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First Committee

12th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

The Chair: Before we proceed to the thematic discussion, I shall call on the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte.

Mr. Duarte (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I have been asked by the Secretary-General to inform the First Committee of the issuance today, on behalf of the Secretary-General and of the Governments of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States as sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, of a joint press statement on the appointment of the facilitator for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The joint statement reads as follows:

“In accordance with the practical steps endorsed by the parties to the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Secretary-General and the Governments of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, as sponsors of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East and depositary States of the Treaty, in consultation with the States of the region, are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Jaakko Laajava, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, as facilitator and the designation of Finland as the host Government for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East

zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.”

The Secretary-General has asked the facilitator to come to New York at the earliest possible date to initiate consultations on the matter.

Mr. Al-Kuwari (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, I should like to express our gratitude to Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the statement on an issue that is of great importance to the Arab Group. That is the holding of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, consonant with the action plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, especially section IV of the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference, which is entitled “The Middle East, particularly implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East”. I also wish to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his ongoing efforts to achieve consensus on that important issue and for the arrangements to hold the 2012 conference.

Among the results of the 2010 NPT Review Conference was the adoption of practical steps towards the implementation of the resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, on creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The 1995 resolution was a condition for the indefinite extension of the Treaty, determining specific steps, and

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entrusted the Secretary-General, in coordination with the depositary States and the States of the region, to nominate the host country and the facilitator.

The Secretary-General, in coordination with the depositary States and in consultation with the Arab States, has designated Finland to host the 2012 conference and has appointed the facilitator, who will be entrusted with the responsibility of preparing for the conference.

The Arab Group made clear its position on the conference in a paper that His Excellency the Ambassador of Qatar, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group, handed to the Secretary-General yesterday. I wish to highlight here the following elements with regard to the Arab position.

The Arab Group welcomes the nomination of Finland as host country for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all the countries of the Middle East, and the nomination of Mr. Jaakko Laajava of the host country to be the facilitator for the conference. The Arab Group looks forward to the important role that the Secretary-General will play in the preparation of the conference, as entrusted to him by the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The Arab Group is of the view that the conference has the competence to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and of all other weapons of mass destruction and at the same time to maintain progress in a process that, in terms of content and timing, could lead to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region — nuclear, chemical and biological — in consonance with the part of the adopted action plan that concerns article VIII of the Treaty. Instead of being a forum for discussion, the conference must produce concrete results to realize that objective.

The Arab Group hopes that the facilitator of the 2012 conference will submit an objective report to the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference and that the 2012 conference will achieve its objectives by the time of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize how important it is that a suitable date be selected for the conference

so that it does not conflict with other important international functions in 2012.

Ms. Ries (United States of America): The United States welcomes the announcement today from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that Finland has been selected to host a Conference in 2012 to discuss a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and the systems for their delivery. We also welcome the Secretary-General's announcement of Finnish Under-Secretary of State, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, as the conference facilitator. We have full confidence in Finland and in Ambassador Laajava.

The United States has worked closely with the Secretary-General, Russia and the United Kingdom. The conveners agreed at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to identify a host country and facilitator to ensure a successful event. I am of course very pleased by today's announcement.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation welcomes today's announcement and the decision by the Secretary-General that Finland will host the 2012 conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We also welcome the appointment of Ambassador Jaakko Laajava as coordinator of the work.

We express our gratitude to the States and representatives thereof who throughout the entire effort expressed their readiness to lead this work and to host the conference.

In conclusion, I express my satisfaction and associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Arab countries. I would also like to express the willingness of the Russian Federation to provide every assistance to representatives of friendly countries for the success of this entire endeavour and the success of the conference.

Mr. Pollard (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom would like to join others in welcoming the announcement made by the Secretary-General earlier today of the appointment of the host country and facilitator for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We are particularly pleased by the Secretary-General's appointment of Finland to host the conference. We have full confidence in Finnish Under-Secretary of State, Mr. Jaakko Laajava,

as the facilitator for the conference. Mr. Laajava has extensive diplomatic experience and is well qualified to engage with the Middle East States over the agenda and remit of the conference. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Finland for taking on this role and wish them well.

As co-sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we remain committed to delivering the conference in 2012 and offer Finland and Mr. Laajava our full support. The United Kingdom has long supported the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We have been actively engaged in negotiations and consultations with the region in advance of today's announcement.

The issue of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction is not just a regional issue but an international one, the resolution of which is important for the stability and security of the whole world. We firmly believe that a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is an achievable goal, and one that is vital to the long-term peace and security of the region. But it will not happen overnight, nor without the commitment and support of all States in the region.

This conference represents a first step in what will be a challenging process. Nevertheless, we are optimistic that, with the full commitment of all States in the region and the wider international community, the conference will be a real opportunity for the region to discuss and make progress on this very important issue.

Ms. Kelly (Ireland): Ireland would also like to warmly welcome the announcement today of the appointment of Ambassador Laajava as facilitator and the designation of Finland — your country, Sir — as host Government for the 2012 conference. We wish to congratulate Ambassador Laajava and Finland on this announcement.

We also appreciate the hard work that has gone into reaching this point and the work of the Secretary-General and the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution. This is an important day in the life of the process of implementing the 1995 resolution. Ireland will do all that it can, in coordination with its partners in the European Union and beyond, to support this process. We wish Finland and Ambassador Laajava well.

Mr. Lusiński (Poland): On behalf of Poland as the State holding the presidency of the European Union (EU), I should like to join previous speakers in congratulating our fellow member State, Finland. Let me echo the warm welcome expressed today by European Union High Representative Baroness Ashton at the announcement by the Secretary-General of the name of the facilitator and host Government for the conference on a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

I would like to say how glad we are that Finland offered to host the 2012 conference, as well as to congratulate Under-Secretary Jaakko Laajava on his appointment as the facilitator. The Secretary-General's announcement today follows the task given to him and to the co-sponsors in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

The European Union has always been fully committed to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region. Following the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference last July the EU organized a successful seminar involving all parties of the region in Brussels. The EU is ready to continue its long-standing engagement on the issue and assures the Secretary-General, facilitator Jaakko Laajava and the Government of Finland of its full support in the process.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Iran, as the initiator on the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in 1974, attaches great importance to this issue. My delegation takes note of the announcement of the appointment of the facilitator and the host country by the Secretary-General. I will elaborate my delegation's position on the forthcoming 2012 Non-Proliferation Treaty Middle East conference in the thematic discussion we will have on regional issues.

The Chair: I would like to take this opportunity to read out a message by the President of the Republic of Finland, Tarja Halonen.

“Finland is honoured to undertake the role of the host country and facilitator for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free

of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We are committed to do our utmost as we now begin our work, humbled by the challenges ahead yet confident in the shared understanding of the importance of this long-standing goal.

“In 1995 the resolution adopted by the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference set the bold aim of establishing such a zone. The 2010 Review Conference opened a new window of opportunity to move forward this issue, which touches upon the security of the region as a whole.

“We realize that the task ahead is not easy. But it is very important. Constructive deliberation and cooperation by all stakeholders are vital. I hope that countries of the region come together for such a dialogue. I am convinced that consultations carried out by the facilitator can serve as a useful platform.

“I would like to extend my fullest support to Under-Secretary Jaakko Laajava in this task. I am grateful that Finland enjoys the trust of the Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, as well as other Member States.

“A zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would be a major contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to regional and global security. It is now our joint responsibility to succeed in this task.”

Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

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

The Chair: We will now proceed with the scheduled thematic debate. First, I would like to remind delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions was 3 p.m. today. The deadline passed some minutes ago, and I hope that all interested delegations were able to meet it. For delegations wishing to become additional co-sponsors of draft resolutions, the Secretariat will have the sponsorship lists available for signature in the conference room this afternoon.

We will now continue with our thematic discussion on the nuclear weapons cluster, including the introduction of draft resolutions.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish): Before fulfilling my duty on behalf of Australia and New Zealand in our joint intervention, allow me to first thank our distinguished friend the High Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Duarte, for the wonderful news that he shared with us, as well as to express our gratitude to both the Government of Finland and Ambassador Laajava for the enormous responsibility that they have taken on and our best wishes for this undertaking.

I shall now speak on behalf of my friends the Ambassadors of Australia and New Zealand.

(spoke in English)

It is an honour to take the floor on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and my own country, Mexico, co-authors of the draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is introduced annually. The cessation of all nuclear-weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions would constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and would end the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons.

A global, verifiable ban on nuclear testing is therefore an essential step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. That was the spirit that guided the international community to the conception, negotiation and conclusion of a universal and internationally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Today, 15 years after the CTBT was opened for signature, its positive, norm-setting impact is unquestioned. Although the Treaty has not yet entered into force, all 182 State signatories have abstained from testing nuclear explosives.

Those countries that have remained outside the Treaty and have performed tests have faced universal condemnation. We note with satisfaction that 155 States, including all the nuclear-capable countries of Europe and Latin America, have ratified the CTBT. We especially welcome the recent ratifications by Guinea and Ghana. Every new ratification constitutes a powerful signal to the international community and to States that have yet to ratify.

But in order to achieve its purpose, the Treaty needs to enter into force, and that must happen without any further delay. This was reinforced strongly in the call contained in the Final Declaration adopted by the seventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force

of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 23 September 2011, which was co-chaired by Mexico and Sweden.

We welcome the steps taken by Indonesia and the commitment made by the United States in pursuit of the Treaty's ratification. We urge those States that have not yet adhered to or ratified the CTBT, especially those whose signatures and ratifications are necessary for its entry into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay in order to achieve its entry into force.

We warmly welcome the support for the Treaty and its entry into force expressed by the Secretary-General, the Security Council Summit, the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and, over many years, the General Assembly. We hope that support will be expressed once again in the positive consideration of our draft resolution by the General Assembly at this sixty-sixth session.

Ms. Ries (United States of America): At this year's First Committee session, the United States is once again sponsoring its traditional resolution on compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments. I have asked for the floor today to introduce the draft resolution (A/C.1/66/L.47) under agenda item 98, "General and complete disarmament". We believe this resolution can make a useful contribution in reflecting the commitment of the international community to acting together to strengthen such compliance.

This resolution was last considered in 2008. In December of that year, in resolution 63/59, the General Assembly acknowledged, by an overwhelming majority vote, the importance of compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and other, related legally binding commitments.

All the sponsors agree on the importance of advancing such compliance. From the United States perspective, I recall in particular that in Prague in April 2009 President Obama called on all States to comply with their obligations and to hold other States accountable for their actions. He emphasized specifically that rules must be binding, violations must be punished, and words must mean something.

Today, more than two years later, the issue of compliance remains of fundamental importance. There

is broad consensus that compliance with multilateral and international treaties, agreements and other obligations and commitments undertaken by Member States to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to regulate and/or reduce armaments is critical to international peace and stability.

Indeed, confidence in compliance with such treaties, agreements, obligations and commitments is a central element of the international security architecture and a requirement for continued progress towards disarmament. Furthermore, there is broad recognition of the importance of building national, regional and international capacity for effective verification of compliance with, and enforcement regarding violations of, multilateral non-proliferation obligations consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

By way of example, I wish to cite the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), which in its Actions 26 and 27 underscores the importance of addressing all outstanding cases of non-compliance with safeguards obligations and calls on International Atomic Energy Agency member States to extend their full cooperation. The key objective in sponsoring this measure again this year is to reflect and strengthen that international consensus.

Let me say a little about the draft resolution that the United States and our co-sponsors are proposing. It would update, and only slightly revise, the compliance resolution that the General Assembly adopted in 2008. Specifically, this year's draft resolution would ensure that the item is maintained as an item on the agenda of the Assembly's sixty-ninth session.

This year's draft resolution would also draw upon language contained in the 2002 compliance resolution, 57/86, which the Assembly adopted by consensus, to emphasize the importance of cooperation in increasing confidence in compliance. In that regard, I would like to recall that the United States and many of the resolution's co-sponsors continue to work with and assist others, including through the work of the Security Council's Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the implementing organs of existing treaties, to meet their relevant arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament commitments.

Like its predecessors, this year's draft resolution would acknowledge the widespread recognition

within the international community of the impact of non-compliance challenges on international peace and stability and of diplomacy as a tool to encourage a return to compliance by States not currently in compliance. Its adoption would be another concrete example of the international community's determination to use diplomacy to advance compliance.

Holding States accountable for failing to comply with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments strengthens confidence not only in the integrity of those agreements and commitments but also in the prospects for progress towards achieving the peace and security of a world without nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, failure to hold States accountable for their actions undercuts not only the integrity of agreements and commitments but also the prospects for future progress. Such failure would only pave the way for other States to follow the path of wilful non-compliance and undermine the authority of the relevant non-proliferation treaties; it would also dilute the benefit that States have come to expect when they adhere to such agreements.

The United States has no illusions that advancing compliance will be easy. We know that sometimes progress will be slow and setbacks will occur. Often there are no easy answers to non-compliance issues that we face. However, we know that advancing this cause together is the only way we can succeed. It is in this spirit that we hope all nations represented here will join in supporting this year's draft resolution on compliance. After all, supporting compliance with treaties, agreements, obligations and commitments freely undertaken is something we should all be able to endorse.

We ask all States to support this year's draft resolution. It is open for co-sponsorship, and we are hoping for a larger number of co-sponsors than we had when it was last introduced. Those delegations that have not yet been approached about co-sponsorship and wish to do so should contact any member of the United States delegation. We hope that this year we can once again return to consensus adoption of this important draft resolution.

Finally, our delegation looks forward to collaborating successfully with other delegations on this draft resolution, as well as on the other work of this session.

Mr. Woolcott (Australia): Australia is committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and has a history of practical and determined activism in support and promotion of that goal. The Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Rudd, reaffirmed Australia's commitment to that goal in his address to the General Assembly last month (see A/66/PV.18).

Australia attaches importance to the First Committee as a place where we can build support for practical steps to strengthen efforts in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Australia, with fellow sponsor New Zealand, strongly supports Mexico in its leadership this year of the draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That important draft resolution is strongly supported in the General Assembly and has enjoyed co-sponsorship by the five nuclear-weapon States since the Assembly's sixty-fourth session.

It is a serious failure, however, that 15 years after it opened for signature the CTBT has not yet entered into force. We call on those States yet to ratify the CTBT, particularly annex 2 States, to do so as soon as possible. In the meantime, we encourage all Member States to support this draft resolution.

Australia is under no illusion about the complexity and difficulty of achieving our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. All of us — States that have adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and those States still outside the NPT — have an opportunity to keep moving towards that goal, an opportunity we must seize. There is no magic bullet. We have to work through a rigorous step-by-step approach.

Australia worked hard for and strongly welcomed the consensus outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, under the highly effective leadership of Ambassador Cabactulan of the Philippines. The adoption by NPT States parties of the consensus action plan — which spans the NPT's three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and which also addresses matters relating to the Middle East — was substantial. However, the action plan, a road map, will be only as good as its implementation. This is now the time for further hard work.

For its part, Australia is encouraged by the recent meetings of the five nuclear-weapon States. We look forward to positive results from their individual and

collective efforts in implementing their obligations under the consensus action plan.

Australia also supports the efforts made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the depositary States in consultation with the States of the Middle East region for the convening next year of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Australia very much welcomes the announcement earlier this afternoon of the appointment of Finnish Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava as the facilitator of preparations for the Conference and of Finland as host. We urge all relevant States to continue to cooperate constructively in this endeavour.

But of course, implementing the action plan is not the work and responsibility of a limited number of NPT States parties but of all NPT States parties. While the five nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility under the NPT, Australia is keen for all NPT States parties to carry this notion of broad responsibility for action plan implementation to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference, including by looking at how their own endeavours can support action plan implementation.

Australia takes its responsibilities in this regard seriously. Following our collaboration in establishing the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament and our joint work at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Australia and Japan last year convened the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) to focus on action plan implementation. Our two countries are joined in this initiative by eight other NPT States parties, all being countries committed to a world free of nuclear weapons and all with strong non-proliferation credentials.

Ministers of these countries met again in New York on 21 September, and in their statement — which has been circulated during this First Committee session — they outlined the NPDI's ongoing efforts, including on specific actions in the action plan. The NPDI has developed and shared with the five nuclear-weapon States a draft standard nuclear disarmament reporting form as a contribution to their discussions on the implementation of Action 21 of the action plan.

In accordance with Actions 28 and 29, NPDI States are offering to share our collective experience in concluding and implementing additional protocols. The NPDI regards the safeguards agreement and

an additional protocol as the standard for effective verification of State safeguard commitments. In accordance with Action 13, the NPDI continues to take diplomatic opportunities to urge States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT, and to do so as soon as possible.

The NPDI is working for the implementation of Action 15, on the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Australia's position on the fissile material cut-off treaty is well known. We consider its negotiation long overdue. Banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes through an FMCT is an essential step towards irreversible nuclear disarmament. An FMCT would further tighten controls on fissile material, reinforcing efforts to reduce the risk of fissile material leaking to proliferators or terrorists. It would also complement the CTBT. The CTBT impedes the qualitative development of nuclear weapons by prohibiting testing; an FMCT would impose a quantitative limit on the amount of fissile material available for weapons use.

It remains scandalous that 16 years after the Shannon Mandate the Conference on Disarmament still has not begun negotiations on this treaty. In 2011 Australia and Japan made a practical gesture to encourage the Conference on Disarmament back to work through our FMCT experts' side events. At this session of the First Committee, Australia strongly supports Canada's efforts, through its annual FMCT draft resolution, to move an FMCT beyond its current impasse, and we encourage others to support Canada. We will continue to do all we can to support an FMCT.

Australia remains gravely concerned about the nuclear activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the revelation of a covert uranium enrichment capability. The pursuit by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear weapons and its defiance of Security Council resolutions pose a significant threat to the stability of our region and to the non-proliferation efforts of the international community.

Australia also shares serious concerns about the mounting evidence of the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme. Iran continues to defy binding Security Council resolutions and the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We again encourage Iran to comply with Security Council resolutions and engage with the

IAEA to resolve all issues and demonstrate conclusively the peaceful intent of its nuclear programme.

Finally, as many Member States have noted, there have recently been a number of positive developments in non-proliferation and disarmament, and it is important that we try to build on the momentum if we are ever to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. This is not a time for complacency; much work remains to be done. We should all focus on practical and positive efforts that keep us moving forward.

Mr. Amano (Japan): First, I would like to welcome the announcement by Mr. Duarte on the appointment of the facilitator for the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

For the people of my country, the issue of nuclear weapons is of immense importance and has a special meaning. Through the peace memorial ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki every August, the citizens of Japan have an opportunity to reaffirm their strong belief that the tragedy caused by the use of nuclear weapons must never happen again. Japan, as the only country to have suffered from atomic bombings, takes nuclear disarmament seriously and has been engaged — and indeed will remain engaged — in substantive activities to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

In order to advance nuclear disarmament, we need not only individual efforts but also efforts by all States together. Basing itself on the idea that a world without nuclear weapons should be achieved through concrete and effective steps, this year Japan, along with more than 60 co-sponsors, has once again submitted a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament entitled “United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons” (A/C.1/66/L.41), with some updates. The resolution puts emphasis on concrete and practical united actions to be taken by the international community towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We strongly hope that an even larger number of States will support it this year.

The success of last year’s Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in reaching consensus on a final document was universally welcomed. But, one year after that Conference, we must be pragmatic and focus our attention sharply on the steady implementation of the action plan in the Final Document of the Conference (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). With that in mind, last September Japan and nine other like-minded States

decided to launch a cross-regional group called the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI). Following the second ministerial meeting in Berlin last April, the third meeting was convened in New York last month, where we all agreed to further promote the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) action plan. Japan, together with its NPDI partners, will continue to make a tangible contribution to that end.

For the implementation of the NPT action plan, it is of the utmost importance that the nuclear-weapon States follow through on their commitments. The Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference reaffirmed the unequivocal undertaking of those States to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals through further efforts to reduce and eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed.

Just as significant, under Action 5 of the action plan, the nuclear-weapon States made an additional pledge to accelerate progress on concrete steps leading to nuclear disarmament and were called upon to report the undertakings to the Preparatory Committee in 2014. In that regard, Japan welcomes the five nuclear-weapon States’ first follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference, in Paris, which highlighted issues such as transparency that are important to us.

Japan, together with its NPDI partners, shared with the five nuclear-weapon States the NPDI’s proposal for a reporting form in accordance with Action 21. We hope that proposal will facilitate their efforts to produce a concrete agreement on the issue.

At the same time as the NPT States parties carry out their activities, non-States parties to the NPT should not remain on the sidelines. Japan calls on those States to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions.

Japan highly values the ratification of the New START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation and the entry into force of that Treaty in February. Japan strongly hopes that the entry into force of the New START agreement will lead to advancements in global nuclear disarmament involving the other countries possessing nuclear weapons. We call upon all States possessing nuclear weapons to take measures to further reduce the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch and to ensure that their nuclear weapons are kept at the lowest alert level possible, in ways that promote international stability and security.

The two important treaties that promote nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be put in place without further delay.

First, as one of the important global efforts for nuclear disarmament, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) must enter into force as soon as possible. It is very disappointing, however, that this vitally important Treaty is still far from achieving this goal 15 years after it was opened for signature. Thus Japan urges all countries that have yet to ratify the Treaty, especially the annex 2 countries, to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Secondly, as stated in action 15 of the NPT Final Document, we must immediately begin negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We are convinced that a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is the next logical and urgent step in our endeavour to create the conditions necessary for a world free of nuclear weapons. Therefore, it was deeply regrettable that, at its 2011 session, the Conference on Disarmament was once again unable to commence negotiations on this treaty. Many efforts were made for the immediate commencement of negotiations but with no emerging prospect of that occurring, and we will now need to seriously consider practical measures that will lead to negotiations and can be agreed to by responsible stakeholders. Currently many countries are considering possible concrete steps to be taken in order to start negotiations. Japan, as a member of NPDI, will strongly support the Canadian draft resolution that was submitted to the General Assembly this year to break the impasse.

It is important to establish further nuclear-weapon-free zones, where appropriate, as called for in action 9 of the NPT Final Document on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned and in accordance with the 1999 guidelines of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The establishment of such zones contributes to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and global and regional peace and security. In this connection, Japan welcomes the intensive talks that were held in New York recently between the five nuclear-weapon States and the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the ratification of the Protocol of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. We also support efforts made by the Secretary-General and other relevant actors for the convening next year of a conference on

the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Along with advancing nuclear disarmament, strengthening nuclear non-proliferation in line with the spirit of the NPT is an important condition for enhancing peace and security. In this context, the nuclear issues related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran are of prime concern to the international community. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, including its uranium enrichment programme and light-water reactor construction activities, which are in clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Regarding the Iranian nuclear issue, it is indispensable for Iran to allay all the suspicions of the international community and to win its confidence. Japan underscores the importance of Iran's full and immediate compliance with its international obligations. With a view to effectively addressing these issues, it is essential to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards to reinforce and maintain the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this connection, we welcome the fact that the number of States with additional protocols in force has increased from 102 to 110 over the past year. That fact demonstrates that a comprehensive safeguards agreement, together with an additional protocol based on the Model Additional Protocol, are becoming the international safeguards standard.

Lastly, allow me to conclude by saying that Japan is fully committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. However, the road to that destination is still long and there remains much for us to do. In order to attain a peaceful and safe world through nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan will actively work in close cooperation with other Member States while building bridges between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Lindell (Sweden): Let me begin by joining and repeating words of welcome to the announcement of Finland as the host country for the 2012 Conference and congratulating the facilitator, Under-Secretary of State Laajava, on his appointment.

I make the following statement on behalf of the delegations of Mexico and Sweden in the capacity of both countries as current article XIV process

coordinating States, that is, facilitators of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As regards other nuclear disarmament issues, we would like to refer to the statements made on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty is an important priority in our work for nuclear disarmament. Mexico and Sweden have jointly taken on the role of coordinating States during the next two years for the facilitation of the entry into force of the Treaty. Less than a month ago, on 23 September here in New York, the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, Patricia Espinosa Cantellano and my Minister, Carl Bildt, co-chaired the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, also known as the Article XIV Conference. We would like to repeat the words of appreciation expressed on that occasion for the strong support in this endeavour of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the valuable work carried out by previous article XIV coordinators France and Morocco, as well as by Ambassador Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission, and his staff.

Sweden and Mexico share resolute support for the CTBT and its entry into force, and a wider interest in strengthening the international security architecture. We have consistently supported the CTBT as the means by which to completely put an end to nuclear testing. The Treaty will significantly constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. In doing so, it will make an indispensable contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. With the CTBT in force, another step will have been taken towards the goal of a future without nuclear weapons.

An overwhelming and growing majority of the international community already agrees on the urgent need for the CTBT to enter into force. The built-in safety valve of annex 2 should alleviate any possible concerns among States to commit to the Treaty because of the risk of others not taking on the same obligation. Moreover, the unprecedented verification system has proven itself and demonstrated that the CTBT, once in place, will indeed work effectively.

In our view, the annex 2 States also have a special responsibility. The need to act cannot be passed on to others. As of now 35 of these 44 States have assumed this responsibility and ratified the Treaty, including three nuclear-weapon States. That is commendable.

Nine annex 2 countries have so far not yet chosen to do so. We are convinced that this will change as it becomes increasingly clear what the potential future options might be — a world where nuclear testing would again risk inflaming international relations, or a global community that has put such dangerous practices behind itself and banned them once and for all. With the CTBT in place, we can build a more secure global environment for all.

The course of further CTBT ratifications is an evolving process. Two of the remaining annex 2 countries have publicly announced their intention actively to pursue ratification. This leadership is very much to be welcomed. Any further ratifications, in particular by States possessing nuclear weapons, could untie the knot and pave the way for a series of ratifications. Sweden and Mexico strongly wish to contribute to such a positive development. We urge all States that have not yet done so, in particular annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay, thereby becoming part of the international consensus to completely end nuclear testing.

Until the CTBT enters into force, the moratoriums on nuclear testing must be upheld, keeping in mind that voluntary moratoriums cannot replace legal instruments. Sweden and Mexico will continue to pursue the entry into force of the CTBT, and we invite all States to join us in this effort.

Mr. Fasel (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The year 2010 was marked by the positive outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This positive momentum was continued this year by the entry into force of the New START treaty. However, this should not lead us to disregard the fact that challenges in the field of nuclear disarmament remain numerous.

The thousands of nuclear weapons still deployed today represent a potential threat to our survival. A significant number of these are being kept at a high level of alert. The nuclear arsenals of some States are still increasing quantitatively, and all nuclear Powers are strengthening their arsenals at the qualitative level through modernization programmes. In addition, none of the nuclear Powers have called the notion of deterrence into question, while a reduction in the importance attached to these weapons could discourage further proliferation. Finally, efforts towards nuclear disarmament seem to be random rather than systematic,

coordinated and verified. They often go hand in hand with budget cuts or technological developments instead of being based on a concerted approach and a genuine desire to disarm.

The efforts made to date are clearly insufficient to reduce the risk posed by nuclear weapons and curb their proliferation. Stronger commitment is required. Switzerland remains convinced of the need to create a legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons, possibly through a convention on nuclear weapons, as suggested by the Secretary-General.

In order to permit real progress, the notions that still give nuclear weapons legitimacy today need to be questioned. The 2010 NPT Review Conference, like the sixty-fifth session of the First Committee, expressed its concerns about the disastrous humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. Switzerland is interested in exploring more closely the implications of the humanitarian dimension and to determine how it can be operationalized. One argument that is often put forward to legitimize nuclear weapons is that international stability would be weakened without them. All States, not just those possessing nuclear weapons, need to join together to address this issue and to determine how security can be assured in a world without such weapons.

Practical progress is also essential in the following areas. Efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals need to be initiated without delay and involve all nuclear weapons — strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed. These reductions should be accompanied by the initiation of activities at the multilateral level concerning a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), negative security assurances and nuclear disarmament. The opening of negotiations on an FMCT encompassing both the future production and existing stockpiles of fissile materials is of particular importance, since such an instrument would contribute towards both disarmament and non-proliferation.

Reducing the level of operational availability of nuclear weapons is also essential. I refer to the statement I made yesterday on behalf of Chile, Malaysia, Nigeria, New Zealand and Switzerland (see A/C.1/66/PV.11). We must also ensure that all progress in nuclear disarmament cannot be called into question. We need to implement and operationalize the principle of irreversibility. This concept is vague and poorly formulated today. Switzerland has therefore taken

steps to examine this matter in greater depth and has commissioned two studies that will be presented at a side event this afternoon after the plenary in this room.

The full implementation of the actions adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference represents a central element of the efforts to be undertaken. Together with our experienced partners, Switzerland has initiated a programme to monitor their implementation, within which each of the three pillars of the NPT and the associated actions shall be the subject of a seminar. The findings formulated at these reunions will be included in a report to be distributed to all States parties in preparation for the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference in order to inform the debate on the implementation of the action plan.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference also adopted certain specific measures concerning the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, including the convening of a conference to be held in 2012 on this issue. While recent political developments have not made the organization of such a conference any easier, they have also made it a matter of greater urgency. Switzerland therefore welcomes the designation of Finland as the host country and of Ambassador Laajava as the facilitator and thanks the parties concerned for their efforts.

This brings us to the topic of nuclear proliferation, a major threat to international security. Unfortunately there were no developments in the course of the past year that made it possible to envisage the closure of pending dossiers in this area in the near future. For Switzerland, diplomacy remains the only way to resolve these issues, and appeals to all Member States to comply with the applicable norms and decisions.

Securing all nuclear material is another major challenge. We therefore welcome the continuation of the process that was initiated in 2010 at the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, D.C. In our view, achieving the declared objective will require all nuclear material, including military material, to be subject to controls. We hope that it will be possible for progress to be made in this regard at the 2012 Summit in Seoul.

It is the duty of all States, whether or not possessed of nuclear weapons, to contribute towards the creation of a world without such weapons. Switzerland fully intends to fulfil its duty in this regard.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation fully endorses the statement made earlier by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Regarding nuclear weapons, last year at this time we were welcoming the adoption of the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the holding of the first Nuclear Security Summit, which were rightly considered significant strides. Indeed, there is no doubt that a process is under way for the implementation of the commitments that have been made, and we would add to that the many good-faith initiatives in the area of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Thus, in terms of the general atmosphere, we can say that the context remains positive with respect to peace and international security.

This optimism, however, is somewhat attenuated by the reality that the multilateral disarmament process has yet to achieve few specific and substantial results. There are many unfinished tasks where work has not even begun. This is deeply troubling. The examples cited by many delegations in the general debate are enough to illustrate the huge task ahead in order to achieve the ultimate objective of eliminating nuclear weapons from our planet.

Algeria reaffirms its commitment to the NPT, which it considers to be the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Any selective approach to the terms of the NPT would drain that instrument of its meaning and vindicate the remaining hesitators, whether or not they have signed the NPT. Ultimately, the balance among the three pillars of the NPT must be preserved at all costs. In so doing, it is high time that disarmament and non-proliferation issues receive equal treatment. In fact, it would be unacceptable for us, in our efforts towards disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons, to limit ourselves to combating horizontal proliferation, because nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interdependent and inseparable.

My delegation is therefore deeply concerned by the fact that none of the 13 measures that were drawn up by common agreement at the sixth Review Conference of the NPT in 2000 has even begun to be applied. Indeed, of the proposals submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement at the eighth NPT Review Conference in 2010 in order

to define a calendar for the implementation of those 13 measures, none met with a favourable response from the nuclear Powers.

The obligations under article VI of the NPT deserve to be implemented in a verifiable and concrete way in order to allay the fears of non-nuclear-weapon States. These States still feel threatened by the lack of legally binding instruments on negative security assurances. More than four decades after the NPT was concluded, the meagre results we have seen thus far in the area of nuclear disarmament remain well below our expectations. The 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice reminds us that nuclear weapons are not in keeping with international humanitarian law. In order to remove the threat that these weapons represent, the NPT must become truly universal and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) must finally enter into force. To that end, we call upon States that have not yet done so, in particular annex 2 countries, to ratify it as soon as possible.

It is also crucial for the credibility of the NPT that we respect the terms of the arrangement arrived at for its conclusion; the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy is more than part of this arrangement. It is undoubtedly an engine for economic and social development. The stress increasingly placed on non-proliferation has a tendency to engender restrictions that are in agreement with neither the spirit nor the letter of article IV of the NPT. My delegation reaffirms its commitment to the legitimate and inalienable right of all States parties to the NPT to the use of nuclear energy for civilian purposes.

We should also seriously take into account the problem of nuclear terrorism. There is a real risk that terrorist groups may seize and use nuclear material or weapons of mass destruction. Thus Algeria stresses the importance of strengthening international cooperation in this area so that we can more effectively address this threat. That is why Algeria welcomes the extension of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Algeria welcomed the entry into force of the 2009 Pelindaba Treaty establishing the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone because it makes an important contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime on the African continent, world peace, and international and regional security. Algeria reiterates its call on nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done

so to sign and ratify the relevant annexes of that Treaty. It is also important that the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBT assist the new bodies of the Pelindaba Treaty to expand Africa's capacity to benefit from the civilian applications of the verification system that has been set up by the CTBT.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is an example to be extended, among others, to other regions such as the Middle East to respond to the wishes of the international community. Hence, Algeria welcomes the announcement made today by the Secretary-General and the three sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, in consultation with the States of the region, of the appointment of Mr. Jaakko Laajava as facilitator and of Finland as the host country for the 2012 conference on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Algeria believes that the 2012 conference, with the participation of the States of the region, will be an opportunity to achieve concrete results, making it possible to set up a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Ms. Nyhamar (Norway): First, let me warmly welcome today's announcement of Finland as host and Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava as facilitator of the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Norway fully supports and is ready to contribute to the success of the Conference, and has allocated voluntary funding to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and various research institutions working on this issue. Furthermore, Norway will chair the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) forum on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East to be held in November in Vienna. We hope that this, too, will contribute to the promotion of the zone. More than half of the world's countries have already freely joined such zones, which illustrates the simple fact that security is strengthened by not maintaining a category of devastating weapons.

The humanitarian consequences should a nuclear weapon ever be used are widely recognized as so horrendous that few can imagine such a choice being made. Indeed, the utility of nuclear weapons as military and political instruments is increasingly questioned. Also, this very year the Fukushima accident and the

Oslo terrorist attack reminded us of our fundamental inability to foresee all eventualities.

It is highly encouraging that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last year reaffirmed a world free from nuclear weapons as our common goal. To reach it would enhance the security of us all. The NPT Review Conference last year gave us a forward-looking action plan of 64 steps covering all three pillars of the Treaty. It is of vital importance that the action plan be fully implemented.

Norway welcomes the ratification and implementation of the New START agreement and looks forward to the commencement of the next round of negotiations covering all categories of nuclear weapons. We were further pleased with the recent five nuclear-weapon States meeting on fulfilling the obligations of the nuclear-weapon States under the NPT action plan and hope that process will lead to substantial results.

Despite these positive steps, it is a sad fact that we have not moved further ahead in our multilateral efforts for nuclear disarmament, including negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The lack of movement was reconfirmed by the 2010 action plan. We have clearly been unable to deliver on the expectations of the international community. There have long been calls for negotiations on a legally binding instrument to fulfil the provisions of article VI of the NPT. Norway acknowledges the need and obligation to negotiate such an instrument in good faith and in accordance with the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in 1996.

However, Norway has questioned the call by many countries for the negotiation of such an instrument to be conducted in the Conference on Disarmament. Substance should guide our methods of work and we should not let ourselves be blocked by our own institutional structures. The draft resolution submitted yesterday by Austria, Mexico and Norway shows that alternative options are indeed available if we really want to break out of the long-lasting impasse. We look forward to consulting with other Member States on this matter.

We must all do our part to implement and further strengthen our non-proliferation obligations. This includes the full implementation of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards and additional protocol.

Our common goal should be to make the protocol universal. The IAEA must be fully equipped to carry out its crucial non-proliferation task. Likewise, Norway remains convinced that the IAEA also has an important role to play in verifying nuclear disarmament.

Norway has on a number of occasions expressed deep concern over the outstanding proliferation challenges that we are facing, as mentioned in our general statement last week (see A/C.1/66/PV.5). Resolving these issues would greatly strengthen the non-proliferation regime and facilitate further nuclear disarmament. Norway also fully supports the action plan adopted at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., and looks forward to reviewing our commitments in Seoul next year. We must secure all nuclear material from all sources. We must continue our efforts to develop cooperative arrangements for producing nuclear fuel for civilian reactors, and we must significantly reduce the use of highly enriched uranium in nuclear research reactors. Nuclear security is important in realizing our nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals, while nuclear disarmament also supports our efforts to enhance nuclear security, both politically and in practical terms.

Norway has on a number of occasions underlined that bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force is important for both the non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament. Norway will continue to support the consolidation of the non-test norm and the process of making it legally binding. We also need to ensure that our verification systems are robust enough to provide the necessary confidence in the integrity of both non-proliferation and disarmament processes, based on the principles of verifiability, irreversibility and transparency.

The United Kingdom and Norway have cooperated at the expert level for a number of years on exploring technical and procedural challenges associated with a possible future nuclear disarmament verification regime. I am very pleased that the United Kingdom, in partnership with Norway, will host a workshop in London in early December to consider lessons learned so far from their joint initiative. Sharing our experiences and findings with a wider group of countries will benefit the international community as a whole and underscore the common responsibility of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike in promoting and verifying nuclear disarmament.

We look forward to the further consultations in the First Committee under the able leadership of the Chair and to seeing substantial progress in the implementation of the NPT action plan as we move into the next review cycle.

Mrs. Chaimongkol (Thailand): Thailand shares the common vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. It has always been our firm belief that it is in the best interests of nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States alike to join hands and work together towards a common goal — the complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. It is evident that the development and possession of nuclear weapons have led to insecurity and instability. The world's nations have long expressed their collective desire to abolish these weapons. The obstacles are daunting, but Thailand believes that if we are to achieve this end, the symbolic value of the possession of nuclear weapons must be minimized and eventually nullified. Nuclear weapons should be regarded more as a source of existential danger to humankind rather than as a sign of great Power status.

Thailand strongly calls for Member States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to fulfil their political, legal and moral responsibility to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Thailand wishes to further emphasize that global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts must be governed by the principles of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility. We are encouraged by the entry into force of the New START treaty between the United States and Russia. We also call for the full and strict implementation of the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Thailand joins other delegations in welcoming the announcement of Finland as host and Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Finland, as facilitator of the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction. We sincerely urge all relevant States to ensure the success of that Conference. In addition, the use of or threat to use nuclear weapons on non-nuclear-weapon States must not be allowed. Negative security assurances are crucial to the reduction of incentives for nuclear proliferation. Thailand is of the firm belief that a universal and legally binding agreement on negative security assurances must be actively pursued.

The vision of a world free of nuclear weapons will never be realized if nuclear testing continues. Such testing must be prohibited because it would undermine regional and global security. Thailand welcomes the seventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and supports the Treaty's early entry into force. We are also working to complete the internal process required for the ratification of the CTBT.

Also recognized internationally is the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the areas of safeguards, verification and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Thailand stands ready to strengthen its cooperation with the IAEA and continues to support the IAEA in successfully carrying out its mandate. Thailand considers the additional protocol to the nuclear safeguards agreement to be a key confidence-building measure and an effective international verification system. We are working diligently to finish our internal process in order to accede to the additional protocol at the earliest opportunity.

The international community cannot achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals if fissile materials are not effectively controlled. In this regard, Thailand underscores the necessity for the Conference on Disarmament to resume its substantive work as soon as possible and begin negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices at the earliest opportunity and in an effective and inclusive manner.

Nuclear security and safety are among the top priorities on the global agenda. Nuclear terrorism is a compelling reason for all Member States to cooperate and coordinate their efforts to prevent such a cataclysm. Thailand is committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) with a view to addressing the threat posed by the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors. We have actively joined international efforts to address this issue through the framework of The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit.

As far as nuclear safety is concerned, the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has raised concerns for the international community on the issue of nuclear safety. It is essential to strengthen the

global nuclear safety regime in order to restore public confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Thailand welcomes the convening by the Secretary-General of the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security on 22 September. We are committed to doing our part to ensure nuclear safety and security and stand ready to support the work of the IAEA in this regard, including the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

Regional efforts are indispensable in supporting global efforts for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone has played a significant role in our region. Thailand and its fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have continued close consultations with nuclear-weapon States to resolve the outstanding issues between the two sides. ASEAN hopes that the nuclear-weapon States will be able to accede to the Protocol to the Treaty soon. Additionally, ASEAN is once again introducing the biennial draft resolution on the Zone for the consideration of the First Committee during this session. We ask for support from the international community and hope that the draft resolution will enjoy consensus and be adopted without a vote.

As nuclear safety, security and safeguards are all important for creating trust and confidence within the region, Thailand has proposed to its ASEAN colleagues the idea of establishing an informal network among nuclear regulatory bodies or relevant authorities in the region to share information and best practices, as well as to enhance regulatory capacity to ensure the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the region. The responses from our ASEAN colleagues were very positive. Thailand will continue to discuss this issue with them in order to explore the possibility of and options for seriously pursuing this initiative.

In closing, Thailand is convinced that multilateral agreements and cooperation are crucial to achieving the common goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Thailand stands ready to cooperate with all member States and will continue to play a responsible role and make constructive contributions in this regard.

Mr. Van den IJssel (Netherlands): Last year saw significant progress on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. At their Review Conference, for the first time in many years consensus was reached among

the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The result was a bold new action plan. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the 2010 Conference, “[t]he world still lives under the nuclear shadow”. It is still there. Now we need initiatives to continue in the spirit of the 2010 Review Conference and remove that shadow.

The Netherlands will continue to make innovative, practical proposals to implement the 2010 action plan. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control have always been and will remain cornerstones of Dutch foreign policy, with the Non-Proliferation Treaty as our foundation and the action plan as our road map towards the next review conference in 2015. This is an essential part of our commitment to strengthening international law and security. For us, non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control are facets of the same diamond. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation system, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its article VI, and an important element in the further development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In view of current proliferation risks, we are convinced that the NPT is more vital today than ever. We must preserve and strengthen its authority and integrity.

The Netherlands is a member of the group of 10 countries that launched the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), which links these issues. The group was convinced that we need to focus on the practical implementation of the NPT action plan. At our ministerial NPDI meetings in Berlin and New York this year, we decided to press for greater transparency in the way nuclear-weapon States report their disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation efforts. At the same time, we have stepped up our efforts for the universal application of the additional protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That is vital to ensure that nuclear activities remain peaceful. For us, the combination of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an Additional Protocol is the current standard for verification.

The Netherlands supports safeguards on a bilateral basis through our Member States’ support programme, and only a few weeks ago Minister Rosenthal announced a voluntary contribution of €100,000 to the Agency’s efforts towards the universalization of the additional protocol. Together with other NPDI countries, we are

currently working on further innovative and practical proposals to implement the action plan.

To advance the global non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control agenda, the Netherlands believes it is vital that an agreement be reached on a way to overcome the continued deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which has kept us from starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). The start of these negotiations is long overdue. The Netherlands wants to move forward, preferably within the Conference on Disarmament, but is prepared to pursue alternative routes. The Netherlands is willing to give the CD another chance to agree on and implement a work programme, but only if at the same time preparatory work on alternatives is done in parallel and a clear deadline is set. That is why the Netherlands, together with South Africa and Switzerland, has just submitted a draft resolution on the high-level meeting process. The Netherlands also firmly supports the Canadian draft resolution on an FMCT.

The Netherlands is committed to universalizing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and promoting its early entry into force. We recognize the security and civil benefits of the CTBT verification system, including the International Monitoring System, and feel that the scope for expanding civilian use of the monitoring system in other areas of early warning and emergency responses should be explored. We will continue, together with other NPDI States, to utilize diplomatic opportunities to urge States to sign and ratify the CTBT.

The Netherlands remains committed to ensuring the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions for countries wishing to develop, in a responsible way, their capacities in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The IAEA role in strengthening nuclear non-proliferation, guaranteeing the safety and security of nuclear energy, and advancing nuclear technology to the benefit of all cannot be overestimated. Therefore, it is crucial that the Agency be equipped with the resources required to ensure that it has the authority, expertise and the resources needed to fulfil its mandate. In this regard, we welcome the agreement on the new budget for 2012-2013. We also welcome the adoption last year of the new medium-term strategy, which solidly addresses the challenges and priorities and which contains a clear commitment effectively and efficiently to carry out the Agency’s tasks in the coming years.

We join the international call for elevating the safety of nuclear power plants to the highest level and strengthening nuclear safety measures worldwide, and welcome the outcomes of the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security convened by the Secretary-General on 22 September. The Netherlands also notes the importance of the work undertaken concerning multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle.

The international community continues to face major nuclear proliferation challenges, in particular from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We must be united in standing up to these challenges and take resolute action in response. We have noted with deep concern the latest report of the Director General of the IAEA (see A/66/95), which confirms that the Islamic Republic of Iran, in violation of its obligations, continues to expand its enrichment activities, including by increasing its capacity for enrichment to 20 per cent. The Agency is increasingly concerned about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed nuclear-related activities involving military-related organizations, including activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile, about which the IAEA continues to receive new information. Iran continues not to cooperate sufficiently in order to enable the Agency to provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and therefore to conclude that all nuclear material in Iran is for peaceful activities. We urge Iran to address all the IAEA's outstanding concerns and to respond positively and through concrete actions to the request by the Agency for engagement and to grant prompt access to relevant locations, equipment, documentation and persons.

The Netherlands continues to be gravely concerned about the Iranian nuclear programme. Iran must suspend all its enrichment activities and heavy water-related projects, including research and development; fully implement its safeguards agreement; bring into force the additional protocol; and fully cooperate with the IAEA in order to clarify all outstanding issues, in particular those from the latest IAEA report, which give rise to increased concerns about possible military dimensions to its nuclear programme.

Iran must comply with its international obligations and implement the resolutions of the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors. The Netherlands

supports the efforts of the European Union High Representative, together with the representatives of China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States to engage Iran in a meaningful diplomatic process. The key objective remains for Iran to enter into meaningful talks without preconditions. The door to dialogue remains open and we call on Iran to enter into such talks to reach a negotiated settlement.

The Netherlands is seriously concerned about the non-compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic with its Safeguards Agreement. The Netherlands welcomed the decision of the IAEA Board of Governors adopted in June to report that matter to the Security Council. The Netherlands urges Syria to fully cooperate with the IAEA to resolve all open questions, to comply with its safeguards agreement and to bring into force an additional protocol as soon as possible.

The Netherlands reiterates its grave concern at the decision made by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease all cooperation with the IAEA. The Netherlands remains extremely concerned regarding the revelation of the uranium enrichment programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. These activities represent another violation of the international obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It must comply without delay with all its international obligations under the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the IAEA, and demonstrate its willingness to implement previous commitments through concrete actions, which would create an environment conducive to the resumption of the Six-Party Talks aimed at achieving the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The Netherlands supports the convening in 2012 of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We warmly welcome, therefore, the announcement made early in this session of the appointment of Under-Secretary of State Laajava as facilitator and Finland as host of the conference. We offer both Under-Secretary Laajava and the Government of Finland our congratulations and wish them every success. In the run-up to that Conference we stand ready to play an active role wherever useful.

Serious challenges remain in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and we must face them with resolve. The Netherlands continues to work

towards a world free of nuclear weapons but realizes that this goal will not be reached overnight. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that, with a prudent and step-by-step approach, the coming generations will live to see it.

Mr. Kmentt (Austria): As this is the first time I have taken the floor, I should like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Chair on his assumption of that important position.

In Austria's view, nuclear weapons pose one of the gravest dangers and key challenges to the international community. Their continued possession by some States is a key driver for the quest for nuclear weapons by others. Their contribution to stability is an unconvincing relic of the past. The risks of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists and the unimaginable humanitarian, environmental, health and economic consequences of nuclear weapons makes them unusable and an immoral concept for the conduct of international relations. The international community must find a way to deal with this challenge.

Last year at the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), all States parties committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the objective of a world without nuclear weapons. The action plan on nuclear disarmament affirms that all States need to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. It notes the five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament of the Secretary-General, which proposes consideration of a nuclear-weapons convention or agreement on a framework of separate mutually reinforcing instruments. Austria would like to underscore the importance of placing the prospect of such a legal framework on the international disarmament agenda.

The fact that an agreement was possible in 2010 provided a little respite for the NPT, whose credibility nevertheless remains challenged on all fronts due to very serious proliferation concerns and to the limited progress made in respect of article VI. The commitments agreed to in 2010 need to be implemented by all NPT States parties without delay. That requires tangible and credible progress in this review cycle. We look forward to NPT States parties convening next year in Vienna for the first Preparatory Committee, which will provide an opportunity to focus particularly on Vienna-based issues, where the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA) provides such an important contribution to the implementation of the NPT. The Agency's pivotal role on non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security needs to be reinforced and strengthened, in light of both the troubling proliferation challenges on the agenda in Vienna and the urgent need for serious reflection in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi disaster.

Vienna is also host to the Preparatory Committee for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has a crucial role to play in developing the effective nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime that we seek. We welcome the declared intention of Indonesia and the United States to move towards ratification of the CTBT and hope that these announcements will be followed up as soon as possible. Moreover, we urge the other remaining annex 2 States to take the opportunity to show global disarmament and non-proliferation leadership by ratifying the CTBT without delay.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation depend on a strong verification regime. The IAEA continues to expand and to strengthen its safeguards system, and the CTBT continues to build its capacities. Both agencies have demonstrated that verification works and that multilateral institutions are highly effective in this respect, owing to their impartiality and their multilateral legitimacy.

The 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction is an integral and decisive part of the consensus reached at the NPT Review Conference last year. It is important that this process be put on a credible track and that all stakeholders approach it with the sincere mindset of wanting to make progress. This is of the utmost importance not only to the countries of the region but also to the entire NPT membership and indeed the international community at large. We are therefore delighted that Finland has been nominated as facilitator and host country for this important process. We wish Finland well in this challenging endeavour.

In our view, the general debate again demonstrated the worrying state of affairs of our discourse on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are stuck in procedural discussions, lacking focus on the urgency of actually making progress on substance, and repeating old positions over and over. Let us take for instance our call — which I now repeat — on the importance of universalizing the NPT and of all States that have not

yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. As important as it is, unfortunately it rings somewhat hollow and unlikely, as do so many other statements and apparent dogmas that have been heard in this Committee and elsewhere for many years. Yet we all seem to agree that we are dealing with issues that need to be addressed with great urgency. So why are we unable to break out of our state of inertia and open our discourse up to new approaches to enable multilateral progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation?

The prime example of this debate is the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva — the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum tasked to negotiate disarmament treaties. Our delegation would fully subscribe to this frequently quoted description if it still were true. However, after a blockage of one and a half decades the CD appears to have been reduced to a forum where multilateral engagement on disarmament matters is feigned without consequences or substantive progress. Let me stress that the responsibility for this lies not only with nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-capable States but with the entire membership.

We certainly want the CD to live up to its mandate, but the fact is that it has been unable to deliver on its mandate for 15 years now. Over this period, the responsibility for blocking progress or ensuring that the CD's discourse remains on unproductive and dogmatic grounds has been shared by a variety of actors. At least from our perspective, there seems to be a determination on the part of too many stakeholders to maintain the status quo for as long as possible. So far, that approach has been successful. The silent majority complains about the state of affairs and appeals for change, but there have been no real consequences.

Unless the international community coalesces around a more innovative course of action, the inertia will continue and any meaningful multilateral disarmament process will continue to elude us for a very long time.

Can the political will around a more determined and constructive way forward be mustered? That is indeed the big question that we also ask ourselves after listening to the general debate. Austria, together with Mexico and Norway, has submitted a draft resolution entitled "Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations" (A/C.1/66/L.21) that in our view identifies such a possible, credible and constructive path ahead. We look forward to exploring and discussing this

approach with all States interested in moving forward on substance.

Ms. Silveira (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) members and associated States: Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, Uruguay.

MERCOSUR and associated States take the floor to renew their commitment to the promotion of a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community is increasingly aware that so long as nuclear weapons exist there will be a real danger of their use and proliferation. Their existence reduces the security of all States, including those that possess them. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States will fulfil their commitments and enter in good faith a general, transparent, irreversible and verifiable process according to a well-defined timetable with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament.

MERCOSUR and associated States underscore recent positive events in the nuclear field. In that respect, we welcome the signing of the New START agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States. We also recognize the announcements by some nuclear-weapon States concerning the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines, as well as the statements made by some nuclear-weapon States regarding measures to strengthen their negative security assurances. In addition, MERCOSUR and associated States welcome the announcements made by those States whose ratifications are required for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that they will continue and complete the process of ratification of the Treaty.

These events and initiatives demonstrate the renewed priority of disarmament and non-proliferation issues on the international agenda, but they are not enough to achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. To that end, MERCOSUR and associated States hope that the First Committee will follow up on the results achieved during the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which are reflected in its Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). These results helped us to approach a new phase in the nuclear disarmament process. Under the

NPT, the nuclear-weapon States committed themselves to nuclear disarmament and the non-nuclear-weapon States committed not to develop nuclear weapons. In addition, the NPT reaffirmed the right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The lack of progress in nuclear disarmament was the main reason to convene the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. We also recall that the 2000 Review Conference adopted 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament — a crucial milestone whose lack of implementation frustrated our hopes for substantive progress. The adoption by the Review Conference of its Final Document containing an action plan of 64 steps to implement the 13 practical steps agreed in 2000 undeniably embodied the will of a new era in the nuclear disarmament process. MERCOSUR and associated States welcome the adoption of the 64 actions through which, *inter alia*, the nuclear-weapon States confirmed their unequivocal commitment to the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, agreed to accelerate progress in the implementation of the practical steps, and agreed that the process of reducing nuclear arsenals should cover all types of nuclear weapons without exception.

The progress achieved at the NPT Review Conference contrasts with the stalemate prevailing in the Conference on Disarmament because of the lack of consensus on the various items on its agenda. The Conference concluded its 2011 session without adopting a programme of work that would enable it to begin substantive work. Our countries will continue to give their full support to a consensus formula that would allow the Conference on Disarmament to adopt a programme of work and thus negotiate new disarmament instruments.

The members of MERCOSUR and associated States stress their readiness to initiate without delay negotiations on a treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices that promote the objectives of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. They also express their interest in achieving substantive progress on other key issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, such as nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of those weapons. We hope that discussions on these four issues will lead to the conclusion of legal instruments.

It is crucial and urgent that all States that have not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, especially all nuclear-weapon and annex 2 States, do so as soon as possible. We welcome ratifications by Ghana and Guinea. MERCOSUR and associated States reaffirm the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear tests. In this regard, it is crucial that all States be committed not to promoting or carrying out nuclear tests or any other form of nuclear explosions, as well as any other action that contradicts the CTBT provisions and obligations.

As members of the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone through the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, members of MERCOSUR and associated States highlight the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia is an important initiative that should be continued. It is crucial to point to the decision to hold in 2012 a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The member States of MERCOSUR and associated States welcome the announcement made by the Chair on the appointment of a facilitator and a host country for the conference.

We underline the critical contribution of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to efforts to establish a safer international system. In this regard, we recognize the importance of the IAEA safeguards regime, in accordance with the NPT and with treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones as an essential tool to ensure that nuclear materials are not used for military purposes. We also highlight the valuable contribution that the IAEA can make to disarmament actions through independent verification.

On this particular point we highlight the importance of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) which completed 20 years in 2011. It is the only binational safeguards organization in the world and the first formed by Argentina and Brazil. As a regional safeguards body, its main objective is to guarantee to both countries and the international community that all nuclear materials of the two countries will be used only for peaceful purposes.

ABACC is the first link of integration between Argentina and Brazil in the nuclear field. Its existence demonstrates the clear political will of both countries to promote transparency in their nuclear programmes, enable an environment of mutual trust, and cooperate constructively in their respective international non-proliferation policies. In reaffirming the strategic nature of the dialogue of coordination and strengthened confidence in the bilateral nuclear field, ABACC unequivocally shows the commitment of Argentina and Brazil to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Members of MERCOSUR and associated States welcome the recent recognition by the Nuclear Suppliers Group that the safeguards agreement within ABACC ensures the strongest guarantees in this field. We note that the Nuclear Suppliers Group also ratified the right of peaceful countries like Argentina and Brazil to have unrestricted access to the information exchanges on the development of relevant technologies for their nuclear programmes.

MERCOSUR and associated States believe that nuclear weapons have no role in the new fairer, more prosperous and democratic world order that we all wish to build. We are convinced that, if resources for nuclear-weapon programmes were spent to support social and economic development, they would surely benefit all of humankind. Nuclear weapons are the regrettable legacy of an era and mentality that humankind has left behind. We expect the First Committee to reflect this new reality through its decisions and resolutions.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Since it is my good fortune to take the floor today, I should like at the outset to welcome, as previous speakers have done, the nomination of a facilitator and the designation of the host country for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This is an important step forward for all the countries of the region and, of course, in the implementation of the road map contained in the action plan adopted by the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The past year has seen progress in the nuclear field, notably with the entry into force of the New START agreement and the launch of regular consultations among the five nuclear-weapon countries aimed at fulfilling their commitments within the framework of the NPT action plan. However, this year has also seen a

particularly dangerous and destabilizing new phase in the exacerbation of nuclear proliferation. Furthermore, the general debate that ended three days ago once again testified to the growing frustration at the deadlock in the multilateral system.

I should like to recall my country's stance on these issues. No one can doubt France's resolve in the field of nuclear disarmament. We are one of the rare States that have taken irreversible disarmament measures. Over the course of some 15 years, we have eliminated half of our nuclear warheads and, in the interests of transparency, made public the ceiling of 300 warheads for our entire arsenal. We have completely dismantled our ground-to-ground system. We have reduced by 30 per cent our airborne and sea-based components. We ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty 12 years ago and dismantled our test sites. We ceased producing plutonium and uranium for nuclear weapons and dismantled the corresponding facilities. Our strictly defensive doctrine severely limits the use of nuclear weapons, restricting their use to extreme circumstances of self-defence.

Our determination to work with the other nuclear States is also perfectly clear. In that respect, I recall our well-known invitation to our nuclear-weapons partners to Paris in July for the first follow-up meeting to the 2010 Review Conference. The success of that meeting was due above all to the obvious determination of the nuclear States to continue implementing concrete actions in order fully to uphold their commitments under the Treaty. We began to examine how we could be ready for 2015 with respect to the three pillars of the Treaty.

Furthermore, we initiated a series of consultations with other countries to encourage the swift commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament. We also, during two rounds of discussions in Geneva and New York, made considerable progress with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) towards establishing a protocol to the Bangkok Treaty establishing the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. France will be ready by 2014 to report on the results of its actions and the progress made within the framework of these commitments, notably those linked to actions 5 and 21 of the action plan.

I want to stress one thing above all — the success of the action plan is a matter for all. Our collective success will come from the fulfilment by each State party of its share in the implementation of the adopted measures. We will then have made progress together towards a safer world. In saying this, I am not evading the special responsibility of the nuclear States, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament. France shoulders its responsibility through such concrete actions as I have recalled. I simply want to point out that improving the strategic context, in which we all have a role to play, always precedes any new step aimed at reducing nuclear arsenals.

Thus, for example, the significant reduction in the number of nuclear warheads in the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and France over the past 20 years was made possible by the ending of the Cold War and the construction of a Europe that was finally united. Similarly, only a sustained effort to reduce the serious tensions affecting — in different but always extremely dangerous ways — the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and the Korean peninsula, will allow us to make decisive progress on disarmament in these regions of the world. We must therefore work simultaneously on targeted strategies to resolve these tensions and to strengthen the mechanisms of collective security. It is through this course of action, both narrow and realistic, that we will make tangible progress towards genuine disarmament and make the elimination of nuclear weapons eventually achievable.

I reaffirmed in my speech during the general debate (see A/C.1/66/PV.5) that the greatest threat to international security today was nuclear proliferation. The past year inspires no optimism. In all forums, including the Group of Eight (G-8), the presidency of which we held this year, France places particular emphasis on reducing that threat. Strengthening the non-proliferation regime is for us an absolute priority.

Iran remains one of our main concerns since its military, nuclear and ballistic missile ambitions are a growing threat to international security and the stability of the region. For many years, Iran has continued, in violation of the resolutions of the Security Council and the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to pursue a fait accompli policy. The danger signals are building up. They include the announcement of a three-fold increase of 20 per cent enriched uranium production capacities without credible purpose, and the installation of the

first centrifuges in the Qom plant, constructed under cover and concealed from the international community until 2009.

In this context, the latest IAEA report (see A/66/95), circulated on 2 September, highlights the deterioration of the situation on the ground. The Agency underlines the very insufficient cooperation that Iran continues to offer on all these matters of concern, making it impossible to guarantee the exclusively civilian purpose of Iran's nuclear programme. The Agency expresses in this regard its growing concern in the light of the possible existence in Iran of secret past or current activities — I repeat "current" — linked to a possible military dimension of the Iranian programme involving the development of a nuclear warhead for a ballistic missile. The IAEA adds that it holds detailed, exhaustive, consistent and credible information on this issue.

The grave and serious evidence of work relating to the design and manufacture of nuclear weapons by Iran is a major cause of concern for the international community. That evidence comes on top of Iran's pursuit of a ballistic and space programme carried out in violation of international law. France continues to work with its partners of the E3+3 format durably to resolve this major crisis. The E3+3 remains open to dialogue, as was recalled at the margins of the latest General Assembly through a declaration published on their behalf by the High Representative of the European Union. Given Iran's lack of willingness to negotiate in a concrete and serious manner on its nuclear programme, however, we are ready to continue to up the pressure on Tehran.

Iran, unfortunately, is not the only country that is a cause of concern for the international community. In North Korea, a secret enrichment programme, in violation of Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009), has come to light. In Syria, the violation of that country's Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, established by the latter in June, resulted in the Syrian issue being referred to the Security Council by the IAEA. In short, last year was decidedly not marked by the resolution of persistent proliferation crises — far from it. We must not simply bemoan this fact. France is more than ever resolved to act with its partners to combat these particularly grave threats.

I now come to an issue that has been addressed here on many occasions and which gives rise to shared

frustrations year after year — the stalled multilateral negotiations on disarmament. The general debate underscored once again, if there were any need to do so, that the paralysis in the work of the Conference on Disarmament arose from political disagreement and that procedural improvements will not be enough to break the deadlock in that forum. In its statement, Pakistan confirmed that it did not want to participate in the next step of negotiating an agreement on a fissile material cut-off treaty, despite the fact that such a step is deemed necessary by the entire international community in order to move collectively towards reducing arsenals. That is Pakistan's prerogative, but with respect to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, its security concerns prompt it to propose that the international community should change the order of its priorities. That is not acceptable.

The draft resolutions submitted this year — today being the deadline for submissions — are important in that they try to contribute as concretely as possible and in a realistic way to restarting the cut-off treaty negotiations. The draft resolution submitted by Canada on the negotiation of a future treaty — for which my delegation expresses its sincere appreciation — goes beyond urging the Conference on Disarmament to adopt a work programme, as it has urged it to do in previous years. Instead, it proposes a mechanism aimed at making real progress even if the Conference on Disarmament should reveal itself in the year to come as once again incapable of adopting such a programme. We hope that these efforts will at last enable that body, which we believe remains the only appropriate forum to negotiate the cut-off treaty, to recover the active role that devolves upon it.

That being said, I also believe it important that other resolutions relating to the nuclear field — such as that submitted by the New Agenda Coalition — should not seek to reopen compromises reached with great difficulty, for example within the framework of the NPT Review Conference. The current wording of certain draft resolutions tends towards modifying and amplifying certain commitments undertaken within the framework of the action plan adopted by consensus in 2010. That does not seem to us to be very productive. We worked collectively on achieving a consensus at the time that would allow us to advance towards greater security for all. Let us now try to preserve the spirit that allowed us to strengthen multilateralism and to focus on the effective implementation of the 2010 action plan.

In conclusion, the Committee may rest assured that it can count on my delegation's full cooperation in order to ensure the success of the work of the Committee.

Mr. Almansoori (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation thanks Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement regarding the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. I commend the Secretary-General for his nomination of Finland to host the 2012 conference and of a facilitator from Finland to coordinate and prepare for the Conference. I align myself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group of States concerning the importance of the Conference, the success of which we hope all parties will participate actively to ensure.

While there have been some positive developments in the field of nuclear disarmament, we continue to hope that the nuclear-weapon States will enter into serious and effective negotiations leading to an agreement to end all operations to improve and develop nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and to ensure a gradual elimination of nuclear weapons. In this respect, the United Arab Emirates calls on all nuclear States to implement their obligations and pledges — reaffirmed at successive Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the 2010 NPT Review Conference — concerning nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this context, we also urge States not parties to the NPT to accede to that Treaty without further delay.

We also call on the international community to step up international efforts to exert pressure on Israel to subject its nuclear facilities to the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in implementation of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including the resolution adopted by the sixth NPT Review Conference in 2000, which all call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We also demand that the international community, particularly the nuclear-weapon and other influential countries, demonstrate genuine political will to contribute to the achievement of early progress on the full implementation of the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, especially the efforts aimed

at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The United Arab Emirates recognizes the inalienable right of all countries to develop and use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and stresses that such rights come with great responsibilities and serious obligations on the part of States, including a full commitment to non-proliferation and to placing all nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA without delay. My country attaches great importance to the IAEA safeguards regime as the ideal and most trusted system to ensure that nuclear materials and facilities are used for peaceful purposes. It also emphasizes the need to meet the challenges that face the safeguards system and to enable the IAEA to realize in full its mandate not only to verify declared nuclear material in States, but also to identify undeclared materials and activities.

Iran, like any other country, has the right to use and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; in so doing, it must also honour its obligations under the comprehensive safeguards agreements and other relevant international requirements, including resolutions of the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors.

In 2008, the United Arab Emirates adopted a clear and detailed policy on the development of its peaceful nuclear energy programme that included the views of my Government and its commitments regarding the use of nuclear energy. That policy is based on the principles of complete transparency, commitment to the highest standards of non-proliferation, and full cooperation with the IAEA, which should be a fundamental principle of all nuclear activities and programmes. The United Arab Emirates, which acceded to the Additional Protocol on the IAEA safeguards regime and began implementing it in December 2010, believes that the Protocol will allow for better ways to provide assurances about the nuclear activities of States.

In conclusion, my country continues to support all the regional and international diplomatic efforts to build confidence in the field of strategic nuclear disarmament, in consonance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.42.

Mr. Ishak (Malaysia): At the outset allow me, on behalf of the Malaysian delegation, to congratulate Finland on its appointment as facilitator and host of the 2012 Conference, which could provide the impetus to the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Also on behalf of my delegation, may I express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons*", contained in document A/66/132, submitted under sub-item x of agenda item 98. We also extend our appreciation to the delegations that have submitted the information requested pursuant to resolution 65/76 of 8 December 2010.

Nuclear disarmament occupies a central role in the work of the United Nations. That is reflected in the fact that resolution 1 (I), the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1946, spoke, among other things, of the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. Twenty-two years later, the international community had the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was opened for signature in 1968. Yet, despite the fact that 65 years have passed since 1946 and that the Cold War ended two decades ago, there remain more than 20,000 nuclear weapons the operational status of which is unclear.

Against such a background, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* was a significant milestone in international efforts aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament by making a powerful moral argument for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In no uncertain terms, the world court declared that all States are obliged to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control.

In this regard, Malaysia has, since 1996, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons*", and will continue to do so on behalf of the sponsors this year. With a view to achieving the broadest support possible, important decisions of the International Court

of Justice have been retained in their existing form, specifically in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution (A/C.1/66/L.42). References to some of the elements contained in the action plan on nuclear disarmament that were consensually agreed to during the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT are also incorporated.

Among the major elements contained in the draft resolution is the proposal for a nuclear-weapons convention that prohibits the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and provides for their elimination. Malaysia believes that the incremental-comprehensive approach that is encapsulated in the draft convention will enable States to reach a balanced implementation of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation that is crucial to ensuring that the NPT remains the cornerstone in the maintenance of international peace and security and achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. If we are to progress further on this issue, we require consensus on commencing the multilateral negotiations process. That in turn requires good faith on the part of the States possessing nuclear weapons. We call upon the States concerned to demonstrate such good faith.

Support for the draft resolution is a reaffirmation of our commitment to the multilateral process in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We thank the sponsors of the draft and we invite others to join in co-sponsoring it. We sincerely hope that the draft resolution will continue to receive the support of all delegations.

Ms. Al-Dhaen (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his announcement of the appointment of a facilitator and host country for the 2012 conference. I should like to express the firm position of my country concerning our unwavering support for efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation and our total commitment to respecting all relevant international instruments.

It is clear that today's world aspires to cooperation and to collective action to meet the challenges to nuclear non-proliferation. That should encourage us all the more to work together to achieve a more stable and safer world in which all States can attain the objectives

of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and to progress in the implementation of the three fundamental pillars of the Treaty: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We are all the more optimistic because the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization to the General Assembly at its current session (A/66/1), notes the resolve of the United Nations to pursue its efforts, in conjunction with Member States, to maintain and reinvigorate the effective standards of disarmament and non-proliferation. In addition, we note the efforts under way to conclude a treaty on nuclear weapons with which all countries of the world could comply.

In recalling the failure in recent years in the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, we wish to stress resolution No. 7362 of the Council of the League of Arab States, adopted at its special session on 15 May, on ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons, as well as the recommendations of many States concerning the convening of an international conference to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which would galvanize the true political will of nuclear-weapon States to achieve the objectives of the Treaty. However, the ongoing concern over the delay in the implementation of the action plan on the Middle East, adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, is currently being dispelled by the tangible prospects of a possible conference in 2012, as stated in the Secretary-General's report.

In this context, Israel must adhere to the NPT and submit its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981).

Though it is true that the current session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time rich in crucial events, which will certainly have an impact on the future, we are still called upon to work tirelessly and pragmatically towards disarmament, especially since there is a real opportunity to establish a world of true collective security, stability and prosperity. It goes without saying that the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a crucial tool for collective security and that it is in all our interests to safeguard and strengthen it. We are confident that today we are in a position to carry out what we could not do in the past.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): As far as world peace and security are concerned, the greatest challenge comes from nuclear weapons. More than half a century has passed since the appearance of the first nuclear weapons, and 20 years have elapsed since the end of the Cold War. Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency to rely on nuclear weapons, and their modernization is being accelerated by the nuclear Powers. In addition, a country with the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons, having designated specific countries as the targets of pre-emptive nuclear strikes, has drawn up an operational plan for nuclear attacks and it is conducting nuclear war exercises under that plan in an undisguised manner.

Our delegation would like to draw attention to the following issues. First, nuclear disarmament should be oriented towards a total ban on the use of nuclear weapons and their eventual elimination. The existence of nuclear weapons, as well as their use or threat of use, constitutes a constant threat to humankind. Furthermore, as long as nuclear weapons exist outside any legal treaty framework, endangering the survival of humankind, there is no guarantee of world peace and security.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is steadfast in its advocacy of the comprehensive and total abolition of nuclear weapons, and to this end insists that a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, in accordance with a time frame, be adopted. In addition, nuclear disarmament should be multilateral in nature, verifiable and irreversible. In this regard, we support the proposal for the establishment of a special committee and an early start to negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, the nuclear Powers should refrain from making nuclear threats against non-nuclear-weapon States and provide them with legally binding negative security assurances. The non-nuclear-weapon States are demanding mandatory and binding negative security assurances from the nuclear Powers on the non-use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances. International relations in which a certain country is free to pose a nuclear threat while others are exposed to those threats should no longer be tolerated. The nuclear Powers should remove the nuclear umbrella over their allied countries and withdraw all nuclear weapons deployed outside their own territories. They should also abandon the nuclear doctrine based on the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States,

and pledge to provide firm negative security assurances and move as soon as possible towards the negotiation of an international treaty.

In expecting that the present meeting will play a due role in achieving substantial results towards disarmament, we assure you, Sir, of our active cooperation with the Committee and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.51.

Mr. Samaki (Nigeria): Let me restate my delegation's confidence in your leadership, Sir, and the competence of your Bureau to guide this Committee to complete its work in a timely and efficient manner. As this is the first time Nigeria is taking the floor to speak during the thematic discussion on the nuclear weapons cluster, my delegation aligns itself with the de-alerting group's statement, read out by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of Chile, New Zealand, Switzerland, Malaysia and Nigeria, on addressing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons.

On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States, may I also take this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty" (A/C.1/66/L.51), which has already been circulated to colleagues and representatives. We welcome the overwhelming support for this text in the past and, with respect to ensuring its effectiveness, we appeal to nuclear-weapon States that have not yet ratified the relevant annexes to the Treaty to do so without further delay.

The opening words of the 1945 Charter of the United Nations declare the objective of this noble Organization thus — "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". We accept that the term "scourge of war" addresses all acts of wars and conflicts fought with deadly weapons, but consider nuclear weapons to be the most deadly of all arms and an unacceptable means of prosecuting wars and the defence of States. This aspect of the danger of nuclear weapons is well reflected in the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, in which the jurists affirmed in clear terms that nuclear weapons possess certain unique characteristics that make them dangerous to world security. Nuclear weapons are identified as explosive devices with energy purposely set to inflict extreme pain and cause maximum destruction. They are by their very nature the

most inhumane weapons ever conceived and intended to be used most indiscriminately to kill, maim and destroy. My delegation views their continued existence as a robust invitation to other Member States to crave and earmark resources for their acquisition.

Nigeria considers the obligations of States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and respect for the three-pillar system contained in its preamble and 11 articles to be sacrosanct. Nigeria believes that broader compliance with the tenor of the Treaty would serve a useful purpose by addressing all the challenges associated with nuclear disarmament, including the clandestine development of its broad systems and the craving associated with its acquisition and ownership. We believe that States parties should also demonstrate practical commitment to article V of the NPT. We welcome the basic philosophy of the NPT which emphasizes that nuclear-weapon States commit themselves to nuclear disarmament while non-nuclear-weapon States adhere to the principle of the non-acquisition of nuclear weapons. My delegation also calls on States parties to work towards nuclear disarmament and to submit their nuclear facilities and programmes to the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards inspections.

In addition, Nigeria believes that the fear of nuclear confrontation among nuclear-weapon States, including the reluctance to halt the horizontal and vertical development of weapons, the lack of commitment and political will to dismantle their nuclear arsenals in line with articles I and III of the NPT, is of major concern to the international community. It is for that reason that my delegation intends to take this opportunity to reiterate the concerns of the de-alerting group, as earlier presented by Switzerland.

Nigeria also welcomes the discussion of the issue of the de-alerting of nuclear weapons during last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, and calls for the continued commitment of nuclear-weapon States to the further reduction of the operational status of nuclear-weapons systems.

We believe in the usefulness of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the overall process of nuclear disarmament, and call for the removal of all impediments that continue to stall its entry into force after 15 years. We therefore call on all States yet to ratify the CTBT, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

As a State party to the NPT, Nigeria will continue to promote a multilateral process and join other Member States, including the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, in expressing support for the NPT as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The next Review Conference is three years away, but we could promote its agenda by demonstrating commitment to addressing the process transparently. We therefore support all useful international efforts towards achieving nuclear disarmament, including the best intentions of the General Assembly to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, permit me on behalf of the African Group to join others in welcoming the announcement of the Secretary-General regarding the choice of Finland as the host country for the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We equally welcome the appointment of Ambassador Jaakko Laajava as facilitator. The African Group pledges its support for the success of the Conference.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.38.

Mr. Dwipayudhanto (Indonesia): Indonesia, as the current Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Chairman of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Commission, has the pleasure to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Indonesia. Before beginning the statement on behalf of ASEAN, we would like to congratulate Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava on his appointment as facilitator, and Finland as the host Government for the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

ASEAN reaffirms that nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority on the disarmament agenda of all 10 ASEAN member States. The South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which was signed in Bangkok on 15 December 1995, expresses ASEAN's determination to contribute towards general and complete nuclear disarmament and the promotion of international peace and security in the region. That was reinforced by the accession of the ASEAN Charter

in December 2010, which clearly states in its article 1 that South-East Asia will be preserved as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

As conveyed by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of ASEAN during the general debate in the First Committee (see A/C.1/66/PV.4), ASEAN is playing an increasingly vital role in maintaining peace and stability in South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. We are also playing an active role in contributing towards the aims and objectives of achieving the goals of general and complete disarmament. It is our hope that our efforts will undoubtedly contribute towards international peace and security.

As a reflection of ASEAN's collective efforts, allow me on this important occasion to introduce once again the biennial draft resolution entitled "Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)", document A/C.1/66/L.38. The draft resolution aims at contributing significantly to strengthening the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. We hope that the adoption of the draft resolution will bring us a step closer to the common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

It is the sincere hope of all 10 ASEAN member States that SEANWFZ can be regarded as a significant step towards achieving our common goal of a world without nuclear weapons. In this regard, the universal support of all Member States for the draft resolution and the SEANWFZ Treaty itself will help pave the way to achieving that goal. We are appreciative of the continued and unwavering support demonstrated for this text at previous sessions of the General Assembly. At this current session, we look forward to the renewed support of all our friends from various regions, and we would also like to seek their co-sponsorship of the draft resolution.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker for today concerning the issue of nuclear weapons. I now call on those delegations that have requested a right of reply.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I will try to be very brief. Today, the delegation of France repeated its baseless allegations against the exclusively peaceful nuclear programme of my country. While categorically rejecting those claims, in this regard I should like to state the following.

France, as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has a long record of non-compliance with its international legal obligations and undertakings in the area of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. France, which ironically speaks out about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, has conducted many nuclear tests at sites outside its own territories, from North Africa in the West to the Pacific islands in the East. In conducting those tests, France contaminated the environment of those countries and inflicted damage upon their innocent peoples. Accordingly, France should be held responsible for all those acts and compelled to compensate the affected peoples and destroyed environments.

France is not qualified to talk about non-proliferation concerns in the Middle East region since it is the first proliferator country that transferred its nuclear-weapons capability by assisting in the building of the Dimona reactor for the Zionist regime in the occupied territories of Palestine as part of an agreement reached between that regime, France and the United Kingdom in 1959, the infamous Protocol of Sèvres. France's cooperation with the Zionist regime in developing nuclear weapons, which is a major threat to peace and security, was in clear non-compliance with the NPT provisions. Furthermore, France continues to violate its nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the NPT by developing and modernizing its nuclear arsenal, and particularly by allocating millions of dollars to developing new nuclear submarines.

France has also recently concluded a bilateral agreement with the United Kingdom to share information on nuclear warheads and construct "joint nuclear research facilities" in flagrant violation of articles I and II of the NPT. France was also the first proliferator of missiles in the Middle East. In the 1960s, France covertly provided the Zionist regime with all kinds of missile technology and materials to promote its capacity to deliver weapons of mass destruction. According to international experts, the Jericho I ballistic missile of the Zionist regime is based on the French missile MD-600. It is ironic that France should cry wolf in this Committee about the proliferation of missiles in the region.

Another obvious example of the non-proliferation record of France was its assistance to the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein during the eight years of war imposed on Iran, on which I will elaborate in my

statement on the thematic discussion of other weapons of mass destruction.

The Chair: A number of other delegations have asked to speak in right of reply. I shall call on them to do so at the start of our next meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.