we have unfortunately witnessed in this year's session of the First Committee. The participation and commitment of everyone will make it possible to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Finally, Argentina welcomes the adoption of initiatives to advance specific aspects of the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament agenda, such as nuclear-disarmament verification and initiatives to revitalize negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Ms. Urruela Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to make the following explanation of vote with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty".

While we should not lose sight of the ultimate objective of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons, we acknowledge that it is essential, in the interim, to implement all initiatives that attempt to mitigate the risk. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important instrument of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and a catalyst for nuclear disarmament.

Guatemala calls for the swift entry into force of the CTBT and, of course, until the objective is achieved, we believe it is crucial to maintain a moratorium on nuclear tests. We are now commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT. We underscore that the entry into force of that instrument would undoubtedly help build trust in the international system and strengthen the international verification regime and the role and activities of the Provisional Technical Secretariat. We urge the eight Annex 2 countries of the Treaty that have not signed or ratified it to do so unconditionally and as soon as possible.

Guatemala has traditionally been a sponsor of this annual resolution. This year, regrettably, we were unable to. Given our unwavering commitment to this important Treaty and its swift entry into force, we voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28 as a whole, but abstained in the voting on its paragraph 4. We would like to note our disagreement with the reference therein to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), adopted

last September over the strenuous objections voiced by many of the 166 countries that have ratified the Treaty. Although we understand the aims of that resolution and we support the efforts of its sponsors to promote the swift entry into force of the CTBT, we are concerned about the Security Council's encroachment on the functions and responsibilities of the General Assembly and other United Nations organs and agencies by taking up issues that are outside its jurisdiction.

The CTBT resolution that the First Committee considers on an annual basis is broad and substantive. Under the Treaty, it is the Preparatory Commission that is responsible for making arrangements for its effective implementation. Conferences to facilitate the CTBT's entry into force, invoked pursuant to article XIV of the Treaty, do just that. We are greatly concerned about attempts to legislate outside the margins of the Treaty.

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): Brazil would like to explain its vote on draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.5, A/C.1/71/L.26 and A/C.1/71/L.28.

Although Brazil has not adhered to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, Brazil voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.5. We did so because we acknowledge and respect the fact that 138 States have already subscribed to the Code as a practical step for countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Brazil also shares the view as to the significance of regional and international efforts to comprehensively prevent and curb the proliferation of ballistic-missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction as a contribution to international peace and security, as stated in the third preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. We particularly welcomed this year's revision of the language of paragraph 3, which is in line with the changes proposed by Brazil during the debate on resolution 69/44, especially with regard to the reference to the right to use outer space for peaceful purposes.

Nonetheless, Brazil reiterates that the construction of an effective and equitable international order depends essentially on a solid international law based on legally binding commitments. We expect that initiatives such as The Hague Code of Conduct could evolve and converge towards the negotiation of a legal instrument of universal character establishing clear obligations and rights for all States.

Brazil voted in favour of A/C.1/71/L.26, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, because we share the sponsors’ goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. However, it is our view that the text could have been more ambitious and should have included, first, an explicit mention that the nuclear-weapon States have not yet fully implemented their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); secondly, the need for a treaty on fissile material to serve both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives by also dealing with existing stocks; thirdly, support for the commencement of negotiations on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument; and, fourthly, a reference to the work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and its report (A/71/371).

Brazil abstained on paragraph 27 since, in our view, the language therein should fully reflect the relevant provisions of the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, particularly Action 30 of the Action Plan set forth in the final document’s conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions, which states that

“additional protocols should be universally applied once the complete elimination of nuclear weapons has been achieved”.

Brazil voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28, entitled “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty”, in the light of our continuing support for the integrity and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an important nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measure. However, we regret what we perceive to be a general lack of ambition from the draft resolution, particularly as it fails to adequately reflect agreed language from the final declarations of the article XIV Conferences of 2013 and 2015. The text ignores the topic of the modernization of nuclear weapons, which constitutes the greatest threat to the CTBT’s role as a nuclear disarmament measure. It also does not adequately reflect the sense of urgency given by the international community to the Treaty’s entry into force.

Brazil abstained in the voting on paragraph 4 due to its reference to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016),

which we consider counterproductive to the Treaty’s entry into force and an undue encroachment on the responsibilities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Brazil expects that these issues will be adequately addressed in next year’s draft resolution, in accordance with the widespread commitment to enhancing and renewing efforts for the entry into force of the CTBT and its consolidation as a stepping stone towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea voted against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, and totally rejects that draft resolution, which was proposed by Japan, among other States.

First of all, the draft resolution takes issue with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s nuclear and ballistic-rocket development, which is an exercise of my country’s sovereign right to defend itself using a nuclear deterrent in the face of unpardonable threats and provocations. All the tests, including the nuclear and ballistic-rocket launches, are part of the practical countermeasures taken to respond to the nuclear threats and sanctions imposed by the United States and its followers, who continue to deny the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s strategic position as a full-fledged nuclear-weapon State.

The nuclear tests carried out to assess the strength of nuclear warheads also represent steps taken to implement our policy of simultaneously developing our national economy and building up our nuclear-weapon strength with a view to drawing a permanent strategic line that we will steadfastly hold as long as nuclear treaties of the United States and that country’s attempts to blackmail the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea persist. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s nuclear weapons are a war deterrent that reliably safeguard the sovereignty and security of our nation and contribute to the peace and security of the region and the world at large in the face of nuclear blackmail by the United States, which has lasted for more than a half-century.

Furthermore, Japan does not have any grounds for discussing — nor is it otherwise qualified to discuss — the elimination of nuclear weapons. Japan’s three non-nuclear principles are designed

to deceive. Every year, nuclear assets of the United States, including nuclear aircraft carriers and strategic nuclear submarines, freely enter Japan. Weapon-grade plutonium is stockpiled in excess, and Japanese political figures are increasingly calling for the nuclear weaponization of the country. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's delegation regards Japan's draft resolution as full of prejudice, distortion and hypocrisy, and therefore voted against it.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also voted against draft resolution A/71/C.1/L.35, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", because, owing to its lack of understanding of the coalition's new agenda, some of its paragraphs are blatantly unfair in dealing with the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. All tests, including the nuclear and ballistic-missile launches, are practical countermeasures to respond to the nuclear treaties and sanctions adopted by the United States and its followers, who continue to deny the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's strategic position as a full-fledged nuclear-weapon State.

The nuclear tests designed to assess the power of nuclear warheads were also a step towards the implementation of our policy of simultaneous development of our national economy and our nuclear arsenal. We will steadfastly hold to this strategy as long as the United States continues to blackmail and draw up nuclear treaties against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As I said previously, our nuclear weapons are a war deterrent that reliably safeguard the sovereignty and security of our nation and contribute to the peace and security of the region and the world at large in the face of a more than a half-century of nuclear blackmail by the United States. Despite the fact that we voted against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.35, we agree with the main point of the draft resolution, which is to bring about nuclear disarmament and global denuclearization. If the draft resolution reflected the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula in a fairer way, we would have voted in favour of it.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/71/C.1/L.23, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons", as it expresses the international community's deep concerns with respect to the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. The only absolute guarantee against the use

of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Although the Democratic People's Republic of Korea extends its principled support for the primary purpose of the draft resolution, it abstained in the voting due to the unique security environment of the Korean peninsula.

As is well known, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is compelled to maintain a nuclear deterrent in order to safeguard its sovereignty and security and cope with the increasingly hostile nuclear treaties drafted by outside forces. For a country that is fully exposed to the hostility of the largest nuclear-weapon States, there is no option but to strengthen its own nuclear deterrent for self-defence. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear deterrence capability does not constitute any threat to non-nuclear-weapon States or any nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Finally, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", because its position in support of the principled stance of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement on nuclear disarmament remains unchanged. Nuclear disarmament should take precedence over non-proliferation, since the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only truly complete solution to the threats that nuclear weapons pose. In that regard, the nuclear-weapon States with the largest nuclear arsenals should lead the process of nuclear disarmament.

My delegation wishes to express its reservations with respect to the continued requests that it join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As a non-party to the NPT, we do not subscribe to the decisions emanating from the NPT Review Conferences. However, we support the main objectives of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.47, which calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and for that reason we voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Eloumni (Morocco): Morocco abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", and in that regard would like to clarify the following points.

Morocco has always insisted that nuclear weapons should not remain the only weapons of mass destruction that are not prohibited by an international legal instrument. Morocco did not participate in the voting on the report (A/71/371) and recommendations

of the Open-ended Working Group in Geneva, as that vote was not the best option for participating member States. Nevertheless, Morocco welcomes the report and calls for a real dialogue on the recommendations and proposals that it contains. As the report was adopted by a vote in Geneva, Morocco was hoping that such dialogue would provide Member States with another opportunity to try to rebuild consensus on effective disarmament measures, taking the report into account. Unfortunately, we came to the conclusion that there was no willingness to engage in such a dialogue, as efforts to push forward a single recommendation were confronted with similar efforts to push back against that specific recommendation. The result was not surprising: another vote in a series of votes that started last year that would add to our division on nuclear disarmament.

Moreover, we took advantage of the single round of consultations on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41 to suggest that the proposed conference conduct its work on the basis of consensus to ensure a more inclusive process. That suggestion was not accommodated. If the adoption of the draft resolution is confirmed by the General Assembly plenary, Member States would be moving directly to a negotiating conference without the appropriate preparatory work. Such a preparatory process could serve once again as a forum for developing a shared understanding on what kind of a treaty or legal measure would help us better to achieve our common objectives of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Morocco has made it clear from the beginning that neither rejecting the work of the Open-ended Working Group nor rushing with one specific recommendation is appropriate. Some of the sponsors of the draft resolution have been consistently denying any possible impact of the proposed treaty on existing mechanisms, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That could be true if they agreed that such a treaty would have no impact at all. We do not agree, and we have maintained that this process and the way it has been handled will affect the NPT review process and the potential of all of us working together. Such effects still need to be addressed instead of simply being dismissed. At the same time, Morocco would like to make it very clear that for nuclear disarmament to move forward in an effective, collective manner, the nuclear-weapon States need to comply with their obligations

and live up, in particular, to their commitments and undertakings.

The starting point is definitely the implementation of all previously agreed measures. The continued push-back on verifiable multilateral processes and the reinterpretation of article VI of the NPT in a manner that makes its objective impossible to achieve are not viable and will continue feeding factors that contribute to division, leading to erosion of the credibility and authority of the NPT.

Morocco remains committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons through a comprehensive but patient and effective process. The General Assembly should continue considering such a process in a manner that moves us forward without putting at risk our achievements or undermining existing mechanisms. At the same time, in striving to move nuclear disarmament forward, all efforts should be made to preserve the integrity of the disarmament machinery while exploring all means of enhancing its efficiency.

The preparatory work for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament offers us an opportunity to review and improve the work of this machinery. But it remains particularly important and urgent to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament begins substantive work on the items on its agenda as soon as possible.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): I have requested the floor to explain my delegation's position on several draft resolutions.

First, with respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65, entitled "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices", it has been the consistent principled position of my delegation on a fissile material cut-off treaty alone that a cut-off treaty that simply maintains the status quo would effectively serve neither the objective of non-proliferation nor the objective of disarmament by perpetuating the symmetries and asymmetries in holdings. Such a treaty would be highly detrimental to strategic stability at both global and regional levels, particularly in South Asia, where a cut-off treaty would serve only to support a strategic imbalance that has emerged as a result of discriminatory waivers and exceptions to long-held non-proliferation norms. A treaty negotiated or considered under the Shannon mandate does not guarantee the existing stocks of fissile

material will be covered in a manner that addresses the concerns I have just outlined.

Pakistan has presented concrete proposals in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to cover existing stocks in a broader fissile-material treaty. We remain open to considering other such proposals as well as to making substantive progress on a fissile-material treaty. The current draft resolution is aimed at replicating the unsuccessful approach of the ill-advised Group of Governmental Experts, which worked during the 2014-2015 period as a non-representative body and essentially duplicated the work of the CD. The Group failed to make any meaningful progress on the issue of fissile materials. Its outcome was a rehash of known positions and self-serving arguments, distracting us from focusing on the real issues and security concerns that are preventing consensus on the issue and that need to be addressed to facilitate consensus on the commencement of negotiations in the CD.

Pakistan engaged with the lead sponsors of the draft resolution in a constructive and positive spirit. We made several proposals for modifying the text and offered some drafting suggestions. Our initial proposals were aimed at starting substantive work on a truly non-discriminatory treaty in the CD, addressing both the future and the past production of fissile materials. Regrettably, the sponsors expressed their inability to take those suggestions on board and persisted with a divisive approach that would further undermine the established disarmament machinery. In order to avoid this outcome, we offered a revised set of proposals that clearly demonstrated significant flexibility from our side. We deeply regret that even this was not accepted by the lead sponsors, which leaves us with no option but to vote against the draft resolution.

With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1, entitled "Nuclear disarmament verification", Pakistan remains committed to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world through the conclusion of a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. To that end, Pakistan supports the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We recognize that the process of multilateral nuclear disarmament involving the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons is a complex undertaking. Verification would be an essential and key component of this process, the credibility of which would rest to a large degree on

an effective and independent verification mechanism to be agreed during the negotiation process.

The negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention need to be undertaken in a holistic manner; it should not be pursued in a piecemeal fashion. Nonetheless, we see the value of engaging some expert work on the issue of verification through a representative forum that includes all the relevant stakeholders. In our view, the more suitable forum for such work would have been the CD. The CD's rules of procedure and past precedent permit the establishment of a subsidiary body for that purpose, and we submitted an amendment to the sponsors encouraging establishing such a body. The sponsors of the draft resolution, however, chose to engage a 25-member Group of Governmental Experts to take on that task, rather than having the CD undertake this work. My delegation has therefore been constrained to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution. Nonetheless, Pakistan hopes to be part of the group that will be established pursuant to the draft resolution.

With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", my delegation supports several elements of the draft resolution, including, *inter alia*, the call for the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, the inclusion of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances and the need for taking into account the security interests of all States while negotiating disarmament treaties. However, we cannot agree to the calls for the full implementation of the action plans of previous Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in line with our well-known position on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Paragraph 16 of the draft resolution calls for the immediate commencement of fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations on the basis of a mandate set out in document CD/1299. It is indeed ironic that the draft resolution on nuclear disarmament continues to reflect only the non-proliferation-centric fissile-material negotiations. We therefore decided to vote against that paragraph.

On draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", Pakistan remains committed to the achievement of a

nuclear-weapon-free world through the conclusion of a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction. As a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Pakistan was a sponsor of resolution 70/34 and of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.64, presented this year and entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", which calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a convention in the CD.

In setting nuclear disarmament as its highest priority, the delegation of Pakistan wishes to emphasize that, in adopting disarmament measures, the right of each State to security should be kept in mind and that at each stage of the disarmament process the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments and military forces. Pakistan believes that this cardinal objective can be achieved only as a cooperative and universally agreed undertaking through a consensus-based process involving all the relevant stakeholders in a manner that results in equal and undiminished, if not increased, security for all States.

The draft resolution put forward by the sponsors lacks some essential elements, including, first, having the nuclear-weapon States on board; secondly, taking on board the vital security interests of all States; thirdly, requiring a consensus rule for conducting negotiations that would help States to protect their national security interests; fourthly, affirming the primacy and centrality of established disarmament machinery; and, fifthly, adopting holistic and comprehensive approach, which is indispensable for nuclear disarmament. In the light of those important factors, my delegation has been constrained to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.35, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world", we continue to appreciate efforts by the sponsors of last year's resolution to streamline the text and take out some if not all controversial elements. We are of the view that the text can be further improved. While acknowledging the importance of several aspects of the draft resolution, we are dismayed by the ritualistic and unrealistic assertion in paragraph 14 that calls upon Pakistan to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-

weapon State. As a non-party to the NPT, we cannot be expected to subscribe to the conclusions and decisions of the Treaty. My delegation has therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole, while voting against paragraph 14.

With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", Pakistan has over the years consistently supported the objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Accordingly, we voted in favour of the resolution in the First Committee and will do so again this year. The year 2016 marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the CTBT for signature. We share the concern that, even after two decades, the Treaty has not entered into force. My delegation continues to believe that the objective of the call in the draft resolution for promoting signatures and ratifications leading to the CTBT's entry into force will be facilitated when major erstwhile proponents of the CTBT decide to ratify it.

Pakistan actively participated in the negotiations on the CTBT in the CD and voted in 1996 in favour of adoption of the Treaty. Pakistan attends CTBT Preparatory Commission meetings as an accredited observer State. Since 1998, Pakistan has voluntarily observed a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing. Pakistan has stated that it will not be the first to resume testing in the region. Recently, at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly (see A/71/PV.11), our Prime Minister reiterated our readiness to agree on a bilateral arrangement between Pakistan and India on a nuclear-test ban.

The draft resolution also refers to the adoption of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). We are wary of the Security Council defining the legislative requirements for Member States and entering into areas that are not necessarily under its jurisdiction. We voted in favour of the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution to signify our support for the objective and purpose of the CTBT. We are also not bound by any provisions that emanate from the NPT, its Review Conferences or any other instrument to which Pakistan is not party. In line with the consistent support for the objectives and purposes of the Treaty, my delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole and abstained in the voting on its preambular paragraphs.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of Pakistan on a point of order.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): I will submit the texts of the remainder of the explanations of vote that I could not deliver here due to time constraints, specifically our explanations of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”; draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.23, entitled “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons”; draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.24, entitled “Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons”; draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.36, entitled “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world”; and draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.10, entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”. In addition, our explanation of vote on The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which this year is the subject of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.5, delivered at the 62nd meeting of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, remains valid, and we will submit it and our other explanations of vote from previous years in writing for inclusion in the record of the Committee.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country’s delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.5, entitled “The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”. The Syrian Arab Republic would like to reiterate its commitment to working together in the multilateral framework of the United Nations to ensure the effective implementation of different disarmament mechanisms.

Some countries have adopted an approach that aims to conclude certain agreements or legal instruments outside of the United Nations. Such an approach undermines the disarmament machinery and could have an adverse effect on the objectives to which we all aspire, namely, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Hague Code of Conduct is selective, discriminatory and unbalanced, which is contrary to our approach. It takes only a single narrow view of the disarmament issue and does not address the *raison d’être* of non-proliferation.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28, entitled “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty”, my country once again abstained in the voting. Syria has always held that a convention of such great importance and sensitivity cannot overlook the legitimate concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States, which represent the majority of the countries in the world. Those countries have not received any guarantees against the use of nuclear weapons. My country sees gaps in the Treaty, including the fact that it does not provide any

guarantees against the use of nuclear weapons within a set deadline, and we have addressed those gaps with comments that have enjoyed consensus. Similarly, the text does not include any guarantees prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the verification and inspection mechanism could open the door to erroneous or politicized use of the text.

We are also very concerned about the following points. Israel possesses weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons and is the only country in our region that does. Israel refuses to make its facilities available for international monitoring, which threatens and impedes efforts to create a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and exposes the region and the world to the threat of nuclear weapons, and in particular Israeli nuclear weapons, without any response from the international community. We would also like to raise reservations about all of the paragraphs and draft resolutions that have been adopted, or which will subsequently be adopted, in which reference is made to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

With regard to document A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1, on a treaty banning fissile material for the production of nuclear weapons, we abstained in the voting once again because the sponsors of the draft resolution did not take into account the points and comments that we and other delegations made. Those comments underlined the importance of including in the draft resolution a provision on fissile material stocks. We remain convinced that the Conference on Disarmament is the only appropriate framework and forum for the discussion of such a convention, with a view to reaching an agreement on a balanced, comprehensive programme in the Conference.

The Chair: I have a brief announcement to make. The Bureau of the Committee held a meeting a few minutes ago with regard to time limits and explanations of vote. I will now read out the conclusions of that meeting.

First, it must be well understood that the Chair will enforce rule 128 and limit explanations of vote to 10 minutes per cluster, not per draft resolution. I would remind the Committee that the time limit was discussed at our organizational meeting and that no one raised any objections at that time. Secondly, I understand that there have been some misunderstandings, but I would urge delegations to revise their explanations of vote

to ensure that they respect the 10-minute time limit. Thirdly, the current Bureau will bring this issue to the attention of the next Bureau so that it can be addressed in advance. Fourthly — and I think that this is the most important of them all — just for today, notwithstanding the decision of the Bureau and on an exceptional basis, I will allow delegations that were not able to finish their explanations of vote to take the floor to do so.

Mr. Varma (India): I thought that the First Committee had had enough of the Indian delegation, Mr. Chair, but you have been very kind to let me finish reading out India's three remaining explanations of vote.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", we were constrained to abstain in the voting because of certain references to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), on which India's position is well known. However, our abstention should not be seen as opposition to other provisions of the draft resolution that we believe are consistent with the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) as well as India's national positions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Those provisions include the reference to the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/S-10/2), NAM summit statements, the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, the role and work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), including the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, reference to document CD/2067, which consists of the proposal of the Group of 21 for a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention, the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the Shannon mandate, the call for convening an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, and support for the draft resolution, sponsored by NAM, calling for a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament by 2018. We compliment Myanmar for retaining vital principled positions in this draft resolution, which are supported by a vast majority of countries.

Turning to draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.49, entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty", India respects the sovereign choice of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the

basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. That principle is consistent with the provisions of document A/S-10/2 and the 1999 guidelines of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. India enjoys friendly and mutually beneficial relations with countries of the African continent and has just hosted a summit meeting with all the countries of Africa. India shares and supports African aspirations for enhancing the region's well-being and security. We respect the sovereign choice of States parties to the Pelindaba Treaty and welcome the Treaty's successful entry into force. As a nuclear-weapon State, India conveys its unambiguous assurance that it will respect the status of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Turning to my last explanation of vote, on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1, entitled "Nuclear disarmament verification", India voted in favour of this draft resolution in view of the importance of increasing common understanding of international and effective verification in multilateral legal instruments for the elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, which would also be an essential element of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention. We acknowledge the utility of technical work on verification as proposed in the draft resolution, which can build upon past work done in the United Nations Disarmament Commission on the subject, while keeping in mind the principles enshrined in the SSOD-I final document. At the same time, such work cannot prejudice the nature and scope of any eventual nuclear disarmament instrument, which would, in turn, have an impact on the verification elements to be agreed and specific to that instrument.

Work on verification under the proposed Group of Governmental Experts cannot be a substitute for the established disarmament mission of the CD and the Disarmament Commission in addressing the issue of nuclear disarmament verification. In our understanding, the reference to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the eleventh preambular paragraph is limited to what is included in the IAEA Statute. Our understanding of paragraph 1 is that it provides for global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): As a country that is under the nuclear threat of the Israeli regime, Iran's vital interest in and its commitment to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons

is unquestionable. We share the view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or the threat of their use. We will actively participate in the proposed conference in 2017 based on that principled position.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a signatory State of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. The principal objective of the Treaty is to comprehensively terminate further qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons. That objective was reaffirmed by nuclear-weapon States at the time of the conclusion of the CTBT. Two decades after the adoption of the Treaty by the General Assembly, we need to answer whether we have achieved that objective or, conversely, whether the qualitative improvement of such weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons remains ongoing. Based on publicly available information, nuclear-weapon States are modernizing and qualitatively upgrading their nuclear weapons by using new technologies. The development and use of new technologies for upgrading and modernizing existing nuclear-weapons systems, including through subcritical testing and simulations, undermine the object and purpose of the CTBT.

It is a source of serious regret that in this draft resolution there is not even the slightest call for the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from such measures. In my delegation's view, the current draft resolution could be improved to meet that concern. At the same time, my delegation disassociates itself from the references in the draft resolution to a Security Council resolution. In principle, in our view, the General Assembly can and must express its views on any matters independently, and there is no need to refer to the work of other organs, which was done in a completely different context.

There are also certain other aspects in the draft resolution regarding which my delegation expresses serious reservations. First, pending the entry into force of the Treaty, its verification regime should be provisionally considered at any stage of development as an independent and reliable means to ensure compliance with the Treaty once it enters into force. Secondly, despite the positive role that might be played by initiatives of the Executive Secretary of the Provisional Technical Secretariat, the Friends of the CTBT, groups

of eminent persons or youth groups, none of them should be considered to have official status during the preparatory process for the Treaty's verification regime. Therefore, any documents produced by those parties should not acquire any status in the process.

Turning to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1, entitled "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices", the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that any instrument aiming to ban the production and provide for the total elimination of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices should be comprehensive and non-discriminatory. It must be of a nuclear disarmament nature and, accordingly, its scope must cover the past, present and future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and provide for the verifiable declaration and total elimination of all stockpiles of such material worldwide by a fixed date.

Accordingly, such an instrument should oblige all nuclear-weapon possessors and all the nuclear-weapon States without exception to completely end the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and declare and destroy all their stockpiles of such materials. All such obligations should be fulfilled within a specified time frame in an irreversible and transparent manner and under strict international verification. We abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1 because it does not propose an instrument capable of addressing those conditions. Instead, it advocates the commencement of negotiations on a treaty on the basis of a limited mandate that is set forth in an old document that is no longer relevant to today's realities. The mandate for negotiating a treaty banning fissile material must include not only future but also past production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and provide for the internationally verifiable elimination of existing stockpiles of such material worldwide.

Finally, while the previous Group of Governmental Experts on this issue proved clearly that there is no consensus on the subject, we see no added value in establishing another group of experts with another name but the same mandate.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, for your flexibility and willingness to accommodate us.

Since I rushed through my previous explanations of vote, I wanted to clarify a point I made on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1. It may have sounded as though I was explaining an abstention in the voting on the draft resolution. For that reason, I wish to put on the record that we voted against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1, entitled “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26, entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, Pakistan supports the objective of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, a key goal of the draft resolution. My delegation would like to clarify our position on some of its provisions.

On the references to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its Review Conferences, we cannot be bound by decisions issuing from forums where we are not present. We are also concerned that a draft resolution seeking united action towards elimination of nuclear weapons is only calling for addressing the non-proliferation aspect of fissile materials. The comprehensive safeguards agreement obviously applies only to those States that have consented to assume such legal obligations under the NPT. In view of those points, my delegation abstained in the voting on the resolution as a whole, as well as on paragraphs 5 and 27, and voted against paragraph 20.

I would also like to explain my delegation’s position on draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.23, A/C.1/71/L.24 and A/C.1/71/L.36, on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and ethical imperatives of a nuclear-weapon-free world, respectively.

Pakistan supports nuclear disarmament objectives and the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We understand and share the sense of frustration among non-nuclear-weapon States over the slow pace of nuclear-disarmament obligations by the nuclear-weapon States. Pakistan also shares the concerns and anxieties associated with the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We therefore actively participated and contributed to the three conferences held on the subject — in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, in 2013 and 2014.

At the same time, we consider that the subject of nuclear weapons cannot be reduced solely to humanitarian dimensions, as that approach effectively ignores its security aspects. The principle of equal and undiminished security for all was adopted universally at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I), both in the non-conventional and conventional spheres, and at the regional and international levels. We consider this principle to be a prerequisite for efforts aimed at attaining nuclear disarmament. In the light of those considerations, my delegation was obligated to abstain in the voting on those three draft resolutions.

With regard to the draft resolution on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/71/L.10), Pakistan, along with the vast majority of States that constitute the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, is of the view that the subject of nuclear weapons needs to be tackled through a comprehensive approach, namely, through the urgent commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. Pakistan firmly believes in the right of every State to equal and undiminished security. That principle was adopted universally by SSOD-I, both in the conventional and non-conventional spheres, and we consider it to be fundamental to any comprehensive approach towards nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.5, entitled “The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”, Pakistan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the objective of the non-proliferation of missiles. During the discussions that led to the evolution of The Hague Code of Conduct, Pakistan stressed that the issue of missiles was complex. It was therefore important to address the issue in a duly constituted multilateral forum, so that the views and concerns of all States could be considered. While we acknowledge that efforts were made to accommodate the concerns of participating States, the lack of proper deliberations prevented the views of several missile-possessing States from being appropriately taken into account. For those reasons, my delegation abstained in the voting on this draft resolution.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting on the draft

resolutions under cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”, carried over from yesterday.

The Committee will now turn to the draft resolutions and decisions listed in informal paper A/C.1/71/INF/2, beginning with cluster 2, “Other weapons of mass destruction”. I shall first give the floor to speakers who wish to make general statements or to introduce draft resolutions.

I call now on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): I requested the floor to make a general statement in support of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.12, entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”.

Pakistan supports the draft resolution and shares its concerns about terrorists and non-State actors acquiring and using weapons and materials that could cause mass destruction. We need to remain vigilant in that regard. Increased international cooperation, including the initiation of negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons, should therefore be given serious consideration.

We, the States Members of the United Nations, have come a long way in developing and putting in place measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Mechanisms like the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit have been valuable in that regard.

Pakistan has remained at the forefront of the fight against terrorism. In addition to its active engagement with the 1540 Committee, the Global Initiative and the Summit, Pakistan participates in the Container Security Initiative, the Secure Freight Initiative, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Incident and Trafficking Database and, as an observer, in the Proliferation Security Initiative. We joined the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) as a non-possessor State. Pakistan subscribes to the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and has ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities, including its 2005 amendment.

We have enacted and enforced export-control measures, national physical-protection and other related actions in order to prevent weapons of mass destruction

technology from falling into the hands of terrorists. Our commitment in that regard remains second to none. The faithful implementation of existing treaty regimes such as the CWC and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction can effectively address most of those threats. We agree with the widely held view that the best guarantee against the threat of the possible use of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons lies in their total elimination.

Through our continued efforts, we, the peoples of the United Nations, will prevail and eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Chair: There being no requests for explanations of vote or position before the voting, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.12, entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.12 was introduced by the representative of India at the Committee’s 11th meeting, on 14 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/71/L.12.

The main sponsors have informed the Bureau of the following oral revision to the text: at the end of the sixth preambular paragraph, the words “and their entry into force on 8 May 2016” will be added.

The additional sponsors are listed in the e-Delegate portal of the First Committee. In addition to that, the Central African Republic, the Niger, Nigeria and Turkey have also become sponsors.

The Chair: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.12 have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.12 was adopted.

The Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.43, entitled “Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol”.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.43 was introduced by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at the Committee's 13th meeting, on 17 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/71/L.43.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Israel, United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.43 was adopted by 179 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

The Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.55, entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources".

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.55 was introduced by the representative of France on 14 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/71/L.55.

The additional sponsors are listed in the e-Delegate portal of the First Committee. In addition to that, the Central African Republic, the Niger and Nigeria have also become sponsors.

The Chair: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.55 have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.55 was adopted.

The Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.56, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.56 was introduced by the representative of Hungary at the Committee's 13th

meeting, on 17 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/71/L.56. In addition, the following oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of paragraph 12 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request that the Secretary-General continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Biological Weapons Convention and continue to provide such services as may be required for the conduct and implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, while noting the importance of addressing the issues arising from outstanding dues of States parties and participating States and from recently implemented United Nations financial and accounting practices.

The Secretary-General wishes to draw the attention of Member States to the fact that the States parties to the Convention, at a meeting of States parties held from 14 to 18 December 2015, approved arrangements for the eighth Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee in 2016, including cost estimates prepared by the Secretariat. The eighth Review Conference, to be held from 7 to 25 November 2016, will take decisions on any future intersessional programme of work for the years 2017 to 2021.

It should be recalled that all activities related to international conventions or treaties that, under their respective legal arrangements, ought to be financed outside the programme budget of the United Nations may be undertaken by the Secretariat only when sufficient funding is received in advance from States parties to the Convention. Accordingly, the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.56 would not give rise to any financial implications for the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

The Chair: The sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.56 has expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.56 was adopted.

The Chair: I now call on those delegations wishing to speak in explanation of vote or position after the voting on draft resolutions in cluster 2.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to explain the Russian position

on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.55, entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources". Needless to say, Russia shares the international community's concerns about the risk of radioactive materials and sources falling into the hands of terrorists, and we are active participants in efforts to combat that threat.

We are of the view that the topics of nuclear security and physical nuclear security in general, as well as issues related to the handling of radioactive sources in particular, should be examined in the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As everyone is aware, the IAEA is the sole international organization with the necessary related expertise. In the past few years, the Agency has done a great deal of work in this area, and all of those efforts were exhaustively reflected in the resolutions adopted at the sixtieth session of the IAEA General Conference, held in September. In our opinion, it is unacceptable that a draft resolution adopted by us here in the First Committee should attempt to freely interpret the results of work carried out by the IAEA. Unfortunately, that is the precise weakness of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.55.

I would first like to draw the Committee's attention to paragraph 10, which calls for the drafting of a guiding document for the management of disused radioactive sources, as a supplement to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. At the IAEA, we have noted more than once that such a supplementary document, as proposed, requires significant additional work. A number of its provisions impinge directly on work in the market for radioactive sources and could have a negative effect on end-consumers' ability to access them. Furthermore, some of the document's provisions could lead to a deterioration in the security surrounding the handling of spent radioactive sources. In general, we are very doubtful about the logic of supporting this draft resolution in its current form.

Furthermore, paragraph 12 of the draft resolution is also vulnerable to criticism. We note with regret that there has been a recent trend in attempting to turn the IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database into a tool for settling political scores and making unsubstantiated accusations. Despite the fact that our substantive views and comments on the text were not taken into account, Russia, as the Committee is aware, did not wish to undermine the consensus on the draft resolution. We made that decision because we believe

that the General Assembly should once again send a united political signal that the issue of the physical security of radioactive sources remains on its agenda. Despite the problems clearly present in the text of the draft resolution, we believe that, overall, it responds to its purpose.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to explain my delegation's position on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.12, entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction".

Combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations on a non-discriminatory basis has been a long-standing policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Accordingly, Iran has supported the various iterations of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.12 since it was first introduced in the First Committee.

We fully agree that international cooperation aimed at strengthening the security and physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities helps to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons. We believe that this important issue can best be addressed in an open, comprehensive and transparent manner and with the participation of all States within the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the most appropriate and relevant multilateral organization for this purpose.

We also have reservations about the reference in the ninth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution to the so-called Nuclear Security Summit. My delegation would therefore like to put on record that it dissociates itself from the consensus on that preambular paragraph.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.55, entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources", I would like to read out my explanation of vote. My delegation fully supports the main objective of the draft resolution. To preserve the global consensus on that issue, it is necessary to avoid overloading the text of the draft with unrelated and highly technical matters. We encourage sponsors to refrain from bringing into the draft resolution issues that are of a technical nature and should be exclusively considered by the IAEA.

The Chair: We have heard from the last speaker for the explanations of vote after the vote on cluster 2.

The Committee will now proceed to cluster 3, "Outer space (Disarmament Aspects)". I shall first give the floor to delegations wishing to make general

statements or to introduce draft resolutions under cluster 3.

Mrs. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to make a general statement on the group of draft resolutions submitted under the cluster "Outer space (Disarmament Aspects)".

The existing legal regime on outer space must be consolidated and strengthened to prevent an arms race in that environment. That is why Cuba supports the urgent adoption of a treaty for the prevention and prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space. An arms race in space would pose grave dangers to international peace and security. The militarization of outer space is unacceptable. On the contrary, international cooperation should be promoted to facilitate the legitimate right of all States to the peaceful use and exploration of outer space for the benefit of the scientific and economic development of humankind. It is for those reasons that the Cuban delegation co-sponsors and supports draft resolutions A/C.1/71.L.3, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space"; A/C.1/71/L.18, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space"; and A/C.1/71/L.19, entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities".

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As the Committee knows, Russia supports research on, and the use of, space for peaceful purposes to guarantee the transparency, predictability, security and long-term sustainability of space activity. By this, we mean that a whole range of activities are required to provide for the smooth functioning of all outer-space infrastructure. Moreover, we are convinced that, without a precise answer to the question of whether or not there will be weapons in space in future, any work to guarantee the security and long-term sustainability of outer space activity will be seriously impeded and at times even impossible. For that reason, with the support of a large group of like-minded stakeholders, Russia has consistently and persistently advocated for the swift adoption of practical measures to create the political and legal guarantees that are needed to keep space free of any kind of weapon.

Our unconditional priority is the development and adoption of an international legally binding agreement

on preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space. We propose that the basis of such an agreement should be a renewed Russian-Chinese 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. In a revised form, such a draft treaty was presented to the Conference on Disarmament in June 2014. Developing a draft treaty will undoubtedly require a significant amount of time. We therefore suggest that specific political measures should be undertaken now, in order to create the conditions conducive to ensuring that a decision is made on all of the security issues relating to outer-space activity and for consequent progress to be made towards a draft treaty.

In that regard, the most effective measures and, in essence, the only measures would be the Russian initiative of a political commitment to no first placement of weapons of outer space, which has already become an international commitment. Fourteen States are already full-fledged participants in the initiative and that number increases each year. Our aim is to make the initiative universal in its scope. Based on such considerations, for the third year in a row, in addition to supporting traditional resolutions on preventing an arms race in outer space, we are promoting draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18 on the subject.

The essence of the no-first-placement initiative is the political obligation of responsible States not to start an arms race in outer space. The draft resolution is in essence a call to States to take a sober look at the increasing threat of the deployment of weapons in outer space and, initially, to consider the possibility that they can consolidate their national commitments into a policy of not deploying weapons in outer space. What is key is that at the moment a no-first-placement treaty is the only real measure designed to prevent an arms race in outer space. If we all subscribe to that commitment, then from a political perspective the question of preventing an arms race in outer space will be resolved.

No single State will then be the first, second, fifth or tenth to place weapons in outer space. It is a political commitment at the very highest national level on one quite specific issue. Of course, all international security issues cannot be solved by this one draft resolution, but no verification measures are required. If anyone pretends not to realize that, or simply does not want to acknowledge it, we would have serious doubts about the sincerity of that party's approach to

maintaining security in outer space. If a State continues to refrain from supporting this draft resolution for any reason, we would like to ask it a very direct and simple question: what is unacceptable to it about the fact that we are encouraging all States Members of the United Nations to consider the possibility of making a political commitment not to place weapons in outer space?

In particular, we have major issues with our partners in the European Union, as well as with countries such as Japan and Australia and independent players in the international arena, such as Switzerland, Austria and New Zealand. All of them have declared or are declaring their commitment to preventing an arms race in outer space. What, then, is their basis for refraining from supporting draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18? After all, it is the only active initiative that can resolve the problems related to preventing the arms race in outer space.

No other initiatives have been proposed. It seems that, in formal terms, countries are advocating the prevention of an arms race in outer space, but they are in fact blocking any attempt by other States to make progress towards resolving the issue. Such an approach contradicts not only the activities and aims of the First Committee, but also the Charter of the United Nations.

I wish to address those who intend to withhold their support for the draft resolution. Are they not ashamed of shooting themselves in the foot and foreclosing any dialogue on the text? Once again, I draw Committee members' attention to the fact that our proposal reflects the highest level of intergovernmental transparency and mutual trust. If adopted, the treaty proposed by the draft resolution would become the most efficient tool for impeding the weaponization of outer space. We hope that our initiative will be universally accepted and that it will be supported by all States that have an interest in preserving space as a peaceful, free environment without weapons or any form of violence.

We have before us an opportunity to demonstrate what we truly mean when we say that we are committed to preventing an arms race in outer space.

The Chair: The Committee will now hear statements in explanation of position before we take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18, "No first placement of weapons in outer space", listed under cluster 3.

Mr. Agha (Slovakia): I am taking the floor in explanation of vote on the proposal contained in document A/C.1/71/L.18, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the European Union (EU). The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia. We will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18.

Ours is a long-standing position in favour of the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and of the peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. Strengthening the safety, security and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space is of common interest and a key priority for us. It contributes to the development and security of States. We believe it is important to develop initiatives to ensure confidence and mutual trust among current and future space actors. We are convinced that transparency and confidence-building measures can contribute to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. That is the reason that the EU has proposed an international code of conduct for outer space activities and reiterates its call for increased international cooperation that should help us to establish agreed standards of responsible behaviour in outer space.

We remain committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Therefore, EU member States voted in favour of resolution 70/26, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. However, we are concerned that “no first placement of weapons in outer space” does not adequately respond to the objective of strengthening trust and confidence among States. We are concerned by the ambiguity of the very idea of “not to be the first to place”, which may entice States to prepare to be second or third. We therefore assess that it could be interpreted as implicitly encouraging States to pre-emptively develop offensive space capabilities in order to be prepared to react when another State of places a weapon in space, by placing, in turn, a weapon in space.

Moreover, the initiative does not address the difficult issue of defining what a weapon in outer space is, which could easily lead a State to mistakenly believe that another State has placed weapons in outer space.

Without a common understanding of what constitutes a weapon in space, a State could inadvertently put an object in space that another State considers to be a weapon. For example, a number of existing satellites are capable of performing orbital manoeuvres. Those satellites could be construed to be space weapons because they could also have the capability of being manoeuvred into other satellites.

We remain concerned about the continued development of all anti-satellite weapons and capabilities, including those that are terrestrially based, and underline the importance of addressing such developments promptly and as part of international efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space. We therefore believe that introducing a no-first-placement pledge in this environment could lead to misperceptions and misunderstandings. It could potentially have the opposite effect of the declared intention, namely, to contribute to strengthening international peace and security and prevent an arms race in outer space. We believe that it is more useful to address behaviour in outer space, and the use of it, in order to further discussions and initiatives on how to prevent space from becoming an arena for conflict and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the space environment.

We would like to stress that, for us, for the reasons we have just outlined, the updated draft resolution on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and on the threat or use of force against outer space objects, as submitted by China and the Russian Federation, does not represent a basis for substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Finally, we would like to recall that we set out our priorities for work at the Conference on Disarmament in our statement during the thematic discussion on the disarmament machinery (see A/C.1/71/PV.21).

Ms. Bila (Ukraine): Ukraine is committed to all aspects of disarmament, including the principle of no placement of weapons of any kind in outer space. However, I would like to inform the Committee that my delegation will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”. The draft resolution, submitted by the Russian Federation, does not look credible.

Unfortunately, since 2014 and 2015, the situation brought about by Russia’s aggressive policies has not changed. The year 2016 brought to the international

stage yet more violent and cruel attacks in Syria, as well as continued war in eastern Ukraine. By advocating no first placement of nuclear weapons in outer space, the Russian Federation and those who support that concept draw attention away from the ongoing crimes being committed by the Kremlin.

Moreover, events of recent years clearly show that the Russian Federation has already started an arms race. After the suspension of the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the denunciation of the treaty on the Russian fleet stationed in the Ukrainian waters of the Black Sea, the Russian Federation violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and suspended the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation concerning the Management and Disposition of Plutonium Designated as No Longer Required for Defence Purposes and Related Cooperation. Against this background, the Russian Federation is conducting large-scale military exercises near the Ukrainian border and on occupied territories of Ukraine.

Finally, the Russian economy is so exhausted that it is impossible for Moscow to expand its plans for an arms race in outer space. The draft resolution on no first placement submitted by Russia is a reservation of its place in space for a future arms race. If violating legally binding treaties is not a problem for the Russian Federation, violating its own resolution could be just as easily done.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): My delegation will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”.

In considering the Russian Federation’s initiative on no first placement — and I want to assure the representative of the Russian Federation that we have indeed considered the initiative — the United States took seriously the criteria for evaluating space-related transparency and confidence-building measures that were established in the study of outer-space transparency and confidence-building measures contained in the 2013 consensus report (A/68/189) of the Group of Governmental Experts. That study was later endorsed by the full General Assembly in resolutions 68/50, 69/38 and 70/53, which the United States co-sponsored with Russia and China, as well as a

resolution that is being considered this year in the First Committee (A/C.1/71/L.19).

As the report stated, non-legally binding transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activity should first be clear, practical and proven, meaning that both the application and the efficacy of the proposed measure must be demonstrated by one or more actors; secondly, they should be verifiable by other parties in their application, either independently or collectively; and, finally, they should reduce or even eliminate the causes of mistrust, misunderstanding and miscalculation with regard to the activities and intentions of States.

In applying the consensus criteria of the Group of Governmental Experts, the United States finds that Russia’s no-first-placement initiative contains a number of significant problems. First, it does not adequately define what constitutes a weapon in outer space. As a result, States will not have any shared understanding of the operative terminology. Secondly, it would not be possible to effectively confirm a State’s political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. Accordingly, the application and efficacy of the proposed measure could not be demonstrated. Thirdly, the initiative focuses exclusively on space-based weapons. It is silent with regard to terrestrially based anti-satellite weapons and thus does not contribute to increasing stability in outer space.

Given these problems, the United States has determined that the no-first-placement initiative continues to fail to satisfy the consensus criteria for a valid transparency and confidence-building measure. It is therefore problematic and unlikely to be equitable or effective in addressing the challenges we face in sustaining the outer-space environment for future generations. Accordingly, as it has done for the past two years, the United States will again vote against this First Committee draft resolution and intends to vote against it in the full General Assembly.

The goal of the United States is to ensure the long-term sustainability, stability, safety and security of the outer-space environment. Preventing the extension of conflict into space is a major part of this goal. Furthermore, the United States continues to believe that the transparency and confidence-building measures recommended by the 2013 report of the Group of Governmental Experts offer pragmatic, near-term solutions to the challenges associated with

orbital congestion, collision avoidance and responsible, peaceful behaviour in outer space.

The Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.3, entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.3 was introduced by the representative of Egypt on 11 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/71/L.3. The additional sponsors are listed in the e-Delegate portal of the First Committee. In addition to that, Nigeria and Eritrea have also become sponsors.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal,

Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

none

Abstaining:

Israel, Palau, South Sudan, United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.3 was adopted by 178 to none, with 4 abstentions.

The Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18 was just introduced by the representative of the Russian Federation. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/71/L.18. The additional sponsors are listed in the e-Delegate portal of the First Committee. There are no further additional sponsors for draft resolution L.18.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte

d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Georgia, Israel, Ukraine, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.18 was adopted by 126 to 4, with 49 abstentions.

The Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.19, entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities".

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.19 was introduced by the representative of the Russian Federation at the Committee's 15th meeting, on 19 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/71/L.19. The additional sponsors are listed in the e-Delegate portal of the First Committee.

The Chair: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.19 have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.19 was adopted.

The Chair: Two delegations have requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply. However, I would ask those delegations to speak at the next meeting of the Committee, on Monday, as we have exhausted the time available to us today.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Representatives are kindly requested to keep the set of draft proposals under clusters 4 and 5 that they received from the Conference Officers. The Committee will take up those drafts on Monday.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.