



General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

First Committee

3rd meeting

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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Sareva (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m

Agenda items 62 to 80 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: I again remind delegations kindly to limit their statements to 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity, and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations or regional groups.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I extend our heartfelt congratulations and sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka of Uganda, for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the deliberations of the Committee during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

I join others in paying tribute to the former Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his invaluable contributions to multilateral disarmament efforts. May I also welcome and congratulate Mr. Nobuyasu Abe on his appointment as the new Under-Secretary-General. I am convinced that, given his vast experience and diplomatic skill, Mr. Abe will continue the excellent tradition of Mr. Dhanapala in leading the Department

for Disarmament Affairs in the promotion of the disarmament agenda of the United Nations.

The year 2003 is a significant year as well as a dismal one for disarmament. On 23 May we commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I). It is worth recapitulating here that the Final Document of SSOD-I underscores the fact that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is the ultimate goal of multilateral disarmament efforts. Yet, after 25 years, the goal is far from being achieved. Hence there was nothing to celebrate in May.

Earlier, in March, the United States, the United Kingdom and their coalition partners launched a war against Iraq to get rid of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Last week it was revealed that weapons of mass destruction had not yet been found in Iraq. The unilateral search for them goes on, and the United Nations inspection regime is cast aside. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced its decision to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and has claimed that it now has nuclear-weapons capability. That certainly endangers the political and security situation in the region concerned.

In 2003 also we have witnessed the failure of the Disarmament Commission to adopt a substantive report on the two items discussed after four years of deliberation. The Open-ended Working Group meeting to consider the objectives and agenda for a fourth

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special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) ended without any results. The Conference on Disarmament is still entangled in uncertainty over its programme of work. My delegation is indeed disheartened by these developments. However, we have not lost hope completely.

The Secretary-General has vividly described the state of affairs of multilateral disarmament efforts in his report (A/58/1) on the work of the Organization. He has stated that the body of multilateral disarmament norms has been slowly eroded as a result of weakened international commitment. I am sure many delegations agree with him.

My delegation is disappointed by the lack of progress in the field of disarmament. The situation must be rectified. Malaysia believes that the key ingredient to progress in disarmament is the establishment of mutual trust. The question of disarmament is intricately linked with the issue of the security of States. In this connection, it is critical that efforts to promote confidence-building measures be pursued. States must be able to trust other States. That can be achieved if States fully adhere to the provisions of international disarmament treaties and conventions that they are parties to. The provisions of those treaties and conventions must be implemented in a verifiable, irreversible, equitable and balanced manner. There is no room for selectivity and double standards; otherwise, the universality of those treaties and conventions would be undermined.

At SSOD-I Member States agreed that nuclear weapons posed the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of human civilization. Today all States agree that weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, still pose a serious threat to humanity. While it is not wrong to argue that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security, we must not forget that the existence of these weapons in the first place is a threat to humanity. In this connection, Malaysia cannot but agree with the Secretary-General that there is no "good" or "bad" proliferation.

The nuclear-weapon States must also fulfil their commitments towards a significant reduction in their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. Non-compliance also applies to nuclear disarmament, and not only to nuclear non-proliferation. In this regard, the implementation by nuclear-weapon States of article VI

of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is crucial.

It has been said that a prime weakness of major weapons-of-mass-destruction regimes is the lack of verification and enforcement mechanisms. However, it should be noted that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has its own verification mechanism, in the form of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). By the same token, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the mechanism to verify whether States parties to the NPT are in compliance with article III of the treaty. What is required is the political will to ensure that these mechanisms can work in a fair, balanced and non-discriminatory manner, while taking into consideration the interests of everyone involved.

Malaysia believes that full adherence to all provisions of international disarmament treaties and conventions by the States parties is the only sustainable approach to multilateral disarmament. We agree that there is a need to strengthen the verification and enforcement mechanisms relating to weapons of mass destruction. That can certainly be done through strengthening these regimes, without resorting to other means. Any proposals outside these established legal regimes, especially through a political body such as the Security Council, might result in an unravelling of the regimes, with serious consequences for us all.

Malaysia is committed to the promotion of nuclear disarmament. In this connection, we shall carry out our obligations as a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT. We will continue to work with other Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) colleagues in realizing our aspiration for the acceptance of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. We will continue to support the promotion of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world, in particular in the Middle East. Malaysia will also continue to work with other like-minded countries to pursue follow-up action to the General Assembly resolution on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*.

International peace and security cannot be fully maintained without significant progress in disarmament. The international community already possesses the necessary tools to advance the disarmament process. What is required is for the

existing legal structures to be strengthened, with the full backing of the political will of States. In this regard, the appeal by the Secretary-General for greater political will cannot be overstated. Without political will there cannot be a genuine solution to international disarmament issues. That is one important element already highlighted at SSOD-I as the decisive factor for achieving real disarmament measures. Perhaps it is time for all of us to return to the beginning and reorient ourselves towards the common objective of achieving general and complete disarmament.

It is important that favourable conditions be created for the further advancement of the global disarmament process. In this connection, all States should strictly abide by the provisions of the Charter. Any action that ignores the provisions of the Charter and that is not compatible with the principles of international law will adversely affect serious and genuine disarmament efforts. In this regard, Malaysia underscores the vital importance of multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in addressing disarmament and international security issues.

The revitalization of the General Assembly has been one of the central themes of the general debate in the General Assembly over the past two weeks. The First Committee, as one of the Main Committees of the General Assembly, should be included in the process. Indeed we are aware of the Chairman's plan to allocate at least half a meeting to deal with this subject. My delegation supports that. However, we wish to stress that the issue must be addressed in a holistic manner. It has to be considered comprehensively in the context of the revitalization of the General Assembly. It should not be treated in a manner exclusive to the First Committee. Malaysia believes that the matter is best addressed at the working group of the plenary chaired by the President of the General Assembly, when the appropriate time presents itself.

Mr. Rademaker (United States of America): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on behalf of the United States delegation, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that your vast experience will be an asset to the Committee's work, and I assure you of the full support of our delegation in the discharge of your duties. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

I would like today to share with it my belief that it can and must reshape itself into an effective

multilateral body, one that is relevant to the security threats of today and of the future, and that can meaningfully enhance international peace and security. In order to do so, we must be prepared to make some hard choices regarding our agenda and the way in which we do business.

We meet at a crossroads for multilateral arms control. In one direction lies the old, cold-war-era thinking that has paralysed achievable and practical progress in this field for far too long. In these dangerous times, too many nations still orient themselves by the anachronistic coordinates of the past. The results have been years of disappointing drift and growing irrelevance. In seeking to address today's challenges, too many nations continue to rely on the machinery endorsed a quarter of a century ago by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I), with no consideration of how to adapt that machinery to address new and emerging threats.

The old direction has also led to impasses and deadlocks that have become routine in some multilateral arms control forums. It has become nearly impossible to deal with a given arms control or disarmament issue without facing demands that other, unrelated subjects be dealt with on an equal basis and at the same time. Recently, the Conference on Disarmament showed signs that its work programme stalemate could be lifted. We consider this to be encouraging and are considering the ramifications. Obviously, seven years of inactivity there have damaged the reputation of the Conference.

Some believe that the objective of consensus is to ensure that all proposals have equal weight or are deemed to be equally acceptable. That kind of thinking over and over again proved itself during the cold war, and beyond, to be a recipe for inaction and failure, as subjects that do not enjoy consensus simply should not, and cannot, be given equal standing, let alone priority, over subjects that do. Too often many issues are addressed only superficially, as in this Committee, or are not addressed at all. While it is appropriate to address all issues of interest to member States, we need to give particular emphasis to those issues that can command consensus now. In that manner we can build gradually and constructively towards the full achievement of our common goals.

Both of these factors — cold-war thinking and linkages to non-consensus items — contributed to the failure of the Disarmament Commission last spring, when we were unable, after three years of work, to reach consensus on either of the two agenda items under consideration. These factors also constitute the root causes for the multi-year stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament. Now more than ever, as we face together the many new challenges to international peace and security, the question is whether the United Nations and the international disarmament machinery can still make a contribution or will be left behind. We must work to ensure that the Committee takes the road less travelled and becomes, once again, an effective multilateral forum.

The United States does not believe in multilateralism for its own sake. After all, the United Nations system itself is a creation of sovereign Governments for specific, defined and delimited purposes. Rather, the United States is committed to an effective multilateralism, properly targeted at today's security threats, contributing in real ways to enhancing international security, and free of political linkages or outmoded cold-war icons. Allow me to list a few examples of America's continued commitment to effective multilateralism in the field of arms control and non-proliferation.

The United States supports efforts to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including efforts to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We led the effort to increase the IAEA budget, and continue to provide a sizeable voluntary contribution to the IAEA. The United States has signed the Additional Protocol for the application of IAEA safeguards. President Bush submitted the Protocol to the Senate last year, and we look forward to formal consideration by the Senate. We urge all other countries to bring an additional protocol into force as soon as possible.

We also continue to meet our obligations under article VI of the NPT. The United States has dismantled over 13,000 nuclear weapons since the end of the cold war. We have eliminated more than a dozen different types of warheads. We have reduced the number of nuclear weapons by 60 per cent, including 80 per cent of our tactical nuclear weapons. Now, with the entry into force earlier this year of the United States-Russia Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, also known as the Moscow Treaty, we will cut the number of

operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads again by about two thirds, to 1,700 to 2,200 by the year 2012. That represents the largest reduction in nuclear forces ever mandated by an arms control treaty. In two decades we will have eliminated or decommissioned three quarters of our strategic nuclear arsenal.

Also the United States and Russia will dispose of more than 700 tons of excess fissile material so that it is no longer usable in nuclear weapons, contributing to the irreversibility of nuclear reductions.

In addition, the United States maintains its current moratorium on nuclear explosive testing. That having been said, the United States does not support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and will not become a party to it.

The United States has led efforts to pursue alternative approaches to strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). These efforts resulted in an agreed work programme at the 2002 resumed Review Conference, which established annual meetings of States parties and groups of experts. The inaugural experts' meeting concluded at the end of August. Preparations are under way for the annual meeting of States parties in November. In our view, the exchange of information among experts on national implementation and biosecurity was valuable. We look forward to the November meeting, and welcome States parties' efforts to fulfil their national responsibilities to implement and strengthen the BWC.

The United States is also playing a very active role in efforts to ensure effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), including efforts to strengthen the international organization responsible for verification, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

We were pleased with the positive results of the First Review Conference of the CWC this past May, which reinforced the importance of the Convention and of compliance with it, and mandated several important action plans to enhance implementation, currently under preparation. Last year we made a substantial voluntary financial contribution to enable the OPCW to carry out important activities in verification and implementation assistance. We are also very active in sharing expertise and experience, on request, with other member States as they work to fulfil their national implementation obligations.

The United States actively participated in the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Group recently concluded its work by recommending, for the first time since the founding of the Register in 1992, substantive changes to the Register's existing categories. The Register has been expanded to include man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and artillery between 75 millimetres and 100 millimetres. These changes will increase the Register's relevance to international peace and security issues, including the threats of terrorism and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. We were very pleased that discussions in the Group focused on the need to ensure that the Register remains relevant to today's security concerns, and that the Group rose to the challenge.

The United States is also taking a leading role in the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to subject anti-vehicle landmines to the same restrictions as anti-personnel landmines, which are included in the Amended Mines Protocol of the CCW.

The international community is seeking to address seriously the problems facing all of us in the fields of multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. President Bush spoke to these concerns when he addressed the General Assembly on 23 September. While some progress is being made through cooperation among responsible nations, others subvert this effort by refusing to live up to their international obligations. The United States believes that non-compliance with, or inadequate implementation of, existing arms control and non-proliferation treaty regimes is one of the premier threats that the Committee should be addressing today. For that reason the United States sponsors a biennial resolution on compliance, and we were pleased that last year's resolution —resolution 57/86 — was adopted by consensus. We hope that it will serve as a guide to all States. I want to repeat what I said this past May at the first CWC Review Conference: "My Government believes in compliance, not complacency." This is a collective responsibility, requiring States to fulfil their respective commitments to comply, as well as to work to make sure that all other parties are in compliance with their obligations. We call on all parties to non-proliferation and arms control treaties not only to honour their commitments, but also to hold other parties to account.

In relevant forums, such as the Fifth BWC Review Conference, the First CWC Review Conference and the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, and at the IAEA, the United States has raised its concerns about non-compliance and has named names. As part of our effort to insist on full compliance with relevant arms control and non-proliferation agreements, we have consistently urged the Security Council to act on last February's referral by the IAEA Board of Governors of North Korea's violation of the NPT, and we have been disappointed by the Council's failure to act on this matter. We are also working with other members of the IAEA Board of Governors to support thorough inspections that address the many serious outstanding questions regarding the scope and nature of Iran's clandestine nuclear activities. The mass of evidence arrayed against Iran in the past two reports of the Director General of the IAEA leads to the unequivocal conclusion that Iran is in violation of its safeguards agreement and is working hard to cover up that pattern of covert non-compliance. In September the United States supported the IAEA Board of Governors' resolution which has given Iran a final opportunity to redress its behaviour before its non-compliance is reported to the United Nations Security Council. The Board found that it is "essential and urgent" for Iran to remedy its failures and fully cooperate with the IAEA by the end of this month. No one should doubt that it is the hard cases, such as North Korea and Iran, that ultimately will determine the degree to which multilateralism will remain relevant to the security challenges of the twenty-first century.

The other paramount threat to global security requiring international attention and action today is that posed by terrorists and non-State actors seeking access to weapons of mass destruction, as well as the States that sponsor such terrorism. Unfortunately, as we have all come to learn, no civilized nation is immune from the barbarity of terrorism. Those who would direct attacks against innocent civilians with conventional weapons should be assumed to be equally willing to commit atrocities with weapons of mass destruction — a prospect that convinces the United States that this problem must be challenged on every front and defeated in an effective, hopefully multilateral, way. The international community, in our view, has no time to spare and no margin for error in this endeavour.

The First Committee considers more than 50 draft resolutions and decisions each year. Most of those draft resolutions originated decades ago, and are repeated year after year with little or no substantive change. As a result, much of the Committee's work has become repetitious and progressively less relevant in view of ongoing changes in the international security environment. This mechanical repetition also overloads the Committee's agenda and, in our view, hinders its ability to focus on the most pressing problems of today. The United States has been gratified by the overwhelmingly positive response from Governments to our non-paper this summer on the need to make multilateral arms control forums, such as the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, more effective. This Committee can this year take actions that will provide evidence for all to see of the true commitment of member States to effective multilateral arms control.

Over the years there have been a number of efforts to improve the work of the First Committee, but all of those efforts have foundered on the same reefs of cold-war thinking and linkages to non-consensus issues that vex multilateral arms control in general. The perilous times that we live in demand that we rise above linkages and parochial concerns by taking an honest look at how to reform the work of the Committee. We must make it possible to judge proposals on their merits, rather than on how they affect extraneous issues.

One of the most promising reforms that Governments have proposed is to streamline the work of the Committee by rotating its consideration of groups of agenda items on a biennial or triennial basis. Some individual resolutions merit yearly reaffirmation, but many more add little value when introduced on a yearly basis. We need to examine carefully the resolutions that the Committee takes up each year and ask ourselves whether yearly consideration is warranted in each instance, in order to avoid drowning our message in a sea of unnecessary repetition.

As the Committee considers ways in which it can make a more substantive contribution to international disarmament, we need to ensure that any efforts that we pursue in the Committee add value to, rather than subtract from or duplicate, important work pending before other United Nations forums or outside the United Nations system. A reduced annual workload, we believe, would permit the First Committee to better

address current security threats, such as those arising from non-compliance with existing treaty regimes. Our delegation plans to discuss this subject in greater detail during the coming weeks.

The United States will examine closely and with keen interest the debates and outcomes of this year's session of the First Committee. We invite all members to engage with our delegation in discussions on how to improve the Committee's efficiency and effectiveness. Our delegation must state in candour that our Government would not view favourably yet another year of desultory debate and rote reaffirmation by the Committee of the same tired and divisive resolutions of years past. Such inertia could lead to a change in the United States approach to the Committee and contribute to changes in the United States direction at the Conference on Disarmament or the Disarmament Commission. If, on the other hand, we succeed collectively in bringing on line a First Committee that is willing and able to act against today's threats, the universally welcomed results will be not only more effective multilateralism, but also enhanced peace and security for all United Nations Member States.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. With your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skills, you will surely steer this session to success. You and the other members of the Bureau can rest assured of full cooperation and support from the Chinese delegation.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka, former Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations, for his excellent work as Chairman at the last session, and to thank Mr. Dhanapala, former Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his contribution to the cause of arms control and disarmament. I welcome Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, who has assumed that office.

With the development of globalization, exchanges and integration among countries and cultures are increasingly enhanced, and interdependence in security among countries is deepening. We live in a new era when the losses and gains of all countries are shared.

The international security environment has undergone profound changes since 11 September 2001. Security threats are multiplying, and instability and

unpredictability have increased considerably. On the one hand, traditional security problems caused by territorial, resources, ethnic and interest disputes are far from being resolved. On the other hand, non-traditional security problems, such as terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crimes and epidemics, have grown rapidly, posing the biggest challenge to global security.

It is a common mission for the whole international community to take up new challenges, grasp new opportunities and create a peaceful, just, democratic and prosperous new century.

First, we should cultivate the concept of seeking security through cooperation. In today's world the security of all States is interdependent. Without international cooperation no State can maintain its security single-handedly. Force cannot win peace.

Secondly, we should respect diversity and advocate tolerance, thus realizing the democratization of international relations. Globalization should be a process for different countries and cultures to learn and benefit from each other. It should not be a process of imposing one standard upon all others. It is not in the common interest of the international community to label some countries and exclude them from the international system.

Thirdly, we should maintain the international legal system and promote the rule of law in international relations. Over the years, human society has established a complete international legal system based on the principles of sovereignty, the peaceful solution of international disputes, and legitimate self-defence. Such a system also includes a series of international legal instruments on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. It has played an important role in maintaining global peace and security and provided the necessary degree of predictability in the evolution of the international security situation. Undermining that legal system will jeopardize the stability of international relations. Only terrorists and extremists will benefit from such an outcome.

Fourthly, we should vigorously promote multilateralism and give the United Nations its full leading role. At present, geopolitical factors are diminishing, while non-traditional security challenges are rising and common interests among nations are expanding. These developments have provided a historic opportunity for the United Nations to realize

all its potential. The United Nations could and should play a greater role.

Through decades of evolution and development, the international non-proliferation regime has become a crucial part of the global security architecture. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become an international norm accepted by most countries. The growing threat of international terrorism has further enhanced such international consensus. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a very complicated issue. To solve the problem properly, first and foremost a better international environment in favour of non-proliferation goals should be created and the legitimate security concerns of each sovereign State should be accommodated and respected. That will help to eliminate the root causes of some States seeking weapons of mass destruction.

Secondly, peaceful solutions through political and diplomatic efforts should be advocated. The purpose of non-proliferation is to maintain global and regional peace and stability. Using non-peaceful means to counter proliferation, would not only be logically self-defeating but also counterproductive.

Thirdly, discrimination and double standards should be eliminated to ensure the universal participation and cooperation of the international community. We are opposed to unjustifiable sanctions under the pretext of non-proliferation.

Fourthly, the legitimate right of all countries to the peaceful uses of science and technology should be guaranteed.

China has been firmly advocating the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. China has acceded to the international legal instruments related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and has consistently strengthened its non-proliferation regime. China has promulgated a series of laws and regulations and established a complete export-control mechanism covering sensitive technologies and items in the nuclear, biological, chemical and missile fields. Such measures as the end-use and end-user certificate system, licensing system, control list and a catch-all principle have all been incorporated into China's export control mechanism in line with international practice. Penal measures have also been set out against violations of those laws and regulations. China is

further strengthening its export control measures in light of its national conditions. We are willing to benefit from the experience of other countries and further improve our non-proliferation export control mechanism.

Under current circumstances, it is of great significance to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in international political and military affairs. In this regard, nuclear-weapon States have special and unshirkable responsibilities. It is against the trend of the times to lower the threshold of nuclear war by developing new types of nuclear weapons which are easier to use in actual combat, to refuse to undertake, in a legally binding manner, no use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, or even to list other countries as targets of nuclear attack.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Though the treaty has not yet come into force, the principles and objectives set out therein have already become an important international norm. China supports the CTBT and is firmly against nuclear tests by any country under any pretext. China is also aware of its special responsibilities in promoting the early entry into force of the treaty. While observing the moratorium on nuclear tests, the Chinese Government will continue to promote the ratification process in China's legislative body.

A fissile material cut-off treaty will, hopefully contribute to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. China supports the early negotiation and conclusion of that treaty.

On 7 August this year China once again demonstrated its constructive attitude towards the work of the Conference on Disarmament by accepting the initiative of five ambassadors. We hope that the other parties concerned will respond positively so as to facilitate reaching agreement on a comprehensive and balanced work programme at the Conference on Disarmament that will reinvigorate the Conference as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

In recent years, along with the rapid development of space technology, human society has become increasingly dependent on outer space. Outer space is inextricably linked with our daily life, economic activities and scientific research. Outer space is the

common heritage of mankind. To prevent an arms race in, and the weaponization of, outer space is an urgent task facing the international community. Over the years the General Assembly has adopted a host of resolutions calling for further measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. We call upon all States to continue to attach great importance to the issue and to start substantive work, as required by the relevant United Nations resolutions, for the purpose of maintaining a peaceful and tranquil outer space.

The First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) held earlier this year was an important meeting, a step towards the full and effective implementation of the Convention. On 4 August this year, the leak of abandoned Japanese chemical weapons killed one person and injured 43 in Qiqihaer City, Heilongjiang Province of China. This tragic event illustrates once again the importance and urgency of the early and complete elimination of abandoned Japanese chemical weapons on Chinese territory. We hope that Japan will faithfully implement the obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and intensify its efforts to start the destruction process so as to remove as early as possible this long-standing threat to the lives of the Chinese people.

The meetings of experts and annual meetings of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) offer important forums for exploring effective measures to implement the Convention. China supports the multilateral process aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention and is willing to contribute to its effective implementation.

China always attaches great importance to humanitarian issues. In June this year, China's National People's Congress ratified the amendment to article I of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The forthcoming meeting of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts in November will be an important one. We are ready to work closely with all parties to conclude an instrument on the issue of explosive remnants of war. We also hope that an appropriate mandate on anti-vehicle landmines acceptable to all parties can be reached at the same meeting, taking into consideration both humanitarian concerns and the varying conditions of States.

China supports international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We have been implementing the Programme of Action faithfully and have formulated stringent legal and administrative measures on the production and transfer of small arms and light weapons. China donated \$10,000 this year to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs for its efforts related to the issue of small arms and light weapons. We support the report adopted by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts, and are in favour of starting negotiations on this issue next year in Geneva or any other appropriate venue.

China is of the view that the Firearms Protocol will play an important role in combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms. As a signatory State, China wishes to see the early entry into force of the Protocol.

In recent years, China has actively participated in international demining assistance efforts, and has donated a large amount of detecting and demining equipment to mine-affected countries. Moreover, China sent two groups of demining experts to Eritrea for on-site training and instruction in 2002 and 2003. This year China joined the Mine Action Support Group. We are ready to cooperate with all interested countries and international organizations in the future with a view to providing further assistance to mine-affected countries.

The reform of the First Committee is a topical issue this year. I should like to present some preliminary views on this issue. With the development of the international situation, the First Committee needs to keep pace with the times, and there is room for improving its efficiency and working methodology. Therefore, some reform and readjustment may be necessary. However, the nature of the First Committee as the most representative international forum on security and disarmament should not be changed, and each member State's right to express views or introduce draft resolutions on any issues related to international security and disarmament should not be compromised. Under the new situation it is the common interest, and also the common responsibility, of all countries to preserve the nature of the First Committee and enhance its role. We are ready to discuss and explore this issue with other countries in a frank and open-minded manner.

The Chinese Government recently announced an additional reduction of 200,000 military personnel by

2005, after the reduction of 500,000 troops during the period 1996 to 2000. This once again demonstrates the desire for peace of the Chinese Government and people. We are ready, together with the international community, to make unremitting efforts to push forward the international disarmament process and promote world peace and prosperity.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It is a great pleasure to convey to you, Sir, the warmest congratulations of the Algerian delegation on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of our full cooperation. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I take this opportunity once again to present my sincere congratulations to Ambassador Abe on his appointment to head the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his devotion to the cause of disarmament.

The disarmament process today reveals some disturbing signs of having run out of steam. Its future has become rather uncertain and its outlook seems to be particularly bleak. Nevertheless, the major changes on the international scene over the past decade should have argued for a reduction in the strategic and political advantage that nuclear arms are seen to have as a guarantee of national security. In fact, the prevailing feeling today seems to be that nuclear arms are here to stay. Indeed, never have they been so prized and worshipped, and never has it been so clearly asserted that they are evaluated on the basis of the identity of those who possess them, rather than their destructive capacities.

Let us make it quite clear that nuclear weapons are bad, whoever possesses them. It is therefore absurd that they are regarded as good when they are held by certain countries and bad when they are held by others. Nuclear weapons, to use fashionable terminology, are an absolute evil. They should therefore disappear, in the interests of mankind as a whole, because it is unacceptable for the world to be divided for ever between nuclear and non-nuclear countries.

Furthermore, keeping alive the concept of nuclear deterrence, which has no legal validity, far from promoting the achievement of the purposes of disarmament, has, unfortunately, only encouraged certain countries to acquire nuclear weapons. This legacy of the cold war, which the international

community must rid itself of once and for all, is an obstacle to progress in the disarmament process.

The reality is that arguing that nuclear deterrence is still relevant to preserve the strategic balance in the new context that arose at the end of the cold war, or that it is the best way to deprive any adversary of the use or threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction, is simply to seek a pretext for preserving nuclear weapons indefinitely and putting off to the Greek calends their total elimination. Is not giving up nuclear weapons, after all, the only way to demolish the reasoning which underlies that obsolete and anachronistic theory, so that they may finally be renounced?

The concept of deterrence, apart from the idea of unjustly imposing rules and obligations which only the nuclear States are not bound by, is conducive to questioning and endangering everything that has been achieved and agreed collectively in disarmament matters. Likewise, the emergence of new concepts based on unilateral and discriminatory logic and selective reasoning, seriously risks destabilizing the regime created by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), whose obligations apply to all and relate to both vertical and horizontal proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

All these concepts and other recent initiatives, tend to jeopardize the principle of undiminished security, destroy the development of collective and universal security and risk accelerating the arms race. Undiminished security cannot be the monopoly or privilege of some to the detriment of others — others, indeed, who have agreed to give up the nuclear option and respect their obligations under the pertinent treaties.

The objectives of nuclear disarmament must be reinstated, which inevitably means that we must implement the commitments already made in this area and that there must be universal accession to the NPT and scrupulous respect for all its obligations, particularly article VI, which should be fully implemented in order to pave the way for other treaties for the total elimination of these destructive weapons, under effective international control.

The non-nuclear-weapon States also have obligations, starting with the obligation not to acquire nuclear weapons, an obligation which they should not shirk under any circumstances. The multilateral

framework seems to be the most appropriate way to deal with this matter of high priority — nuclear disarmament. The fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV), a United Nations conference on nuclear dangers and a renewed Conference on Disarmament are the best possible forums to promote disarmament and to consider and resolve multilaterally a problem with global dimensions — nuclear disarmament. We cannot allow these forums to be in a constant state of deadlock or let the commitment voluntarily entered into in 2000 to rid humankind of these arms remain a pious wish.

Unilateral and bilateral initiatives, however necessary or useful, should not replace multilateral efforts, but should be used to buttress them. Respect for the principle of irreversibility will help to give even more relevance to these initiatives.

In this connection, it is important that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should be universal and should enter into force. Nevertheless, it would gain if it went beyond prohibitions of tests in physical space and also covered simulated tests.

Likewise, establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones would be a considerable contribution to maintaining international peace and security. It is our hope that efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones will be made in more areas, in particular in the Middle East. The absence of progress on the creation of such a zone in the Middle East is a matter of grave concern to us. This objective has not been achieved because of the refusal of Israel — the only country in the region that has not acceded to the NPT — to eliminate its nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and to place its nuclear installations under the generalized safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Nuclear weapons, which are quintessentially indiscriminate, must be banned once and for all. General Assembly resolution 1 (I), adopted at the Assembly's meeting on 24 January 1946, already contained this idea, together with a solemn commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) made this a matter of priority and the Sixth NPT Review Conference in 2000 was a road map which clearly signposted the way to nuclear disarmament. The conclusions from these important

meetings remain valid and must be implemented urgently.

The advent of a safer world also requires that other weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated. The universality of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which would guarantee the disappearance of biological and chemical weapons if it could be achieved, is still a goal.

Furthermore, disarmament would have more logic and would be greatly strengthened if undertakings were given not to devise new types of conventional weapons that, too, are lethal and destructive. It would be further strengthened by agreement to consolidate the Programme of Action to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which are closely linked to violent phenomena such as terrorism, organized crime and banditry.

General and complete disarmament continues to be the only way to give real content to the principle of undiminished security and to create a space of co-ownership and security that is indivisible, universal and non-discriminatory. Therefore, it is the only alternative that can save mankind from the danger of annihilation, ensure world peace and free the enormous resources currently allocated to armaments for development purposes. Current trends and analysis of the profound changes in international society show that today's threats and challenges seem to be mostly the products of economic depression rather than of any kind of political construct.

The new threats to international security can be seen to be the echo of the tensions and paroxysms of a crisis created by the headlong course of international relations just after the end of the cold war, whose outlines we can still not clearly make out.

The new system of international relations that is being created should leave no room for weapons and should give more consistency to the notion of interdependence. Collective well-being and economic and social development must henceforth be regarded as the guarantees of peace and security. This system calls upon us to multilaterally face the new threats to international security. Terrorism, the drug trade, organized crime and epidemics are precisely the challenges that we absolutely must meet.

Algeria is profoundly convinced that world security must be based on cooperation. Just and lasting solutions to conflicts, respect for the aims and principles of the Charter, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and specific and effective disarmament measures — these are all essential principles that have constantly underpinned my country's policies and diplomatic actions.

It was in this spirit that Algeria chose to promote economic and social development and to accede to the various multilateral disarmament treaties in the nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional fields.

We recently provided further proof of our firm commitment to disarmament by depositing on 18 July our instrument ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We have also decided to destroy, during November, part of our stock of anti-personnel mines, thus discharging part of our obligation under the Ottawa Convention.

Furthermore, Algeria works tirelessly to strengthen stability and peace in the Maghreb and is continuing with the same resolve to fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in order to reach a just and final solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, a conflict based on the right of the people of Western Sahara to freely choose their destiny through a free and fair referendum on self-determination.

In Africa we have always worked to settle conflicts and to strengthen security and cooperation between the African countries. We were actively involved in the creation of the African Union and the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which has made it possible for the continent to take its affairs in hand, facilitate its integration, and better guarantee its development and its access to the world economy.

Algeria also believes that security in the Mediterranean is indivisible from security in Europe and that the essential purpose of the Euro-Mediterranean space is to ensure peace and security for all and to build an edifice of cooperation and prosperity that will be profitable to all the peoples in the region. We reaffirm our commitment to the process of constructing a Euro-Mediterranean space and our conviction that joint, concerted action is the only way to reach that objective.

Nevertheless, in the eastern part of the Mediterranean the serious deterioration of the situation in occupied Palestine is a matter of grave concern. Israel's persistence in its policy of occupation and aggression compromises any dynamic for peace and stymies any attempt to settle the conflict. Algeria continues to be committed to pursuing the peace process in the Middle East and considers it to be urgent to relaunch the peace process so that a peaceful, just and lasting settlement can be found to the conflict in the Middle East, based on the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State, with Al-Quds as its capital.

Before concluding, I stress that the evolution of the disarmament process requires that we do not base our thinking on outmoded doctrinal references and patterns of thinking. Nuclear weapons, an absolute evil, is the worst threat to international security. Banning and eliminating it will make it possible not only for international peace and security to prevail, but also for mankind and its civilization to triumph over fear and uncertainty over the future.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): At the outset I extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I am confident that with the benefit of your diplomatic experience and skill our deliberations will be most fruitful. You may be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of the Committee. I should also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Nobuyasu Abe for his statement yesterday.

Japan considers the maintenance and reinforcement of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime as one of the major pillars of diplomatic efforts to ensure the stability of the international environment. Today we are faced with some serious problems that could aggravate the international security environment, problems such as the development of weapons of mass destruction, and suspicions about it, and the increasing threat of international terrorism. It is therefore as imperative as ever to further strengthen international efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation in order to promote the peace and security of the world.

Especially since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the magnitude of devastation that terrorism can cause has been well recognized. Terrorism is a heinous means to obstruct various peace

and stabilization efforts. That is evident especially in the current tragedy whereby Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and other United Nations staff sacrificed their lives in the bomb attack in Baghdad. In order to ensure the peace and security of the world against such new threats, the fight against terrorism must continue, and the various diplomatic efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation must be strengthened.

With regard to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Japan is deeply concerned about North Korea's declaration of its intention to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). From the perspective of peace and security in North-East Asia and international non-proliferation, any development, acquisition or possession, test, or transfer of nuclear weapons by North Korea must never be tolerated. Japan once again urges North Korea to immediately and completely dismantle all of its nuclear development programmes in a verifiable and irreversible manner. This issue should be resolved peacefully by diplomatic efforts, including the six-party talks process. Japan calls upon North Korea to take a responsible attitude, based on the Pyongyang Declaration signed by the Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, and Chairman Kim Jong-Il, in which both sides confirmed that, for an overall resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, they would comply with all related international agreements.

Japan calls upon Iran to take seriously the resolution adopted at the 12 September meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and comply fully with all measures prescribed in the resolution, which include cooperating fully with the IAEA to rectify problem points by the end of this month, concluding the IAEA additional protocol immediately and unconditionally, and implementing it in its entirety; and eliminating the concerns of the international community regarding the nuclear issue. Japan will continue to appeal to Iran to this end.

Given the growing awareness of the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, international cooperation to respond to such threats is necessary. Japan calls upon all States to take the necessary measures in this regard. Japan has been actively engaged in the negotiation of the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of

Nuclear Material, with a view to protecting in a more assured way weapons-of-mass-destruction-usable nuclear material from theft, robbery or any other unlawful taking. Japan also organized last month in Tokyo a seminar on consequences and crisis management of chemical and biological terrorism for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, with the aim of enhancing their capacity to respond to terrorism.

Japan considers the Proliferation Security Initiative to be consistent with Japan's efforts to hinder the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Japan dispatched coastguard patrol vessels to take part in a maritime interdiction exercise near Australia's north-east coast in mid-September. Japan hopes that the Statement of Interdiction Principles adopted at the Paris Proliferation Security Initiative meeting, will receive wide support from all countries that share similar non-proliferation concerns and objectives. Japan will call upon countries, particularly those in Asia, to participate in, and cooperate with, the Proliferation Security Initiative to work towards effectively preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with a view to strengthening coordination and cooperation within the international community.

Japan, the only country to have ever experienced nuclear devastation, firmly maintains the so-called three non-nuclear principles — the policy of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into its territory. Successive Cabinets, including that of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, have repeatedly articulated these principles, and Japan continues to uphold this position. In order to realize, at the earliest possible date, a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons, it is important to make steady progress in implementing specific nuclear disarmament measures. Japan welcomes the entry into force of the Russia-United States Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty in June. We hope that the treaty will be implemented steadily and that it will serve as an important step towards further nuclear disarmament efforts.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is one of the major pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime, and Japan is committed to promoting its early entry into force. The Third Conference on facilitating its entry into force, held in Vienna last month, produced some meaningful results. Prior to the Conference the

Japanese Foreign Minister, Mrs. Yoriko Kawaguchi, together with the President of the Conference and the Foreign Minister of Austria, sent a joint ministerial letter to those countries whose ratification is required for the CTBT to enter into force, encouraging them to ratify the treaty as soon as possible.

Japan has made other efforts to promote the CTBT's early entry into force, such as providing technical assistance in verification technology to developing countries and launching the CTBT National Operation System in November last year. I take this opportunity to once again urge all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so at the earliest date possible.

Japan places great importance on the commencement of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). It is regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has failed to commence negotiations on the treaty, despite the agreement in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Japan presented a working paper on the fissile material cut-off treaty to the Conference on Disarmament in August, with a view to facilitating the early commencement of negotiations.

The States parties to the NPT held last spring the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the parties to the NPT, in which balanced and active discussions took place and an increased number of national reports were submitted, thus helping to enhance mutual understanding and transparency among States parties. In order to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime, it is essential to bring the 2005 Review Conference to a successful outcome. To that end, I stress the need for the implementation of the agreements contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, both in aspects of nuclear non-proliferation and in nuclear disarmament.

It is also important to promote the universality of the NPT and to ensure compliance with it. Japan therefore welcomes the accession by the Republic of Cuba and Timor-Leste to the NPT. Japan urges all remaining non-member States to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay.

It is important to strengthen the IAEA safeguards and, in particular, to promote the universality of the IAEA additional protocol as an effective means to stem non-compliance. Japan has made various contributions

by providing expertise and financial assistance to universality seminars held not only in the Asian-Pacific region, but also in Latin America, Central Asia and Africa. Last December Japan held an international conference in Tokyo for the purpose of strengthening IAEA safeguards. Again this year my delegation will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled: "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons". We look forward to its adoption with the support of an overwhelming majority of member States.

It is important to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the functioning of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Japan will continue to support the efforts of the OPCW. States parties to the CWC convened in The Hague in April this year for the First Review Conference, which generated some positive outcomes: a Political Declaration was adopted by consensus and commitment to the total elimination and non-proliferation of chemical weapons through an international verification system was reaffirmed.

Japan welcomes the fact that at the resumed Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), convened in November last year, the programme of work for the three years prior to the 2006 Review Conference was agreed by consensus. The meeting of experts held last August, according to the agreed programme of work, was a fruitful and successful "kick-off" meeting. Japan contributed to that meeting with a presentation on biosecurity and the submission of working papers. Japan hopes that the outcome of the meeting will provide the foundation for a more focused discussion at the coming meeting of States parties in November.

The international community must address the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which is a threat to international and regional peace and security. States must take concrete action to restrain and reduce missile activities and to prevent their proliferation. The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation was launched in November last year. It constitutes a significant step forward, as the first international norm to promote the non-proliferation of ballistic missiles and to call for maximum self-restraint in their development, testing and deployment. Japan supports the universalization process of the Hague Code of Conduct and calls on non-participating countries to join it.

The gravity of the problem of small arms and light weapons is all too well illustrated by the fact that these weapons cause approximately 500,000 casualties every year. Japan served as Chair of the First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held here in New York in July this year. It was the first United Nations Meeting to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 Conference on small arms and light weapons. The report (A/CONF.192/BMS/2003/1) of the Meeting, to which the Chairperson's summary was annexed, was adopted by consensus, bringing the Meeting to a successful conclusion. As Chair of the Meeting, I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all delegations for their spirit of cooperation in making multilateralism work.

The Meeting spurred various regional initiatives and provided a clear picture of the depth and extent of the commitment of the entire international community to work together in a multilateral framework to combat the problems of small arms and light weapons. Its success clearly demonstrated that multilateralism matters and that we can make it work. A reference to the First Biennial Meeting was also made in the Chair's summary of the G-8 Evian Summit, prior to the Meeting. Japan hopes that all States will make efforts to reinforce their commitment to the Programme of Action and build on the results of the Meeting by taking concrete steps to strengthen national, regional and global efforts to tackle the problem of small arms and light weapons in the lead-up to the Second Biennial Meeting in 2005.

Japan considers it essential to assist those countries affected by small arms. Japan has launched, for example, weapons collection projects in Cambodia. One of the pillars of these projects is known as "Weapons for Development" — a voluntary surrender of weapons that will bring to the community benefits such as the construction of schools, bridges, roads and water wells.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, established by the joint initiative of the European Community and Japan, has been playing a significant role in promoting transparency in armaments. Last year marked the tenth anniversary of the Register's establishment. In an effort to enhance its

universality, Japan has been co-organizing with Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Nations a series of regional workshops in Africa, South America and Asia.

Japan will continue to make efforts to enhance the universality of the Ottawa Convention from a humanitarian point of view. Japan completed the destruction of its stockpile of anti-personnel mines, as required by the Convention, in February this year. The Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Bangkok last month, concluded successfully, and Japan has assumed the co-chairmanship of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance. I take this opportunity to call upon States that are not yet parties to the Convention to accede to it.

Within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), negotiations on explosive remnants of war are currently under way, as well as discussions on restricting the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines, with a view to drafting a negotiation mandate. Japan is willing to engage in substantive work for the upcoming November Conference of States parties.

In order to advance disarmament and non-proliferation, it is essential to gain the understanding and support of young people and civil society as a whole. Well-balanced disarmament and non-proliferation education is important in this respect. Japan took the initiative to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation education in the context of the NPT, and introduced a working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education at the second session of the NPT Preparatory Committee on behalf of the other co-sponsoring countries: Egypt, Hungary, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Poland and Sweden.

Japan has also received as many as 450 participants in the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme over the past 20 years. The Programme includes visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It enables young diplomats to gain a deeper understanding of various disarmament issues, and many former fellow members are active in this area as ambassadors and diplomats. Japan will continue to support this meaningful programme.

Japan appreciates the activities of the three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament. It was encouraging to learn that

meaningful discussions took place during the United Nations Disarmament Conference in Osaka in August this year. Japan will continue to support the efforts of these regional centres.

I should now like to touch upon the current situation of the Conference on Disarmament. It is truly regrettable that the Conference, the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, has been unable to enter into negotiations since the formulation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. This stalemate must be resolved promptly. Japan served as President of the Conference for the final part of this year's session. During that time the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mrs. Yoriko Kawaguchi, addressed the Conference, speaking on Japan's policy and its efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and appealed for early agreement on a programme of work and the commencement of substantive work without delay. Japan hopes that, through continued efforts in Geneva and in the capitals of member States of the Conference on Disarmament, the Conference will be able to start negotiations early next year. During the intersessional period, in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I will continue to hold consultations with member States of the Conference, in close coordination with the incoming President, on ways to resolve the current stalemate in accordance with the mandate provided by the annual report.

Before concluding, I should like to stress the importance of addressing disarmament in conjunction with the process of reconciliation in societies emerging from deep-rooted conflicts. From that viewpoint, I draw the Committee's attention to the significance of coordinating and reinforcing efforts on disarmament, reconstruction and reconciliation. In post-conflict situations it is important for the international community to cooperate for the structural prevention of the resurgence of conflicts, not only through disarmament and demobilization, but also by promoting reconstruction and reconciliation. It is particularly important to consider how the concept of reconciliation can be embedded in the process of reconstruction and disarmament in the post-conflict period, and how disarmament programmes can be designed with a view to enhancing reconciliation.

The Chairman: There are another eight speakers on our list for the morning. I plead with delegations to kindly limit their statements to 10 minutes for those

speaking in their national capacity and 15 for those speaking on behalf of several delegations or regional groups.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): At the outset I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that your able stewardship will be a great asset in guiding this year's discussion on disarmament and non-proliferation.

As always, the First Committee presents us with a unique forum for taking stock of what has transpired in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation over the past year. This year it is more crucial than ever that we seize this opportunity to tackle the pressing threats emerging within our rapidly changing security environment. In order to make the work of the First Committee more effective and relevant, we must not shy away from the difficult tasks before us. In this regard, my delegation supports your initiative, Mr. Chairman, to hold consultations on First Committee working methods with a view to enhancing the efficiency of the Committee's work.

The global nuclear non-proliferation regime, based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), currently faces unprecedented challenges to its credibility and integrity. At this critical juncture, the international community must renew its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation by devising a comprehensive strategy to better cope with problems of non-compliance. Such a strategy should be designed to overcome any gaps and limitations inherent in the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In this regard, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to strengthen its safeguards system. The IAEA safeguards system plays a central role in fostering confidence in the compliance of States parties to the NPT. It must, therefore, be equipped with the capability and mandate to deal more effectively with determined proliferators. We view the universalization of the additional protocol as a *sine qua non* to this end. For its part, the Government of the Republic of Korea will ratify the protocol soon.

Recent events have proved that legalistic approaches alone, which are based on a one-size-fits-all model, are not adequate to address the increasingly complex cases of proliferation. If these emerging trends and new patterns cannot be deterred by

conventional measures, we must develop more effective strategies to meet these challenges. In this regard, the Republic of Korea supports the recent G-8, European Union, and United States — European Union Summit joint statements and action plans, which underline the need for a more active response to suspected cases of weapons of mass destruction proliferation and non-compliance.

Against that backdrop, we believe that countries with relevant weapons of mass destruction capabilities, and suppliers of relevant materials and equipment, should bear the heightened responsibility of owners. Those countries with relevant capabilities must demonstrate a higher level of openness and transparency in their activities. These heightened standards would serve not only as a deterrent to non-compliance, but also as a means of promoting confidence among States.

Furthermore, effective and rigorous enforcement of export controls is a key component of the non-proliferation infrastructure. All States must implement effective export controls on materials, equipment and technologies related to weapons of mass destruction, and enforce adequate safety and security measures thereon. Export control regimes, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, have played an essential role in establishing substantial barriers that help to keep dangerous items from falling into the wrong hands, including those of terrorist organizations. With this strong conviction, the Government of the Republic of Korea hosted the plenary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in Seoul in May 2003. Moreover, the Korean Government will host the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) plenary meeting in 2004.

The Korean peninsula is once again haunted by the spectre of nuclear proliferation. North Korea's nuclear weapons programme is not only the most pressing challenge to the peace and security of the Korean peninsula, but also a grave threat to the peace and stability of the North-East Asian region and beyond. The Republic of Korea is strongly committed to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Accordingly, North Korea's nuclear weapons programme cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. Moreover, there is no substitute for North Korea's complete, irreversible and verifiable dismantlement of its nuclear weapons programme. North Korea has nothing to gain and everything to lose by pursuing its nuclear ambitions. On the contrary,

once North Korea abandons its nuclear programme my Government will spare no effort in helping North Korea to overcome its economic difficulties and to join the mainstream of the international community.

The Republic of Korea will continue to work in close cooperation with those countries that also have a vital stake in a denuclearized Korean peninsula, in order to find a peaceful, diplomatic resolution to the North Korean nuclear issue. The six-party talks, which began in Beijing last August, provide the best chance for a diplomatic solution to the problem. We urge North Korea to seize this opportunity for a peaceful resolution.

The objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament cannot be achieved without strengthening the multilateral instruments that complement the NPT regime as a whole. The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As a strong proponent of establishing an international norm against nuclear testing, the Republic of Korea participated in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty held in Vienna last month. Pending its entry into force, all existing moratoriums on nuclear testing must be maintained. The Republic of Korea continues to support the work of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), particularly in its efforts to establish the Treaty's verification regime.

Another task we deem urgent in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. It is regrettable that much of the delay in negotiating such a treaty has been attributed to the longstanding impasse at the Conference on Disarmament. The fissile material cut-off treaty will constitute not only a practical step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, but also an effective means of combating nuclear terrorism by reducing the risk of loose nuclear materials falling into the wrong hands. Thus, we sincerely hope that the Conference on Disarmament will break its deadlock and begin negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty without further delay.

The Republic of Korea supports continued and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament as an integral part of the NPT. In this regard, we welcome

the entry into force of the Moscow Treaty, the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States, last June. We commend that agreement between the two largest nuclear Powers as a significant step that will help to bring about quantitative reductions through a practical step-by-step approach. In the global context, we believe that the new strategic framework will have a far-reaching, positive impact on the international security landscape. We hope to see it provide momentum for further agreements with enhanced transparency and accountability measures between other nuclear-weapon States.

The Republic of Korea is pleased to note the progress that has been made in the fields of chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles. The First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) provided a useful forum for discussing important issues, such as an action plan on national implementation, the role of the CWC in the current security environment, and achieving universality. As an active member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), we hope that the five-year work plan included in the Chairman's text will provide the Organization with a useful road map as it carries out its daunting tasks in the coming year.

The experts meeting of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) offered an opportunity for useful discussion on two timely and relevant topics: adopting the necessary national measures to implement the prohibitions set forth in the Convention, including the enactment of penal legislation, and establishing national mechanisms to maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins. Considering that this was the first meeting since States parties had agreed on the new process to strengthen the Convention, we believe that it provided momentum in the right direction. We hope to see the meeting of States parties in November result in a number of specific recommendations within this field.

In light of the continuing proliferation of ballistic missiles, the Republic of Korea welcomes the positive outcome last week of the second regular meeting of States subscribing to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. As a significant confidence-building measure to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles, the Hague Code of

Conduct will, we hope, achieve universal adherence in the near future.

Over the past year substantial progress has been made in the field of conventional arms. In particular, we note the efforts to strengthen the regime of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Republic of Korea continues to lend its full support to these efforts.

We underscore the deadly connection between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and terrorism. This dangerous illicit trade not only provides terrorist groups with treacherous weapons, but also in many cases serves as a major source of funding for their operations. The First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, provided an important opportunity for member States to share their experience, best practices and lessons learned. We value the many useful suggestions posited to strengthen the global efforts in this field.

In particular, my delegation wishes to add its voice to the call for tightened control of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), as they have become a formidable weapon of choice for many terrorist organizations. We commend this year's work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms this year, which agreed to expand the Register to include MANPADS as a new subcategory. Such developments should serve as a guide in our efforts to adapt our existing mechanisms to the threats of the changing security environment.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the work of this year's session of the First Committee. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our full support and cooperation in helping both to identify ways and means to overcome emerging security threats and to streamline the work of the Committee.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates delegation, I am pleased to extend to you, Sir, my sincerest congratulations on your election as the Chairman of this important Committee. We are confident that your extensive diplomatic expertise will effectively contribute to our deliberations and help to harmonize our views on issues relating to disarmament and the enhancement of international security. I wish

you and the other members of the Bureau every success. I should also like to thank your predecessor for his conduct of the affairs of the Committee at last year's session, and the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and his Department for their valuable efforts in developing mechanisms of international cooperation in the areas of disarmament and the stability of international peace and security.

While the First Committee is holding its meetings, the international community is witnessing regional and international developments in the armaments race. In spite of the massive and continuing efforts by the United Nations system over the years to address such an important and critical issue, which is regarded as the most important factor encouraging the emergence of military confrontations and destructive wars for both peoples and diverse civilizations, it is regrettable that several big countries still seek to develop their reactors and their military arsenals, including missiles and chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as strategic and tactical weapons.

Moreover, many non-nuclear-weapon States — especially in regions experiencing tension and conflict, such as South Asia, the Korean peninsula and the Arab Gulf — act according to their own understanding of deterrence and resort to a declared or undeclared armaments race through experimentation, production and acquisition of such weapons for non-peaceful purposes, ignoring all regional and international multilateral conventions and protocols calling for the prohibition and destruction of such weapons.

Challenges facing international peace and security are no longer limited to the arms race between States only, but also include new forms of dangers and new challenges, such as systematic arms trafficking and attempts to acquire, illegally and irresponsibly, dangerous types of weapons such as nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. That heightens the possibility of allowing criminal elements and extremist groups engaged in terrorist acts to have access to such weapons. New dangers also include trafficking in drugs, transnational organized crime, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, and similar acts which pose threats to the balance of regional and international security and the fundamentals of our world.

The significant, unprecedented increase in the volume of annual military expenditures by most States

to develop their military capabilities, compared with the military budgets of the years of the cold war, reflects the state of pessimism, tension, lack of security and escalation among countries in many regions of the world. In the meantime, volumes of official and unofficial development assistance for addressing the problems of poverty, the spread of disease, the deterioration of the environment and containment of human crises in developing countries, are considerably lower. Accordingly, we call for the development of a binding international strategy for international cooperation, to be based on the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions, and other multilateral conventions and protocols which treat countries equally and without discrimination. Such a strategy must ensure enhancement of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the destruction of weapons of mass destruction and the elimination of threats and escalations that result from such problems. In this context, we reiterate the necessity of the following.

First, nuclear States must be urged to fully comply with their legal and moral commitments under disarmament treaties and protocols, as well as treaties relating to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, by enhancing their political will through serious negotiations leading to the complete destruction of their nuclear and strategic weapons within a specific time frame.

Secondly, we must demand that non-nuclear States seeking to acquire such weapons review their policies, exercise self-control, and solve their regional disputes through peaceful means and negotiation.

Thirdly, there is a need to strengthen efforts to develop effective, unconditional international instruments guaranteeing the security of States that do not possess nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and confirm the right of those States to have access to modern technologies that can be used for peaceful developmental purposes.

Fourthly, the Conference on Disarmament should establish specialized committees in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to be responsible for following up efforts to systematically destroy all types of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons. Those efforts should include the establishment of an international organization to develop a treaty banning

the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or tactical weapons, in order to maintain international peace and security.

While we commend the successful regional and subregional efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world, we are surprised and disappointed at the unsuccessful efforts to establish a similar zone in the Middle East, because of the obstinate position of the Government of Israel. That Government insists on keeping its nuclear reactors and military arsenal outside the international safeguards regime, in order to ensure its military superiority and continue its illegitimate occupation and exploitation of the Palestinian and Arab territories. It is thus defying the principles of international law and international resolutions which prohibit its unilateral acts of aggression because they threaten our region and international peace and security.

The United Arab Emirates has acceded to the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, based on its firm conviction of the importance of enhancing the universality of such treaties to build a world free from all forms of threat. It considers the establishment of zones free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to be vital for building balanced regional and international strategic relations. Therefore, we renew our call to the international community, especially the big, influential Powers, to pressure the Government of Israel to compel it to eliminate its nuclear arsenal and accede unconditionally to the NPT, as it is the only country in the region which has not yet acceded to that Treaty. It must also subject all its nuclear facilities, be they civilian or military, to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with relevant international resolutions and the resolutions of the Sixth NPT Review Conference, held in 2000. We also call for the discontinuing of all scientific, technological and financial assistance to develop Israeli nuclear facilities, due to their negative impact on the peace process in the Middle East.

In conclusion, we call for the revitalization of international efforts to enhance preventive diplomacy and the culture of peace, as well as the development of dialogue mechanisms, confidence-building and the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, based on the principles of respect for the sovereignty of countries, non-interference in their internal affairs, and

the rejection of foreign occupation. We also hope that our deliberations in this important Committee will lead to the achievement of notable progress in all aspects of disarmament and result in the establishment of an international environment free from all forms of threats, so that human, economic and environmental resources can be dedicated to achieving our universal development plans.

Mr. Wagaba (Uganda): The Uganda delegation has already had an opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your election to steer the work of the First Committee. We continue to assure you of our full cooperation and support. We also congratulate Mr. Nobuyasu Abe upon his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and thank him for his introductory statement yesterday, which has provided us with useful guidelines for our deliberations.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons as the weapons of choice in the numerous conflicts in Africa is a real and present threat to peace and security, not only in our continent, but also in the world as a whole. The ease with which these weapons are procured, transported and distributed has helped fuel conflicts between and within States

In our own region, the Great Lakes region of Africa, positive developments have been achieved in the region-led efforts to resolve the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and southern Sudan. It is our ardent hope and desire that the peace dividend that the region stands to gain should not be lost through the illegal use of the vast arsenal of small arms that have been deployed in these conflicts, especially by non-State actors.

Uganda therefore welcomes the report (A/58/138), of the Group of Governmental Experts on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons which the Committee will examine during this session. Uganda is ready to support any positive proposals aimed at the elaboration of an international instrument on the tracing and control of these weapons. We also welcome the successful conclusion of the First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place here in New York last July. We look forward to the next one in 2005 and the Review Conference in 2006.

Terrorism is one of the vilest scourges of our time. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or maimed through indiscriminate acts of terrorism all over the world. This has added a new and urgent dimension to the need for an elaborate regime of disarmament and arms control. If terrorist groups should gain access to weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, the world would be brought to a deadly and terrifying precipice. It is therefore now more urgent than ever before that multilateral efforts should be increased to persuade all nations to ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). These efforts should continue until there is universal agreement to totally eliminate and ban these weapons. Uganda will lend its total support to these efforts.

The continued impasse with regard to the convening of the Conference on Disarmament is a matter of great concern to Uganda. We urge the Working Group to press on with its work until a programme of work for the Conference is agreed. We believe that international peace and security, including issues of disarmament, is within the purview of multilateral endeavour, particularly through the United Nations.

With regard to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Uganda is pleased to note that more and more countries are ratifying or acceding to the Convention. We urge the remaining States to come aboard without any further delay. In this regard, Uganda will co-sponsor a draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention. We associate ourselves with the remarks that the delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand will make on the subject.

Finally, the Uganda delegation wishes to express its support for your proposal, Sir, to hold a special session to review the working methods of the First Committee, in particular, and the General Assembly in general. We believe that this review is opportune and that it will contribute to making the work of the Organization more efficient and more profitable.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): Let me begin, Sir, by congratulating you most sincerely on your election as

Chairman of the First Committee, in both my national capacity and as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. I assure you of our full support in the discharge of your important responsibilities. This gives me the opportunity also to warmly welcome the appointment of Mr. Nobuyasu Abe as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. We look forward to cooperating with him and his team.

Romania fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the Italian presidency on behalf of the European Union (EU). In addition, I should like to make the following remarks.

Present-day security and stability is being challenged both globally and regionally by the risks associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The date September 11 2001 has given a greater sense of urgency to the common efforts required from all States to prevent weapons of mass destruction from getting into the hands of terrorist groups.

The proliferation threat has gained a new dimension — the prospect of transnational groups seeking to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. There is increasing concern that radicals or terrorist groups might obtain weapons of mass destruction from unstable regimes. We are all aware that there is no panacea or one-size-fits-all policy to counter the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In pursuing our goal of eliminating weapons of mass destruction, we have to use the means that we deem will be most effective in each particular case. A number of tools are at the disposal of the international community. All are necessary; none is sufficient in itself.

The spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons has been successfully limited by international arms control and disarmament agreements. These multilateral treaties and the regimes they establish help to deter the pursuit of weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes and contribute to increasing related political costs for proliferators. But these treaties are not yet universal. Recent experience shows that on their own they cannot prevent determined proliferators from not complying with their international obligations. What must be changed to respond more effectively to these increasingly ominous challenges and threats?

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and therefore it should agree to broaden its definition of situations that constitute a threat to international peace and security to cover also situations related to weapons of mass destruction, so that the international community can act in a timely and effective way to address them. We must modernize the system put in place by the United Nations Charter in terms of both preventive diplomacy and enforcement, and develop a new multilateral approach aimed at delegitimizing the acquisition or use of all weapons of mass destruction.

That approach should comprise not only the goal of universal adherence to, and effective implementation of, conventions that prohibit weapons of mass destruction, but also robust and intrusive verification systems and reliable enforcement measures to effectively counter efforts by any country to illicitly acquire weapons of mass destruction. This demands stricter national export control legislation and procedures consistent with international standards. It requires also an effective global approach to the physical protection of nuclear and other radioactive material, better controls for chemical and biological agents, and effective measures for prohibiting the transfer or transport of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related materials to States or non-State actors that give cause for concern about proliferation.

The goals set in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — to control the further spread of nuclear weapons and to move towards nuclear disarmament — are now under considerable pressure. The NPT, in our view, remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, is the fundamental pillar of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Romania considers additional protocols to be an integral part of the IAEA safeguards system and attaches a high priority to their implementation by all States concerned. We therefore urge all States to conclude and implement an additional protocol as soon as possible.

The prohibition of all nuclear-weapon test explosions, or any other nuclear explosions, and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-

Ban Treaty (CTBT) will constitute an essential step towards achieving nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is important that all States that have not yet done so sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. In the meantime, we welcome the fact that several countries that have not yet been able to sign or ratify the Treaty are nonetheless observing moratoriums on nuclear explosions.

Negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory and universal treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices are an essential stage in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We regret that consensus has not yet been reached in the Conference on Disarmament for the negotiations to start. We restate the view that the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference on Disarmament should begin without delay on the basis of mandates that are sufficiently pragmatic and broad to foster agreement.

Romania is deeply concerned about the growing proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the adoption of the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation as a primary step towards the integration of ballistic missiles in the multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and encourage other countries to join the International Code of Conduct.

The possible misuse of chemical materials and equipment in an offensive programme or by terrorists is too great a risk to allow for any complacency. Romania firmly believes that establishing sound national export control systems is one of the fundamental obligations of every State party under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). It provides significant security benefits for all States parties by reducing the risks that chemical weapons will be developed and used anywhere. Effective national export controls, voluntarily coordinated between States, together with the improved transparency resulting from full implementation of the Convention's verification measures, will enhance international security and improve mutual confidence. We attach great importance to the further strengthening of the CWC and to the smooth functioning of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Secretariat, under the able leadership of the Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfitter.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) represents a key instrument to prevent biological agents or toxins from being used as weapons. A total ban on such weapons of mass destruction becomes especially important in the light of their potential use for terrorist purposes. I have already underlined the importance of effective national export control legislation and enforcement institutions. In our view, it is now essential that all exporting States assume their responsibility and take appropriate measures to ensure that exports of sensitive materials, equipment and technologies are subject to strict control. Export controls must ensure that transfers are made only for peaceful purposes, as required by the relevant conventions and treaties, facilitating also international cooperation and technological development. Romania supports all efforts undertaken by the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and to promote, in the case of the Wassenaar Arrangement, transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.

I turn to the question of small arms and light weapons. The First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects helped all States to give consideration to starting work on unresolved and newly relevant issues to maximize the chances of success through the 2005 Biennial Meeting and the 2006 Review Conference. Romania hosted in February this year, in cooperation with Canada and Italy, a regional seminar on export controls and marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, the outcome of which was presented to the First Biennial Meeting.

Romania remains strongly committed to promoting the global eradication of anti-personnel mines, and will continue to campaign for universal application of the Ottawa Convention, which sets strict time limits for the destruction of stockpiles and the clearance of mined areas. Even though the Convention gives some degree of flexibility, we must do our utmost to achieve the objectives within the deadlines. Compliance with the Convention and humanitarian mine activities are mutually reinforcing activities.

To conclude, Romania remains committed to working closely with other member States in bringing about comprehensive reform of our Organization. In this regard, multilateral mechanisms in the field of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation should be adapted to respond more effectively to the current needs of the international community. We therefore stand ready to join ongoing efforts to improve the deliberative process within the First Committee.

Ms. Mohajy (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): Permit me first to convey to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your experience and special expertise in the field of disarmament will surely help us to achieve substantial results on the many items on our agenda. Our congratulations are also addressed to the other members of the Bureau. Rest assured, Mr. Chairman, of my delegation's support in the completion of your task.

In the current international context of relative turmoil and concern, Madagascar wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the multilateral process with a view to general and complete disarmament. As a developing country facing the daily problems of poverty, we have no other recourse but to the collective security system embodied in the Charter to guarantee the safety and security of our people. We therefore insist, on the one hand, on the central role of the United Nations in the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security, and, on the other, on shared collective responsibility in a multilateral framework for managing the world's problems. These are principles that we have reaffirmed, as we did in the recent Millennium Declaration.

Unfortunately, the end of the cold war, which gave birth to so many hopes, particularly in the area of disarmament, has not given any new life to multilateralism. We see our Organization powerless in the face of widespread problems of poverty and paralysed when confronted with the proliferation of regional conflicts. The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating forum for non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament instruments, continues to be stalemated, unable to move forward on questions of substance and procedure. Even worse, the body of substantive law on all aspects of disarmament, the result of many years of effort, is weakened, on the one hand, by the refusal of some

States to adhere to existing treaties, and, on the other, by the unilateral decisions of some to withdraw from one instrument or another.

While the global situation seems alarming, parallel initiatives have produced positive results that we should think about. We think in particular of the Canadian initiative which led to the conclusion of the Convention on anti-personnel mines. Other initiatives have taken place in other areas. They must be encouraged by mobilizing the necessary resources for them to succeed.

For a small delegation such as mine, which will have difficulties in taking part in the consultations on draft resolutions, we take the opportunity of the general debate to convey our positions on the various items on our agenda.

For Madagascar, non-proliferation and the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are the fundamental objectives of general and complete disarmament. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) must be strengthened, and regional mechanisms such as nuclear-weapon-free zones, must be supported and respected. We hope that the 2005 NPT Review Conference will be able to adopt new monitoring and control mechanisms.

The trade in small arms and light weapons is also a real threat to the stability and security of small States. The present regime of transparency and identification must be improved in order to ensure information about sources and destinations of small arms and light weapons at the international level.

In general, my delegation, a member of the African Group and of the Non-Aligned Movement, supports the positions that will be expressed by those two groups during the general debate or during any future informal consultations. We hope that this session will allow us to find the ways and means of revitalizing the multilateral disarmament process.

The Chairman: Following an official request by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to make a statement, I should now like, with the consent of the Committee, to call on Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the OPCW.

Mr. Pfirter (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)): Allow me to start by extending my heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on

your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee of the General Assembly, the one that, historically, has been most intimately linked with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In addition, of course, your country is a valued member of the OPCW and one whose participation and genuine support, particularly through voluntary contributions, plays an important role in advancing the cause of the Convention. For that I am sure that not just I but all member States are very grateful.

We have come here today, as we do every year, to report on the most relevant developments on the chemical weapons disarmament front. At the same time, we are here to listen to what the voices of the international community, gathered in the First Committee, have to say about the many issues on the international security agenda.

Last year my message, the first I delivered in my capacity as Director-General, was one of hope, but it was tinged too with a certain anticipation. I voiced hope because, after a critical time, the OPCW was just returning to normal business. But there was anticipation, too, because we were facing important challenges to the delivery of our core mission and because an important event in the life of our young Organization — the First Review Conference on the Chemical Weapons Convention — was about to take place in The Hague.

I can report today that our expectations were satisfied, and that the international community has something to be proud of on the chemical disarmament front, in spite of the many challenges still lying ahead. Those challenges indeed are not minor.

The First Review Conference took place from 29 April to 9 May. Delegations met during a period that the Committee will no doubt recall was marked by an ongoing conflict and by a lively debate on the crucial issue of multilateralism and its place in the protection and preservation of peace and security through disarmament. In that context, we must celebrate the unqualified consensus that crowned the First Review Conference, for there emerged from it a resounding reaffirmation by States parties to the Convention of their unflagging commitment to achieving its objectives and purposes.

A Political Declaration, agreed by consensus, outlined the basic findings of the participating States parties, including their recognition of the ways in

which the Convention enhances international peace and security. At the same time, the Declaration confirmed the basic foundations of the chemical weapons ban, embodied in its provisions on real and non-discriminatory disarmament, non-proliferation and international cooperation and assistance.

Together with the Political Declaration, the First Review Conference also produced a second and more detailed document that set out 134 paragraphs of outcomes and objectives, including the decision of member States to prepare two separate plans of action — one on universality and the other on national implementation of the Convention. We must recognize this achievement as a significant result of a multilateral effort at a time when other areas of multilateral disarmament, especially as regards weapons of mass destruction, confront serious challenges and are at times marked by open disagreements. By contrast — perhaps regrettably, because there should be no contrast — on the chemical disarmament front we seem to have found common ground, a firm consensus that we have won by working hard to reconcile divergent views, one that we should cherish and promote.

Of course, no one would say that we have accomplished our mission, but we have to admit that such widespread support is indeed vital, giving us, as it does, the strength and the impetus to accomplish the demanding tasks the Convention sets for member States and for the Technical Secretariat alike. Let me give a brief overview of these tasks.

Possessor States, of which there are now five, including Albania, have continued destroying their chemical weapons stocks. As at 1 September 2003, almost 8,000 tonnes of chemical agents, including category 1, category 2 and binary-component agents, or about 11.2 per cent of the total stockpile declared by possessor States, as well as nearly 2 million munitions, nearly 25 per cent of declared stockpiles, had been confirmed as destroyed under the OPCW verification regime.

India, the United States of America and another State party have to date met their obligations to destroy 20 per cent of their declared chemical weapons stockpiles. The destruction programme in the Russian Federation, after initial delays, is proceeding in accordance with extensions of the deadlines established by the Convention, as agreed by States parties. Last October the situation was unclear, but in April this year

Russia reached an important milestone by completing the destruction of 1 per cent of its stockpiles, and its campaign continues.

Destroying chemical weapons is an extremely complex and costly operation. Billions of dollars are spent on this obscure but necessary task by possessor States parties, and by non-possessor States parties that lend their support to destruction efforts. In spite of the delays and difficulties, possessor States are firmly committed to destroying their stockpiles within the time frames established by the Convention. In the United States, which has committed substantial financial and operational resources to the task of destruction, some delays are to be expected, but the United States has demonstrated enormous determination to get the job done through the allocation of financial and technical resources, and we are confident that it will meet the deadlines stipulated in the Convention.

Disarmament is of the essence, and it makes all the difference when it comes to the Convention. But it is only one of the faces of the Convention.

All States parties to the Convention have affirmed the importance of a credible verification regime for the chemical industry. It would make little sense to destroy existing chemical weapons without an efficient scheme to prevent would-be proliferators from circumventing the will of the international community by developing new weapons. To date, nearly 1,600 inspections have been carried out by the OPCW inspection teams, nearly two thirds of them at chemical-weapons-related facilities and one third at about 500 industrial plants all over the world producing, processing or consuming various chemicals that are included in the Convention's schedules of chemicals. We continue to work hand in hand with national authorities in member States and with industrial associations around the world to ensure that the verification regime is applied in an equitable fashion and that it does not hamper the economic and technological development of States parties. But we have to do more in this area if our verification regime is to remain a credible deterrent.

The chemical industry is an important link in the chain of chemical disarmament, and it cannot be overlooked. We have extraordinarily good cooperation from the chemical industry. This is crucial for the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

International cooperation and assistance programmes continue to be put at the disposal of member States, with increasing success. Through them the Convention provides added value to the commitment entered into by States parties. We collaborate with developing countries in their capacity-building to protect themselves against chemical weapons. Through the Associate Programme we train chemical engineers and experts, exposing them to state-of-the-art technologies and processes, and we facilitate the exchange of information, chemicals and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited by the Convention.

However successful that is, in order to be truly successful the Convention must try for universality and full implementation by States parties.

As far as universality is concerned, we are growing. Last year I mentioned that 147 States had acceded the Convention. Today there are 156 States parties, and we expect more accessions in the near future.

Our efforts, which must continue, have multiplied in all regions. We look with particular concern at the lack of adherence by key players in the Middle East and in the Korean peninsula. Our efforts are also continuing in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Once more taking my statement last year as a benchmark, members will notice that 12 months ago we announced a Programme of Action for Africa. Since then we have strengthened our links with the African Union in pursuance of the decisions of the African Union to work towards the implementation of a convention on that continent. We brought our message to the African Summit in Maputo, Mozambique, earlier this year and the results are encouraging as we see new African States acceding to the Convention and starting to benefit from the cooperation programmes and increased security deriving from their membership in a major disarmament convention. We are particularly gratified to note the favourable disposition of the African Union Commission to include the issue of chemical weapons in the regular agenda of that organization.

Concerted efforts are needed to encourage the remaining States that are not parties to accede. In some cases our contacts are promising and we are ready to give interested States all the support and guidance they

might require to sign the Convention. In some others — and I mentioned some regions earlier — we are fully aware that wider security considerations may be the reason behind the present reluctance of some States not parties to accede to the Convention. However we will not give up. We are convinced that even in areas of tension States not parties will realize that the chemical weapons option is out of the question and will never be legitimized by the international community, even in the exercise of the right of self-defence. No one can expect sympathetic understanding of an ambivalent attitude towards chemical weapons, which have been stigmatized by the international community, and rightly so, because their main victims are innocent civilians.

The risk that terrorists will gain access to weapons of mass destruction requires concrete action by States and international organizations. We of the OPCW are playing our role in line with Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). Cognizant of the fact that we are not an anti-terrorist agency, we nevertheless want to make our contribution to the international fight against this new and extremely grave menace. Implementation of the Convention is, to be sure, one effective measure against terrorism. In addition, the OPCW has participated, and will continue to be an active partner, in the consultations carried out under the aegis of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee.

In the same spirit, we want to increase and enhance cooperation between the OPCW and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the new leadership of Ambassador Nobuyasu Abe, whom I congratulate most warmly on his recent appointment. We attach the greatest importance to cooperation with the United Nations. That is logical and cost-effective, as we are different sides of the same international community of nations, united behind the concept and principle of disarmament and non-proliferation. Through joint meetings, by exploring the possibilities for the exchange of experts, and by collaborating with United Nations regional centres, we will offer a number of opportunities for this relationship to grow.

The OPCW is moving ahead with its programmes. Our verification activities continue at a brisk pace, and we continue to multiply initiatives and actions in the fields of international cooperation and assistance. The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Technical Secretariat established to uphold it and make it operational are a vibrant reality that we must support,

and we look to the international community, in particular the United Nations and this Committee, to continue such support.

Before closing, I should like to repeat something I said a couple of weeks ago to our Executive Council gathered in The Hague. A few weeks ago, a barbaric and cowardly attack on the headquarters of the United Nations in Baghdad took the lives of many, including that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the distinguished Brazilian, our colleague, Sergio Vieira de Mello. We in the OPCW associate ourselves with our United Nations counterparts, with whom we are working closely on matters of common interest. Let the memory of those who perished for peace under the sky-blue flag of the United Nations inspire our deliberations and guide our actions.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before doing so, I remind them that the Committee will follow the procedure that I outlined at a previous meeting.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to exercise its right of reply to answer the allegations made by the Japanese representative who referred to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula this morning.

Japan's hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a very dangerous policy aimed at a military clash between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan. Japan's concern about its security is of its own making, and the solution lies in its dropping its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In fact, Japan's policy to stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now getting more pronounced as the days go by, and consequently relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan are inching closer to the phase of clash. Even the fate of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Japan Pyongyang Declaration is threatened by Japan's reckless, hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Ensuring security and creating a peaceful atmosphere is a job to be done by Japan itself. That can never be solved by accelerating the arms build-up and preparations for overseas aggression under the pretext of a threat from someone. If Japan truly wants security

and a peaceful atmosphere it should stop cooperating with the United States in its efforts to antagonize and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and opt to redress its crimes of the past and improve relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is the way to ensure Japan's security.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): I am somewhat bewildered by the comment made by the representative of North Korea. There are many things I should like North Korea to recall. It was the initiative of my Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, to make his courageous visit to Pyongyang a year ago and engage himself in very important substantive talks with Mr. Kim Jong Il. It is very unfair of the representative of North Korea — and I hope he does not mean what he said — to suggest that Japan holds hostile policies against North Korea. If that were so, my Prime Minister would not have visited North Korea, making such a cooperative commitment.

It is my strong belief that Japan is committed to solving all the bilateral problems and nuclear proliferation issues in a peaceful, diplomatic, constructive, substantively meaningful and useful manner, and it is not the position of Japan to hold any hostile policies against North Korea. We have repeatedly committed ourselves to engage in constructive, peaceful efforts to solve the problems, and I do not accept allegations that we hold hostile policies against North Korea. We have concerns, we have expressed those concerns, and we have committed ourselves to addressing them, but it is not our position to hold hostile policies against North Korea.

We are cooperating with the United States with a view to resolving outstanding issues and concerns in the region in a peaceful and constructive manner. We have, I believe, the commitment of all members of the six-party talks, and the support of the entire

international community, in seeking to solve all outstanding issues in North-East Asia in a most peaceful manner. I am sure that the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea agrees with us that all our issues need to be solved in a peaceful manner. It is imperative that we prove that we can solve issues in North-East Asia in a peaceful manner and that we can show the international community that there is a place for diplomacy and a cooperative spirit to flourish. We can show it in North-East Asia.

I urge the representative of North Korea to join me in the commitment to try to solve all our issues in a most productive, peaceful and substantively meaningful manner. It is not in the spirit of the United Nations to engage in wars of words, and therefore I reiterate my call to the representative of North Korea to agree to the commitment made by both of us, which will be supported by the international community, to solve the issues in a peaceful manner.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The master key to the implementation of the Pyongyang Declaration is for Japan to settle its unhappy past, in view of the historic background to the adoption of the Declaration and its basic spirit. This is an indispensable precondition for the normalization of bilateral relations, whose future improvement will depend entirely on whether or not this issue is solved. If Japan does not adopt a sincere attitude, in the basic spirit of the Declaration, it will also be difficult for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement the Declaration.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): I have one short comment to make. The Government of Japan is fully committed to implementing the Pyongyang Declaration in its entirety.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.