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First Committee

7th meeting

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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. José Luis Cancela (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 86 to 103 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Azor (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Haiti.

I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of the full support of CARICOM and, of course, of my delegation. I endorse the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Weapons of mass destruction are the biggest threat to our collective security. That said, CARICOM notes with satisfaction the efforts and considerable progress made this year in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. CARICOM hopes that such a climate is capable of inspiring hope in the future. What is required is work towards the elimination, or at least the reduction, of weapons of mass destruction while also regulating conventional weapons. Along these lines, CARICOM welcomes the joint statement made in London last April by the Presidents of the United States and Russia, Obama and Medvedev, committing

their two States to working towards denuclearization by commencing to reduce their own arsenals.

CARICOM also welcomes the 24 September Security Council summit on disarmament (see S/PV.6191). That meeting cast light on the manifest will of States to move towards lasting, viable solutions in this matter. Further, CARICOM hopes that the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will produce a favourable political climate for the international community and represent progress towards a safer world. The three pillars of the NPT — disarmament, non-proliferation and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes — must continue to be the objectives of the international community.

CARICOM is part of one of the five nuclear-weapon-free zones. All the States members of CARICOM have signed and ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Treaty was signed in Mexico on 14 February 1967 and makes Latin America and the Caribbean a nuclear-weapon-free zone. That is why our regional group remains faithful to its commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. Further, for CARICOM, multilateralism remains the only viable option for maintaining international peace and security. The major and urgent challenge that awaits us is that of ensuring the efficacy of the mechanisms for multilateral disarmament in our efforts to grapple with the difficult questions of disarmament and non-proliferation.

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Armed violence is a significant problem for the countries of our region and at the international level as well. During recent years, my country has paid a high price in this matter. The dangers of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons are also significant. The illicit use of these weapons contributes to crime and to political, social and economic destabilization in our societies.

As indicated in 2008 in the context of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development initiative, there are between 45 million and 80 million firearms circulating in Latin America and the Caribbean region. Our region has the highest rate of firearm-related homicides in the world. CARICOM renews once again its commitment to fully cooperate with the international community in efforts to curtail this scourge.

The proliferation of conventional weapons continues to be a threat to peace and international security. It continues to be the cause of conflicts and transnational organized crime. Small arms and light weapons have unfortunately not stopped bringing death to our families. Their regulation remains a high priority for our region and is worthy of particular attention by the international community. CARICOM reiterates its call to the international community to negotiate legally binding standards for the conventional arms trade, in order to ensure that those who engage in this type of commerce do so in accordance with the relevant provisions of international law.

CARICOM continues to call attention to a matter of the utmost importance for the region, namely the trans-shipment of nuclear and toxic waste through the waters of our region. The risk of an accident is a serious threat to the environment and to the economy of the region. The human and sanitation costs of such an accident would be unimaginable. CARICOM and the Association of Caribbean States have not ceased to call for a total cessation of this practice throughout the waters of the Caribbean. We continue to call upon the countries that produce this nuclear and toxic waste to implement urgently the relevant measures that would put an end to this activity. CARICOM urges those countries involved in the production and shipping of these nuclear materials to adopt measures aimed at strengthening international cooperation so as to be in step with security measures on the transportation of radioactive materials, in particular those adopted at the

forty-seventh General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2003.

The international community remains concerned by the threat posed by the possible acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors. As regards Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), CARICOM, working with other member States, will intensify efforts to promote the full implementation of that resolution. Along these lines, CARICOM is counting on the support of the IAEA to strengthen the capacity of the States in our region, by sharing best practices and through technology transfers, thereby helping developing countries fulfil their obligations in step with that resolution.

The States members of CARICOM will continue to express their will to work towards the adoption of common mechanisms and further to participate constructively in the international debates so as to make progress in the disarmament programme. CARICOM calls once again for respect for the principles and norms enshrined in international disarmament treaties and encourages the promotion of their universality, their implementation and verification mechanisms.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee during this session of the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. We know that your wisdom and skill will ensure that our work is ably guided. I would also like to express the deep appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo, for his successful leadership of the work of the Committee during its previous session. I also wish to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his detailed statement. My delegation also endorses the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The world today is witnessing a number of positive steps towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The challenges that the international community is encountering on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and the setbacks it has experienced at the international level on this issue, should not be viewed as obstacles to making the world a safer place and establishing the conditions required

for a world free from nuclear weapons, in which international security and peace are strengthened.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) forms the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It is important to achieve universal adherence to that Treaty, and not to limit it by imposing exceptions. The solution to issues of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East must be based on a global and comprehensive approach. On that basis, the Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates its demand that serious steps be taken to make the Middle East, including the Gulf region, a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Also, Israel must accede to the Treaty and submit its nuclear installations to international inspection under the comprehensive nuclear safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981). That resolution demanded that Israel place all of its nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the Agency so as to build the confidence required to seek solutions to the many other challenges facing the Middle East.

The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) recently adopted at the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191), which includes among its provisions important elements on which we can work to make greater progress in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Indeed, the resolution underscored the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Disarmament Commission, which are designed to strengthen international peace and security, to promote the non-proliferation regime and to achieve the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

The Kingdom of Bahrain attaches great importance and priority to the question of nuclear security and safety standards. For this reason, any project or programme involving nuclear disarmament must meet the highest international standards of guaranteed security and safety. This must be done in accordance with the requirements of the Agency and the fundamental principles of peace and security.

That is an essential guarantee which builds confidence in projects and programmes in the nuclear field aimed at fostering the necessary progress and

development for States that are trying to develop their technological capacities in order to make progress in vital areas in this field.

Peaceful nuclear technology is an option for those countries that are seeking various advanced ways and means to promote their development. On that basis, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms the legitimate right of States to possess such technologies, to use them in development programmes, to diversify their energy resources within the framework of the relevant international agreements and in accordance with international law.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms the importance of achieving a peaceful diplomatic solution to the crisis of the Iranian nuclear programme through direct negotiations among all concerned parties aimed at achieving security and stability in the Gulf region and to safeguard friendly relations among the countries of the region.

The Kingdom of Bahrain acceded to the NPT on 3 November 1988 and to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 12 April 2004, and joined the IAEA in December 2008. Today it looks forward to working actively together with all Member States to put nuclear energy in the service of peace, health, development and well-being for all and to build international cooperation in the area of nuclear safety.

Mr. Tessema (Ethiopia): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I wish to congratulate you on your election to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee at the sixty-fourth session. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to assure them of my delegation's full cooperation. My delegation took note of the opening statement by Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, which was comprehensive in addressing a wide range of issues.

Ethiopia welcomes the progress on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which entered into force recently. We are determined to strengthen the main elements of collective security in Africa. My delegation is convinced that the remarkable progress made during the Security Council debate on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, on 24 September 2009 (see S/PV.6191), will enable the international community to move forward. We are also confident that the new momentum in the negotiations

on global disarmament issues will attract many nations to follow a similar path.

The tensions of conflict and war in Africa, as in many regions of the world, continue to threaten global security. The menace of terrorism is closely tied to the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. Ethiopia, located at the epicentre of this scourge, believes that international collaboration is critical in the fight to wreck the activities of international terrorist groups in our region. Terrorism and the spectre of the use by irresponsible actors of weapons including biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction has made our nations most vulnerable. The war on terrorism in the Horn of Africa and the partnership sought from the international community do not seem to match the demand. The situation that we are in requires us to act in unison. Ethiopia calls for strict adherence to arms embargoes imposed on countries at war.

As our foreign and national security policy specifies, the main focus of my Government is to build a vibrant economy and establish a strong defence system so as to be able to realize our objective of bringing about economic development and building a democratic society. Ethiopia believes that peace and security can be guaranteed in the world only when all nations are able to enjoy a stable economic and social order. There is a consensus that security, stability and peace will be achieved through investment in the human person rather than through the creation of sophisticated armaments. In many instances, we observe the rising figure of military expenditure, whereas the majority of the people in our part of the world are living in abject poverty. The world should not be silent on increases in military expenditures, which cannot be justified on any grounds.

My delegation believes that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a key component of nuclear disarmament. While on the one hand we are witnessing agreements on the reduction in nuclear armaments, it is worrying to us that some nuclear States continue to uphold doctrines of national defence and a security strategy based on nuclear weapons. Even more alarming is the possibility of continued nuclear tests to improve these weapons to fit into the configuration of various scenarios of war. My delegation notes with appreciation the recent accord between the Russian Federation and the United States of America. There is no doubt that nuclear weapons continue to pose the

main danger to the survival of the human race, by either accidental or deliberate use. We believe the abolition of nuclear weapons to be the only assurance against the use of those weapons. My delegation calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to focus its efforts on the resumption of substantive work. When partners in peace are able to pursue momentous disarmament and security goals, they will bring significant change.

Ethiopia has been closely working the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, given the danger posed by such weapons. My Government has put in place the legal framework and institutional machinery for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. My delegation believes that the alarming threat posed by chemical weapons in the hands of terrorist groups requires immediate action by the international community. The problem of the proliferation of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in our subregion has been aggravated as a result of the absence of stable government in our neighbouring State, Somalia. This problem poses a major challenge to the maintenance of regional peace and security. For us, small arms and light weapons are as destructive as weapons of mass destruction. The provision of these arms by States to terrorist groups and non-State actors has a direct bearing on the security of individual States and indeed on international peace and security.

We are encouraged that the search for solutions to the grave challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects has placed it on the current international agenda. My Government has been working in close cooperation with partners within and outside the region to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In line with this, States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development have undertaken measures to improve the coordinating mechanisms that will facilitate smoother implementation of the Programme of Action. These regional and subregional organs in Africa need financial, technical and political support from the international community for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Hossam Aly (Egypt), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

In conclusion, I should like to call upon States to focus on the alleviation of poverty and to invest in the human person and reduce expenditure on armaments, as that is the right path to security, stability and peace. Ethiopia also calls for the adoption and implementation of measures to rid the world of the threat posed by small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Al-Saif (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation congratulates the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their election to guide the work of the First Committee. We are confident that they will perform their tasks ably and skilfully. My delegation thanks the Secretary-General and all those who contributed to the reports before us. Our thanks to also to Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his valuable statement at the beginning of the work of the Committee.

As Mr. Duarte said, the current year marks the fiftieth anniversary of General Assembly resolution 1378 (XIV) which called for general and complete disarmament as one of the goals of the United Nations. Unfortunately, that goal has not yet been reached. It is regrettable that military expenditures are increasing, along with the escalation of crises around the world, most recently the world financial crisis, which has affected the economies of nations and peoples around the globe.

The international community has found some solace lately in the Security Council's summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament (see S/PV.6191), which would never have been held unless the whole international community believed in a world free of nuclear weapons. In spite of that optimism, we must recall that Israel, the only State in our region still insisting on not acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or placing its nuclear installations under the guarantees and safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is essentially blocking the universality of the NPT. This means that other countries will try to acquire such weapons in the belief that States that have yet to accede to the NPT are treated very leniently. The unique position of Israel is a source of concern and is the main obstacle to making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as was stated in a recent IAEA resolution which expressed concern over Israel's nuclear capabilities and called upon Israel to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

It is axiomatic that States parties to the NPT are obliged to commit themselves to and abide by the Treaty, its safeguards regime and the additional protocol, and to work closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve any doubts or questions about their own programmes through negotiations and constructive dialogue — without infringing upon the sovereign right of States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In this respect, and in our new relations with the IAEA, His Highness the Emir, in his eagerness to diversify our energy resources, has instructed the Government to set out a national strategy for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Council of Ministers last March also established a high national committee on nuclear energy, headed by the Prime Minister, in accordance with the relevant recommendations of the IAEA.

As regards the nuclear programme of the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran, my country welcomes the talks held in Geneva between Iran and the Permanent Five plus one (P5+1) and would like to confirm that only a diplomatic solution can be the basis for any future resolution of this problem. My country's delegation encourages the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its cooperation with the IAEA and to implement all items related to the requirements of the IAEA and relevant international resolutions in order to safeguard the stability and peace of the Arab Gulf region and the Middle East region in general.

As for the issue of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, my delegation welcomed the open meeting held by the Security Council Committee establish pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004), whose work focuses on preventing terrorist groups from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their components. In 2005, my country submitted a national report which set out all the steps we have taken to comply with that important resolution. We hope that the Committee will enhance its work on non-proliferation by coordinating with relevant agencies such as the IAEA.

In conclusion, my country attaches great importance to the NPT Review Conference to be held in May 2010 in New York. We think that the Conference is the formal framework for creating legal commitments for States parties to the NPT. The Conference should identify non-proliferation concerns for the near future. My delegation believes that making

the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone should be at the top of the Review Conference agenda.

Mr. Ba-Omar (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to the Chairman our sincere congratulations on his election to lead the First Committee at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We are sure that his wisdom and skilful guidance will enable us to be successful in achieving concrete results. We assure him of our full cooperation. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. My delegation wishes moreover to thank most sincerely the outgoing Chairman and the other members of the previous Bureau for the role they played during their mandate. In addition, I wish to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, the Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement. We highly appreciate the role he has been playing to strengthen the effectiveness of the international disarmament machinery. We support the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement that will be made by the representative of Sudan on behalf of the Arab Group.

The stalemate on disarmament and the pessimism engendered by the failure of Member States to take action to solve the problems we face give rise to doubts and mistrust regarding the long-standing multilateral disarmament machinery. This means that Member States must demonstrate political will and the courage to emerge from the nuclear disarmament stalemate. That is an important objective if we are to eliminate this threat to international peace and security. States must demonstrate political will, without using double standards, in order to avoid setbacks like those we have repeatedly seen over the years and in order to achieve consensus on a variety of nuclear disarmament issues.

Over the past three decades we have seen no progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. This has made some States wish to obtain such lethal weapons on independence and national security pretexts. This is because the super-Powers have given no serious indication of any intention to reach agreements or formulas on nuclear disarmament. We hope that the call by President Barack Obama during his visit to Poland earlier this year means that the world is finally ready to rid itself of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and

intends to establish conventions on the limitation or reduction of these weapons.

Although more than 40 years have elapsed since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was opened for signature, some States are still not parties to it. That is a great deficiency in the non-proliferation regime. Once again, we urge all such States to demonstrate the necessary political will to accede to the NPT as soon as possible. At the same time, we reaffirm the legitimate right of all States, without exception, to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the NPT and with respect for international criteria and controls through the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Once again we urge that the Middle East be made a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Like all other Arab States, we are certain that achieving that objective would help create a climate conducive to cooperation among the States of the region and would prevent an arms race among them. It would also have the effect of ensuring that trust and peace prevail in the region and would help maintain international peace and security.

The creation in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is an important objective. The international community must support it and aid in its implementation. In backing that objective, we urge Israel to accede to the NPT and to submit all of its nuclear installations to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA. That would be in accordance with the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which included a resolution on the Middle East. That agreement established an objective link between the indefinite extension of the NPT and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which Israel would join. Unfortunately, we have seen no progress to that end.

It is our hope that the NPT Review Conference to be held in May 2010 in New York will be successful and will achieve the objectives and meet the commitments already established. We reaffirm the importance and credibility of the three pillars of the NPT — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — as well as the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East

and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone there.

We welcome the continuation of cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the IAEA, along with the Permanent Five plus Germany, on the Iranian nuclear file. We reaffirm the importance of resolving this issue by peaceful diplomatic means while hoping for an agreement that preserves Iran's right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and dispels the fears and apprehensions of certain States regarding the Iranian nuclear programme.

We are fully committed to the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We have thus enacted legislation to combat that trade.

Finally, we urge all Member States to fulfil their obligations under the relevant disarmament treaties and conventions, in particular those relating to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is our hope that this Committee, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Cancela, will be able to achieve the aspirations of all peoples for security, peace and stability.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I appreciate this opportunity to address the First Committee. It is an honour for me to congratulate Ambassador José Luis Cancela of the sister Republic of Uruguay, on having been elected to lead our work. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and assure them of the full cooperation of the delegation of Nicaragua in the work of the Committee. My delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Rio Group.

One of the principle purposes of the United Nations, and indeed of the peoples of the world, is to achieve disarmament. The goal of Article 26 of the Charter is the maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources. However, global military expenditures are constantly increasing. In 2008, which saw the beginnings of the worst recession that humanity has suffered since the 1930s, military expenditures surpassed \$1.4 trillion, a 4 per cent increase over the year before and an increase of 45 per cent since 1999. These increases jeopardize international peace and security.

Nicaragua believes there is an undeniable link between disarmament and development. If just a fraction of the increase in armament were reallocated to development assistance, the majority of the countries of the South could attain the Millennium Development Goals. It would seem that the arms-producing countries believe that it is a more important enterprise to sell these weapons than to eradicate hunger and poverty or to invest in education or health or in saving lives. With the diversion of these resources the countries of the North would meet the commitment of allocating at least 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to official development assistance. The funds that come from disarmament could be administered by institutions of the United Nations.

As we have said on numerous occasions, and as was recalled by Commander Daniel Ortega, President of Nicaragua, during the general debate at the sixty-second session, "The best path for humankind is for nuclear weapons to disappear altogether" (A/62/PV.4, p. 25). Our President said this because the existence of these weapons is tied to the possibility of their use, authorized or otherwise. In neither case would it be justified – just as the only two uses of nuclear weapons against civilians at the end of the Second World War were not justified. There also exists the possibility of accidents, production or use by non-authorized actors and vulnerability to terrorist attacks.

According to United Nations information, there are 23,000 nuclear weapons, enough to eliminate every trace of life from the Earth. After the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, and after the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East and the 13 practical measures adopted at the Review Conference, there was a moment of hope on nuclear disarmament. However the lack of compliance and commitment by some nuclear Powers undermined the political will of those who wished to meet their obligations.

It is urgent that new activities and dialogue by the principal nuclear Powers promote a positive outcome at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, achieved with flexibility and political will. We cannot fail to recall one of the three pillars of the NPT: the right of all States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and of course with a corresponding respect for the safeguards, oversight of which is the responsibility of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Recent events

that we could consider to be encouraging in the area of nuclear disarmament include ongoing negotiations on the reduction of nuclear arsenals between the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

As regards the recent Security Council summit of heads of State or Government (see S/PV.6191), we must also recall that priority should be given to resolutions of the General Assembly, in which all 192 Member States participate. We hope that these initiatives do not remain mere words on paper but will be translated into concrete action.

Nicaragua, as a signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, favours the extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones to other regions. In that regard, we support the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions. We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and of the Pelindaba Treaty in Africa. We urge nuclear-weapon States to negotiate and conclude an unconditional universal treaty that would provide legally binding security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The 8 July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons continues to be of great importance in the area of nuclear disarmament. It clearly establishes that States have the legal obligation, in conformity with article VI of the NPT, to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects as soon as possible.

Nicaragua calls upon those States that have not yet done so, especially the Annex 2 countries, to ratify or accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Nicaragua attaches great importance to addressing the illicit trade in small arms. It is unfortunate that large-scale illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues in various regions of the world. Small arms and light weapons are linked to international organized crime, internal conflict, terrorist groups and drug traffickers. These are phenomena that threaten life and human dignity and the stability of all nations. The victims of these weapons are almost always innocent civilian citizens.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a universal problem whose solution requires universal commitments with the participation of national and international actors and all sectors of society. In 2000, Nicaragua signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and has signed the Additional Protocols. It has also signed the 1997 Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

On the proposal of Nicaragua in the Central American Integration System we saw the adoption of the Central American Small Arms Control (CASAC) project. Nicaragua hosts the headquarters of the regional implementation unit. This project is an intergovernmental effort with a mandate to strengthen the control of trafficking in small arms and light weapons at the regional level. Currently a regional assessment for the control of small arms and light weapons is being drafted and confirmed, and plans for arms control and the prevention of armed violence in Nicaragua are being developed. Nicaragua has modernized its domestic legislation in the area of arms control and arms registration. In July 2008, almost 13,000 illicit weapons seized by the national police were destroyed.

The Code of Conduct of Central American States on the Transfer of Arms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials is another Nicaraguan initiative and is a preventive mechanism that promotes principles, guidelines and conduct that will facilitate cooperation so that international transfers of conventional weapons, non-conventional weapons, small arms, light weapons, ammunition, explosives and other related materials is undertaken with transparency, oversight and control.

In 1917, the Central American Court of Justice — the first standing tribunal for international law in history and the first international tribunal for human rights — ruled on a case brought by El Salvador against my country, Nicaragua, and ruled in favour of El Salvador, which at that time was led by a Government imposed under military occupation by the Government of the United States. The nationalist President José Santos Zelaya was then overthrown and the rebellion of the hero Benjamin Zeledón suppressed. The ruling established that a naval base would be installed in Nicaraguan territory in keeping with a

treaty signed by the colonial Government — and the United States threatened the national security of El Salvador. Ironically, this ruling was based on the so-called Lodge resolution of the United States Senate, which reflected Government concerns that ports in the Americas were being administered by companies that had relationships with foreign Governments, which could pose a threat to United States communications. Naturally, the puppet Government in my country at that time did not accept the ruling.

The Government of the United States of America has still not changed its imperial policy. It calls for nuclear disarmament but still creates new military bases on Latin American territory. We wish to express our total rejection of the installation of these military bases. They threaten to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the countries of the American continent and create an arms build-up chain and put regional peace and security in danger. They also bring aggravating circumstances such as the pollution and destruction of the environment of the countries in which the bases are installed and indeed of Mother Earth. In that regard, we express our solidarity with the people and the Government of Cuba in their demand for the dismantlement and removal of the Guantánamo naval base, which exists on territory that is illegally occupied against the will of the Cuban people.

Mrs. Phommachanh (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, I should like to join those who have congratulated Ambassador Cancela on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure him and the rest of the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation under his able leadership throughout the course of this session. The Lao People's Democratic Republic fully associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

My delegation is delighted to contribute to this general debate on disarmament and international security and reaffirms the commitment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to global efforts aimed at strengthening disarmament. General and complete disarmament must be our ultimate goal. In this context, the current session is taking place at a time when there is much opportunity to move towards progress in disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons. The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the

2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concluded successfully with the adoption of the agenda and procedural decisions for the Review Conference, which laid an important foundation for a successful Conference. In May, the Conference on Disarmament was able to agree on its programme of work after a decade of stalemate. Likewise, the Disarmament Commission reached an agreement on the agenda for its three-year cycle. At its recent high-level meeting on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191), the Security Council adopted its resolution 1887 (2009), which addresses the issue of nuclear weapons.

Weapons of mass destruction also pose the gravest threat to humankind. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is of the view that the absolute and most credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The NPT is therefore a key instrument in efforts to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the upcoming 2010 Review Conference will be an important opportunity for States parties to the NPT to provide a renewed commitment to the principles and objectives of the three pillars and to demonstrate greater political commitments and collective efforts to seek solutions to the issues of nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are looking forward to a successful outcome.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the other cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation, remains a significant instrument in promoting both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In this regard, the Lao People's Democratic Republic sees the Final Declaration issued on the occasion of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 24 and 25 September 2009, as a firm commitment by the international community to accelerate the ratification process in order to promote the entry into force of the Treaty at the earliest possible date, thus ridding the world of nuclear-weapon test explosions.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world represent an effective contribution to strengthening the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes and enhancing peace and security at the

regional and international levels. The Lao People's Democratic Republic believes that the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone and other regional nuclear-weapon-free zones continue to reinforce the NPT system as well. We therefore wish to underscore the importance of nuclear-weapon States adhering to these various zones, including, in particular, acceding to the Protocol annexed to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Of more immediate concern to the Lao People's Democratic Republic are cluster munitions. We fully endorse the objective of achieving the total elimination of cluster munitions, which cause excessive injury and have indiscriminate effects, especially on civilian populations. As one of the countries most affected by cluster munitions, the Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches enormous importance to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and its contribution towards protecting civilians and addressing the humanitarian impact of these silent killers. We have strongly supported the Oslo process since its inception, from Lima to the Dublin diplomatic conference that led to the signing of the Convention in Oslo, Norway, on 3 December 2008. Since Oslo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has actively taken all necessary steps to fulfil its obligations under the Convention and ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 16 March 2009. We will remain an active supporter of the Convention and contribute our utmost to all initiatives that will promote the early entry into force of the Convention and its full and effective implementation.

In this perspective, the Lao Government announced at the signing ceremony in Oslo its offer to host the first meeting of States parties in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Together with Ireland, the Lao People's Democratic Republic will present a draft resolution on the Convention on Cluster Munitions to the First Committee at this sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. In this regard, we would be grateful for the support of delegations for our draft resolution.

In conclusion, the Lao People's Democratic Republic would like to underscore that to make further progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation there needs to be strong political will and flexibility from States to overcome obstacles and to meet the security challenges facing the international community. We therefore hope that the First

Committee, which is an important forum of the United Nations for deliberating on the disarmament and international security agenda, will be productive in addressing threats to international peace and security. It is our strong belief that with great solidarity we will be able to achieve the common goal of a safer and more secure world for all.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): On behalf of the Serbian delegation I should like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. José Luis Cancela of Uruguay on his election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee. I also congratulate the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur on their elections. I wish all of them every success in their important work.

Serbia has aligned itself with the statement made by the representative Sweden on behalf of the European Union. Nonetheless, I shall address some of the priorities from Serbia's point of view and shall speak of some of the activities it has pursued in connection with various topics on our agenda.

We share the conviction that risks from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the growing danger of non-State actors, especially terrorist groups and individuals, acquiring these types of weapons constitute one of the major threats to international peace and security. In that regard, we welcome the holding of the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament on 24 September 2009 (see S/PV.6191), which reaffirmed the belief that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime should be strengthened to ensure its effective implementation.

Serbia has acceded to all major international agreements in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control and is committed to full and consistent implementation of the obligations it has assumed. Moreover, in order to make a full contribution to the relevant United Nations activities, last April my country submitted its candidature for membership of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We believe that the progress achieved in its work this year could also facilitate the opening of a discussion on the expansion of its membership, thus enabling applicant States to become members of the Conference soon.

My country supports the commitments and concrete activities of the United Nations and other international actors aimed at establishing effective

measures and instruments that would strengthen long-term the international regime of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, we attach great importance to the fulfilment of obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), including submission of annual reports on the activities to implement it.

As a responsible member of the international community, Serbia is fully committed to consistent implementation of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the national level we have taken comprehensive measures for the implementation of the Treaty. Serbia considers the preparations for the forthcoming NPT Review Conference as an opportunity to make progress on all three pillars of the Treaty: non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and disarmament. We welcome the results of the Preparatory Committee's work, which we believe provide a solid basis to achieve success at the Conference.

During the visit of Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to my country last July, an Additional Protocol to our safeguards agreement was signed, completing the implementation of Serbia's obligations within the legal framework of the NPT. In addition, Serbia has adopted a law on protection against ionizing radiation and on nuclear security, which provides for the establishment of an independent regulatory agency for protection against ionizing radiation and for nuclear security and standardizes measures for the protection of the lives and health of people as well as for environmental protection against the harmful effects of ionizing radiation.

Serbia cooperates very actively with the IAEA. During the fifty-third General Conference of the Agency, held in Vienna, an agreement was signed by the Russian Federation, the United States of America, the European Union and the IAEA providing for the allocation of \$14 million to the Vinca Institute Nuclear Decommissioning Project on the transfer of spent nuclear fuel from the Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences in Serbia, presenting a potential ecological threat.

My country attaches special importance to full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Last August the Serbian parliament adopted a new law on the implementation of the

Chemical Weapons Convention and ratified the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Cooperation with OPCW and its member States is evolving in many areas, especially in the organization of international seminars on assistance and protection against chemical weapons and in the training of personnel in Serbian institutions in the field of toxicology. Furthermore, a law on the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, one of the major instruments within the national mechanism for preventing the proliferation of this type of weapon, is expected to be adopted in parliament soon. The procedure for waiving the reservation on the 1925 Geneva Protocol is also under way.

In view of the importance of the fight against new security challenges, Serbia has started, with other countries of the Western Balkans, the Implementation Programme against CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive weapons) Terrorism (IPACT). We are ready to give it our full contribution in terms of offering our capacities and expertise, but the success of IPACT will depend in large measure on assistance, including financial assistance, by the European Union and other interested States and stakeholders.

Serbia supports all United Nations activities aimed at ensuring the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, one of the pillars of the international regime of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Serbia is resolved to honour its obligations in the field of disarmament. To that end, we are working on the fulfilment of our remaining obligations under the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines and believe that, with the assistance of international donors, we will, by the end of the year, achieve our goal of demining the minefields in the border area with Croatia and will enter 2010 without anti-personnel mines on our territory.

Along with other parties, Serbia continues to implement the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control — article IV, annex 1-B, of the Dayton Peace Accords — and through new projects has made a contribution to the quality of implementation. The parties to the Agreement are faced with a new challenge: to continue the Agreement ownership

transfer process with the assistance of the Office of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is hoped that the parties will take over the Agreement ownership in the reasonably near future, even though we may have a need for the assistance of the Personal Representative for some time yet.

In order to improve its legislation and procedures in the field of arms export control, Serbia has submitted a request for regulating its membership in the Wassenaar Arrangement and intends also to submit a request for membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group soon.

Serbia is resolved to contribute fully to the fight against international terrorism. We have established an effective regime of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods export control and have improved border and customs control measures. As one of about 40 States that have submitted timely reports to the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/89 of 2006, Serbia welcomes the progress achieved in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group on the commencement of the negotiations on preparations for an arms trade treaty and its eventual adoption.

Let me conclude by drawing the Committee's attention to the new security risks posed to our region by the formation of the illegal Kosovo Security Force. The formation of the Force runs counter to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and threatens the national security of Serbia as well as regional peace and security. In view of its symbolism as an attribute of State, the Kosovo Security Force violates Council resolution 1244 (1999), which is governing the status of Kosovo at present.

From the military and security point of view the threat is not significant at this moment, but it may become so, as the Force is intended to become the nucleus of the armed forces of an independent Kosovo. Besides, it is a factor contributing to mistrust, fear and insecurity for non-Albanians and a potential catalyst of their exodus from the province. Last but not least, the formation of the Force is tantamount to a steady rearmament of the southern Serbian province, contrary to Serbia's declared policy of demilitarization since 1999, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Cancela on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee and to wish him and the other members of the Bureau success. We are confident that his experience and organizational skills will ensure that the work of the Committee is highly effective. Our delegation assures him of its readiness to cooperate. Our delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Central Asia is one of the richest regions of the world in natural, mineral, energy, human and other resources. On the territory of this region are five independent States whose economies are developing positively. There are more than 60 million individuals living there who want to live and work in peace and security. That is a prerequisite for stable and sustainable development and international cooperation. The geostrategic and geopolitical significance of the Central Asian region is constantly on the rise. Located at a geographic crossroads, the region is a link between Europe and Asia and is extremely important because of its vast energy resources, which are transported to countries in Europe and elsewhere.

The world situation today, however, has not become more secure. The threats posed by international terrorism, drug trafficking and climate change are on the rise and can have a significant impact on the system of international security. Questions of peace and security, including disarmament, are of high priority in the foreign policy of Turkmenistan. Our country is extremely interested in strengthening regional security mechanisms, assisting the international community in its efforts to maintain and strengthen the global security system and preventing and neutralizing the threat of emergent conflict.

Security in its broadest sense cannot be provided through the efforts of any individual country. Only through interaction and collective efforts can we counter threats and challenges. One of the key items on the global agenda continues to be disarmament and the reduction of arsenals, above all of weapons of mass destruction. Along with all the other countries of Central Asia and the United Nations, my country is making major efforts to maintain peace in the region and ward off threats. It is with that objective in view that the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia has been opened in

Ashgabat. It is carrying out coordination and monitoring of regional problems and is promoting collective action to successfully resolve these issues.

The States of Central Asia have taken the decision to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and its first conference will take place this month in Ashgabat. These are genuine practical steps for strengthening peace. Turkmenistan has acceded to the majority of disarmament conventions and has fully carried out its obligations under the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines.

A great number of weapons have been accumulated in our region, and military bases exist there. In other words, the military arsenal is not on the decline. A constant threat to the region is drug trafficking and the fact that there are groups located on adjacent territories and in countries that directly border on two nuclear-weapon States. In our view, the measures being undertaken are insufficient, and there is a need for new steps, new initiatives and real action in this area. Here, we share the concerns of Kazakhstan concerning the danger of the spread of nuclear weapons and of their falling into the hands of terrorist organizations. We support the idea of the creation of an international nuclear fuel bank under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We support the proposal of Kazakhstan to declare 29 August as an International Day for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons.

We favour the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan. We support the global struggle against terrorism by providing assistance to the Government of Afghanistan to achieve peace and concord in the country. Our country is assisting Afghanistan by sending humanitarian assistance, providing electricity, restoring the economy and building sites for humanitarian and social projects. This year alone, a hospital and a school have been built and provided with all the necessary equipment.

We also believe that the Afghan problem cannot be resolved solely by military means. This question must be on the agenda of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We believe too that to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan a range of effective measures to counter the illegal trafficking in drugs is needed. During the general debate at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly (see A/64/PV.3) the President of Turkmenistan put forward the idea of convening, under

United Nations auspices, an international conference on disarmament in the Central Asian region and the Caspian basin. The relevance of this issue is unquestionable, and further steps in this area are needed. In that connection, we propose support for this idea and embarking on its implementation.

Turkmenistan proposes that the United Nations make use of our political, organizational and technical potential in order to establish an ongoing international dialogue for a comprehensive discussion of regional problems and the use for these purposes of the potential of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): On behalf of the Ugandan delegation I wish to congratulate the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their election to guide the work of the Committee. They can count on our full support and cooperation. My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by the representative of Nepal on behalf of the least developed countries, by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

This Committee plays a very important role in the pursuit of solutions to challenges confronting the world's collective security today. The end of the cold war significantly reduced global polarization, but we continue to face the dangers and effects of nuclear proliferation and violent conflict. Our efforts to build a better world should be inspired by a shared vision and a commitment to justice, equity, progress and peace. Those efforts should also focus on promoting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, reducing conflict and deepening mutual understanding and respect. Uganda is a proponent of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. More than ever before, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction poses a serious threat to world peace and security. We are convinced that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of international efforts to contain the threat of nuclear weapons and provides a framework for nuclear disarmament.

As long as some countries have nuclear weapons, there will be others who aspire to get them as a deterrent measure. This, no doubt, leads to an arms

race that increases the potential of proliferation. It is critical to focus on all three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Non-nuclear States should be able to harness nuclear technology for a wide range of peaceful uses. We are convinced that the use of nuclear technologies in developing countries, especially in Africa, can help to overcome the current energy crisis, thereby contributing to the continent's economic and social development.

The Security Council summit held on 24 September (see S/PV.6191) opened a new chapter in the Council's efforts to address nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The unanimous adoption of Council resolution 1887 (2009) was a significant step in that direction. Many decades of talks on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament have gone by without satisfactory results. It is imperative that the process of engagement by nuclear States be accelerated to achieve complete disarmament. My delegation calls for political will and commitment from nuclear-weapon States to show leadership in this matter. Uganda therefore welcomes and supports the convening of the 2010 global summit on nuclear security.

The entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, on 15 July this year attests to Africa's resolve on this matter. We fully support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty insofar as it aims at banning all nuclear explosions in all environments for military or civilian purposes.

Although conventional weapons do not have the same destructive potency as nuclear weapons, we have seen in many parts of the world the horror and destruction they have caused. The impact of the use of small arms, in places such as Somalia, as weapons of choice in insurgency and acts of piracy destabilizes the region and international peace and security. There is an urgent need to reinvigorate efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We are also concerned about the dumping of toxic waste off the coasts of some African countries, with disastrous consequences for the environment. There is a real danger of such toxic waste falling into the hands of terrorists. There is a need for the international community to use the tools at its disposal to eradicate the harmful practice of dumping toxic waste.

Finally, the challenge for the international community is to act in unity and ensure full compliance on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament and to deal with all those situations that threaten international peace and international security. My delegation is ready to work constructively in the Committee. We look forward to its effective contribution to specific outcomes at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly towards the achievement of our common goals of global peace and global security.

Mr. Somdah (Burkina Faso) (spoke in French): Allow me first, on behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, to offer the Chairman my sincere congratulations on his election to lead the work of the First Committee. To judge by his great experience in international matters and his personal qualities we are certain that our work will meet with success. He can be assured of my delegation's cooperation and full support. My delegation endorses the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf, respectively, of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States.

Disarmament and security are today at the core of the concerns of the international community, which devotes tireless efforts daily to this matter. The numerous hotspots of conflict that mark the world and the proliferation of weaponry of all kinds are objective reasons for this intense activity. It is for this reason that the matters to be discussed in this Committee at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly are of cardinal importance for the survival of humanity. That is why we must work tirelessly to attain results commensurate with the challenges.

The past 10 years have been marked by a lack of notable progress in the area of disarmament. As the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission struggled respectively to agree on a programme of work and an agenda, the world bore witness to the non-respect of certain important disarmament, to continued nuclear tests and to the illicit accumulation and circulation of weapons. These worrisome signs were certainly the cause of the paralysis of the disarmament machinery during this long period and ended up making the international community doubt the capacity of States to reach agreement on this matter.

Fortunately, in 2009 there was new impetus on issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We note the following: the official statement of the President Barack Obama of the United States in Prague on 5 April 2009 on his country's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons; the conclusion of an agreement on 6 July 2009 between the United States and Russian Presidents aimed at reducing their respective nuclear stockpiles; the appeal by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, on 21 September 2009 during the celebration of the International Day of Peace, for States to focus on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation; the 24 September convening, under the Security Council presidency of the United States, a summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191); and the convening from 30 September to 2 October of a public open meeting of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004), in the context of a full review of the implementation of that resolution.

My delegation hails this new dynamic as well as the progress made in the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. My delegation hopes that these bodies will review key problems such as the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. It is also worth underscoring the 15 July 2009 entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which establishes Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, confirming the will of Africa to contribute to the international disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. My delegation urges other regions to follow suit.

Burkina Faso remains convinced that disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be built on the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT): non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the disarmament of nuclear arsenals and the right of all States parties to the NPT to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in accordance with their non-proliferation obligations. As a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Burkina Faso would like to commend Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the outgoing Director General of the IAEA, for his remarkable work as head of the Agency. We also wish every success to his successor, Mr. Yukiya Amano. We also reiterate our call for the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

As with the great mobilization of the international community vis-à-vis nuclear weapons, my delegation would also like to call for the same determination in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The political, economic and social consequences of the accumulation and unbridled circulation of these weapons are well known. Beyond the heavy death toll that they bring, the proliferation and abuse of light weapons continues to fuel armed conflict and terrorist networks and to create obstacles to humanitarian efforts and peacebuilding, thus slowing sustainable development and making it ever more difficult to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

West Africa suffers from this to a significant degree. Despite the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which since 2006 has had its Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, the phenomenon is taking on a broader scope and needs vigorous support from the entire international community. My delegation therefore hopes as soon as possible to see the success of ongoing efforts to formulate a legally binding international treaty to regulate the trade in such weapons.

We have often said that combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons requires significant resources, which are often beyond the capacity of our States, which daily face the immediate needs of their populations. My delegation therefore urges the international community to continue its support to ECOWAS in order to help it effectively to implement this very important Convention. Also worth mentioning is the need to support the regional centres for peace and disarmament, including the Lomé Centre in Togo, whose activities on the ground include training, awareness-raising and, above all, advocacy for the promotion of regional disarmament.

We should take this historic opportunity of new, propitious winds blowing through the halls of disarmament in order to move the disarmament process forward. Here, the ratification and implementation by all Member States of international treaties and conventions such as the NPT and the CTBT and the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons and on anti-personnel mines, should remain a priority. For this, the United Nations remains the ideal forum.

Burkina Faso is a party to the main treaties and conventions in the field of disarmament and, despite its lack of resources, implements them. Burkina Faso is closely involved as a facilitator in easing numerous crises in our continent — including in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and recently Guinea — and understands the importance of this. That is why my country reiterates its willingness to contribute its support to the building of a world of peace and justice.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation I should like to express our warmest congratulations and sense of satisfaction at seeing a member of the South American region presiding over the work of the First Committee at the sixty-fourth session. We are certain that under Ambassador Cancela's leadership we will reach our goals. The delegation of Bolivia endorses the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The new Bolivian Constitution ratified this year states that

“Bolivia is a pacifist State that promotes the culture of peace and the right to peace, as well as cooperation between the peoples of the region and of the world ...

“Bolivia rejects all war of aggression as an instrument for settling disputes and conflicts between States and reserves the right to self-defence in the event of an aggression that threatens the independence and integrity of the State.

“The installation of foreign military bases on Bolivian territory is prohibited.”

The Plurinational State of Bolivia attaches the utmost importance to nuclear disarmament. We believe that the complete elimination of these weapons is imperative; they can only bring irrevocable damage to humankind and Mother Earth. The fact that the five countries possessing the largest number of nuclear warheads in the world are the five permanent members of the Security Council is a true contradiction of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Peace cannot be ensured through the proliferation and possession of weapons of mass destruction. The best contribution that world Powers could make to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is to begin to

dismantle the hundreds and thousands of nuclear warheads that they still possess. It is impossible to advocate non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons without first dismantling one's thousands of nuclear warheads. It is necessary to comply with and go far beyond the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to attain a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. That should be the commitment of Member States, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council.

Movement towards a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is essential. Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as it is the only State in that region that has not expressed its will to accede to that Treaty.

Faced with the largest scale economic crisis of the past 70 years, \$2 million is spent on defence every minute: more than \$1.2 trillion every year is spent. This situation is an affront to the hunger and poverty suffered by billions of the world's people.

The poorly regulated or illegal trade in weapons fuels conflicts, violates human rights and international humanitarian law and provokes and exacerbates situations marked by violence throughout the world. The Plurinational State of Bolivia backs the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we believe it urgent to agree on a legally binding treaty on marking and tracing weapons.

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean was a pioneer in implementing confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We have seen the benefits of building a climate of peace and the strengthening of democracy with transparency and dialogue among the countries of the hemisphere. However, clouds are building over South America, threatening regional peace, with the installation of seven United States military bases in Colombian territory. This creates a climate of insecurity and threat for the region. Bolivia and many other countries of the region resolutely reject the presence of foreign military bases in the territory of any of the region's members. In the twenty-first century it is unacceptable that a zone of peace such as Latin America should see the deployment of a foreign military force that only provokes concern and tension in all the countries of the

region. It is essential that all States give notice of and register our defence agreements with other countries in order to provide transparency and guarantees for all other countries.

As a country that has suffered the effects of a mined border zone, Bolivia supports the international humanitarian efforts that ban the use of anti-personnel mines. We hope that the States concerned will meet their international commitments within the framework of the Ottawa Convention. Further, Bolivia, as a signatory of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, joins the rest of the international community as it calls for the total elimination of cluster bombs, which cause indiscriminate harm among civilian populations.

Many disarmament matters are awaiting a final solution that would provide security for the future of our peoples. In that regard, Bolivia reaffirms its clear commitment to make every effort in favour of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Mr. Askarov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to welcome Ambassador Cancela as Chairman of the First Committee and to associate myself with the congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I convey my hope for a successful outcome of this session's work.

The international community's multifaceted efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen the existing legal regime in this area and ensure its effective implementation have been among the key priorities in the work of the United Nations since its establishment. These efforts are now becoming particularly important given the urgency engendered by modern technologies and the ability of dozens of States worldwide to make use of and further develop those technologies.

In the tenth year of the third millennium, human development is on the brink of a challenge to many aspects of the lives and activities of States and individuals alike. We see this for example in the challenges posed by climate change, the unprecedented world economic crisis and increasing shortages of resources, among many others.

Two important events of international significance are planned for next year: the Global Nuclear Security Summit, to be held in Washington, D.C., and the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be

held in New York. The majority of States consider that both conferences should be events of historic importance and scale and should ensure a fundamental qualitative shift with respect to full-fledged cooperation on strengthening global security and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

I should like to focus the attention of members on my country's effective contribution to nuclear non-proliferation. Many here have referred to the contributions of countries to nuclear non-proliferation and have noted that States must take the lead and set an example to the world by their behaviour. This fully applies to Uzbekistan's non-proliferation policies, which are at the forefront both in the Central Asian region and globally.

The initiative for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, first proclaimed by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly on 28 September 1993, has come to fruition thanks to the efforts of all interested countries and international organizations working for the higher interests of every State of the region, and with active, highly effective and constructive cooperation from all countries in Central Asia. Ours is one of the world's five nuclear-weapon-free zones and is the first nuclear-weapon-free zone created in the northern hemisphere. It directly borders on two nuclear-weapon States. The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia entered into force on 21 March this year. That important event took place following the ratification of the document by all its parties. The Treaty has no expiration date.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an especially important issue in the process of strengthening international security. The history of nuclear-weapon-free zones began during the cold war, when the increasing sophistication of technology was made it critical to discuss the possibility of nuclear war and its consequences. As a result of countless thematic conferences, round tables, analytical memorandums and modelling of situations there was recognition on both sides of the ocean of the impossibility of counting on survival in a nuclear war. Nuclear-weapon-free zones became one of the means for restricting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and for overcoming existing and potential threats of nuclear disaster in the context of predictions that post-cold-war nuclear security would be among the most important problems for the decades to come.

It is important that the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones is taking place under United Nations auspices. It is no less important that the United Nations is doing everything possible to promote the inclusion of non-nuclear States in this process. It is that appeal to which Uzbekistan quickly responded by putting forward the idea of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, thus emphasizing the interconnection and indissolubility of global, regional and national security. The emergence of a Central Asian initiative became possible thanks to careful study of international experience in the area of non-proliferation and the definition of the initiative's role in strengthening global security. The initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan was fully supported by neighbouring States Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, as reflected in the Almaty Declaration of February 1997.

The sustainable development of the Central Asian region to a decisive extent depends on a correct understanding of the nature of existing threats and the urgent need to identify their sources and links. Particularly important among these threats is that posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Central Asia is one of the most densely populated regions of the world, where the population is concentrated in oases, which are vulnerable in every possible way and are subject to natural disasters of many kinds.

All the countries of our region are aware of this, and are taking preventive action to avert conditions that would oblige us to focus our efforts not on ensuring sustainable development or on resolving social, economic and ecological problems, but on threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. Here, the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone is having a positive impact on States of the region by enabling them to make use of their constructive potential to address important development issues through institution-building and through the establishment in international law of a nuclear-weapon-free region.

The significance of the initiative of Uzbekistan's President, Islam A. Karimov, hinges on the growing geostrategic importance of Central Asia, with its rich

natural, mineral, energy, human and other resources, and where there is a clash of the geopolitical and strategic interests of many of the world's major States. We support the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions of the world, since we are firmly convinced that this coordinated and noble act by the international community would promote the strengthening of regional and international security.

In addition, as noted in the statement of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the International Conference on Central Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, held in September 1997 in Tashkent, any political decision or inter-State act can be worthwhile only if its implementation encompasses social problems and ensures a worthy life for individuals and for society. A nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is not an exception to this: what specifically can it give people? The most important thing is its contribution to ensuring safe and sustainable development.

In previous periods, humankind and the international community were able to find wise solutions to the difficult problems of the day. Over the past 60 years, every 10 or 15 years the international community has signed significant, historic treaties which today form the foundations of international security, including in the sphere of nuclear non-proliferation. I would like to hope that next year too will become a historic year in terms of our ability to work together to jointly develop and implement the international non-proliferation regime.

Organization of work

The Acting Chairperson: Regarding the thematic segment of our work, which begins on Tuesday, 13 October, I wish to inform delegations wishing to take the floor on any of the thematic clusters that the Secretariat will maintain informal rolling lists of speakers for each cluster. Of course, requests for interventions will also be taken directly from the floor on any given day.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.