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Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): This afternoon we shall continue our discussion of other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. El Hadj Ali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): There is no doubt that the Chemical Weapons Convention has some remarkable achievements to its credit. In its 10 years' existence it has gained the almost universal adherence of the international community. It is a source of encouragement and a sign of the success of the multilateral disarmament undertaking of those countries whose attachment and commitment to disarmament are today being severely tested.

The Convention's regime should be a source of inspiration and stimulate the international community to establish equally complete frameworks in other disarmament matters, particularly nuclear and bacteriological.

The progress achieved so far in the destruction of chemical weapons, even though less than we had hoped, allows us to believe that, if everyone has the will and the commitment, we are moving forwards towards the complete elimination of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction.

This significant progress in terms of adherence to the Convention should not, however, conceal the need to continue efforts to implement all its provisions, as the quantity of chemical weapons destroyed and the pace of their destruction are clearly not up to the expectations of the international community. Our fear is that after the 2012 deadline this disarmament instrument will quickly become exclusively a simple instrument of non-proliferation, and that the struggle over this will be used as a pretext to prevent developing countries having access to civilian industrial technologies for development purposes.

While universality is a key part of the Convention, we must reaffirm that it should not be a goal in itself. The fundamental objective should remain the complete elimination not only of chemical weapons, but of all weapons of mass destruction, and particularly nuclear weapons.

Having participated actively in the various stages of the preparatory negotiations that gave birth to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, my country has at all times clearly stated its respect for the principles and objectives of the Convention, which aims to rid mankind of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction.

My country's commitment to the objectives of the Convention stems from its conviction that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction remains the priority of a disarmament process that must mean general and complete disarmament, bearing in mind the exceptional threat to international peace and security

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posed by this category of weapons, which strike indiscriminately and with unparalleled destructive power.

In this spirit, Algeria has this year, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and with the European Union, hosted workshops on the Convention. The first was devoted to customs aspects in the region of North Africa and the Sahel, and the second dealt with the universality of this international instrument. A ceremony commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force was organized at the start of the second workshop.

The importance of those events testifies to the African continent's attachment to questions of disarmament, peace and international security. They were an opportunity for African States parties to the Convention to reaffirm their commitment to the promotion of development and international cooperation, in the framework of the Convention, with regard to chemical activities for purposes that are not prohibited by its provisions.

Finally, Algeria joins all those who have reaffirmed the importance of complete, effective and non-discriminatory application of the Convention and a strict follow-up of all its provisions, particularly those dealing with cooperation and assistance.

Mr. Marrakchi (Morocco): Morocco, which remains attached to the principal objective of eliminating all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, naturally allies itself with the endeavour of the international community to achieve that objective through the relevant international instruments: the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). To save time, I shall focus on the CWC and say only a few words about the BWC.

Morocco signed the BWC in May 1972 and has participated in all its Review Conferences as an observer. In March 2002 Morocco ratified the Convention and began implementation of its binding provisions. It took important steps in harmonizing its legal and institutional arsenal with the requirements of the Convention. The measures taken by the Moroccan authorities are detailed in the reports submitted, starting in October 2005.

With regard to chemical weapons, Morocco has participated actively in the 11 Conferences of States Parties to the CWC and has taken several measures relating to its implementation. On the occasion of the high-level meeting commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force Morocco reiterated its determination to comply with the international obligations to which it has subscribed in that framework.

In my delegation's view, the most important task in order to eliminate chemical weapons from every corner of the earth is to achieve full universality. In this regard, Morocco hopes that all States that are not party to the CWC will adhere to it as soon as possible. With the emergence of new global terrorism threats, broadening the scope of the CWC and strengthening its national implementation are becoming an even more important and urgent task.

My delegation believes that the CWC deserves to be further strengthened through, first, an obligation for States parties to comply with its provisions; secondly, finding effective solutions to the various problems hampering the achievement of the Convention's goals, such as its universality, compliance with its requirements and funding the activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW); thirdly, establishing an assessment mechanism in combating chemical weapons proliferation; and, fourthly, strengthening international cooperation and technical assistance.

Furthermore, my delegation believes that strengthening the CWC goes hand in hand with strengthening the OPCW. Effectiveness, transparency and fairness in implementation of the Convention's provisions contribute to the strength of the OPCW by enhancing trust between States parties and the Technical Secretariat. My delegation welcomes the implementation support programme offered by the Technical Secretariat, as well as the assistance provided in this area by other States parties. That type of assistance can be an incentive for States that are not party to adhere to the Convention.

My delegation also wishes to highlight the importance of horizontal cooperation in strengthening the implementation efforts, so that there will be a more uniform implementation of the CWC around the world.

I should like to say a few words on Morocco's achievements in the implementation of the CWC.

Morocco has been re-elected, for the seventh successive time, to the Executive Council of the OPCW and, for the third successive time, as a member of the Confidentiality Commission, re-elections that are recognition of Morocco's involvement in this field. Moreover, Morocco has submitted to the OPCW Secretariat its annual statement, in accordance with the Convention, and also the questionnaire concerning internal procedures for confidential data processing, and it facilitates the holding of fixed inspections of industrial units. In January 2005 Morocco also established its national authority, which is a national focal point to ensure a link with the OPCW and its member States.

Furthermore, Morocco has submitted to the OPCW, last year and this year, proposals for cooperation and assistance. In this context, two delegations of experts from the organization visited Morocco last May and June to discuss the proposals with the competent Moroccan authorities.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its inviolable commitment to the humanitarian and universal objectives of the Convention, as well as its determination to spare no effort to fulfil its obligations and strengthen its cooperation with the OPCW.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is convinced that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are among the most important international instruments in the area of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Their significance increases owing to the rapid development of scientific and technological achievements that can be of a dual-use nature, as well as the danger of the use of chemical and biological agents and toxins as a means of war and terror.

This year we marked the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC. During this period the Convention has developed into an important element of the mechanism for maintaining international security and stability. It has convincingly proved its effectiveness in ridding the world of chemical weapons and developing international cooperation in the peaceful application of chemical technologies.

The paramount goal of the Convention today is the elimination of existing stockpiles of chemical agents. The urgency of this issue is connected with the real danger of international terrorism using weapons of

mass destruction, including chemical weapons. We consider that the absence of military chemical agents from the world is the most effective guarantee against their use for hostile purposes. The progress achieved by the possessor States in this field is clear to all.

Of particular importance is compliance by all possessor States with the time frames established by the CWC for the destruction of chemical weapons. Russia remains committed to this goal and, despite various technical, financial and economic difficulties, is doing everything necessary for its timely fulfilment. An apt illustration of this is the destruction of 20 per cent of the Russian chemical weapons stockpiles within the time frames established by the Convention.

Strengthening the regime of the non-proliferation of chemical weapons and materials necessary for their production is the common goal of the States parties to the Convention. Ensuring the unconditional implementation of its provisions at the national level and continuing the work of attracting new States to the Convention remain priorities.

An important task for the near future is preparing for the second Review Conference, scheduled for April 2008. We call on all States to spare no effort to ensure its success.

As for the BWC, we assess positively the results of the sixth Review Conference, which concluded its work last December. Its main achievement was the adoption of practical, future-oriented, consensus-based decisions aimed at strengthening the Convention, as well as the article-by-article review of its effectiveness. We are convinced that the earliest return to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group and the resumption of multinational work on elaborating a legally binding BWC verification mechanism will facilitate the effective strengthening of the Convention's regime.

The most important issue today is to focus on the complete fulfilment of the BWC's provisions, as well as the decisions of its Review Conferences. Regrettably, only a small number of States parties to the Convention submit annual declarations on confidence-building mechanisms, which were agreed upon at the second and third Review Conferences.

Since all parties to the Convention recognized the value of the declarations, the depositary States — Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom; I think that I can speak here on behalf of those two other

depository States — request all States parties to the Convention to submit information on confidence-building measures to the Geneva Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Aware of the technical difficulties facing a number of States parties as regards complete and timely preparation of the declarations, Russia — and once again I hope that here I can speak on behalf of the United States and the United Kingdom — is ready, if requested, to share its experience in preparing confidence-building measures declarations.

We deem it necessary to draw attention to the dismal situation around the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Despite the fact that the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference and the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference stipulated that article I of the Convention prohibits the use of biological and toxin weapons, a number of BWC States parties maintain reservations to the Geneva Protocol, thereby admitting of the possibility of using such weapons. We call upon all States that have such reservations to lift them. Russia has already done so.

It is pleasing that the call to promote further universalization of the Convention, which was voiced particularly clearly in 2006, has met with a response. In this connection, we welcome the accession to the BWC of new parties: Trinidad and Tobago, Kazakhstan and Gabon. At the same time, a number of States, including States in regions of increased tension, such as the Middle East, remain outside the BWC framework. We call on all States that are not parties to adhere to the Convention as soon as possible.

Russia looks forward to fruitful cooperation with all States in the interests of strengthening the regimes for the prohibition and non-proliferation of chemical, biological and toxin weapons.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): We are now entering an entirely new phase of the weapons of mass destruction dilemma, which demands entirely new ways of thinking about those weapons and about security. It is time we all woke up to today's reality, that not only does the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitute a great threat to international peace and security, but that their continued existence poses a similar threat.

While we witness slow progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, we recognize that some progress has been achieved in dealing with other

weapons of mass destruction — namely, biological and chemical weapons.

Therefore, we commend the successful Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) held in December last year. We also place high hopes in the decisions taken during the Conference, including the convening of an intersessional meeting and the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit. The intersessional meeting will serve as a forum to share experience among experts, national officials and those in other organizations in implementing the Convention nationally and tackling the threat of the use of these horrendous weapons. It is important to ensure that the next intersessional process follows on with equal success.

Indonesia believes that our endeavour to strengthen the Convention should not hamper the right of each Member State to benefit from the development of biological agents for peaceful purposes. We also believe that States parties should foster all forms of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of biological agents, including capacity building and combating infectious diseases.

I now turn to chemical weapons. Last month we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the creation of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Convention envisages the total and verifiable elimination of all chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities. Thus, for the first time in history, one category of weapons of mass destruction is banned and outlawed in absolute terms.

We attach great importance to the destruction of chemical weapons remaining the highest priority. Everyone is concerned that the existence of stockpiles of chemical weapons constitutes, and will always remain, a serious threat to international peace and security. We are determined to continue our efforts to contribute to the attainment of the objects and purposes of the Convention.

Although we have proudly set out unprecedented achievements, we have yet to face the challenges ahead. Five of the six possessors have requested, and have been granted, an extension of the destruction deadlines. So far only about a third of the overall chemical weapon stockpiles have been destroyed. Meeting the target dates set in the Convention not only

will test the political will of the States parties concerned, but also poses a direct challenge to the integrity and credibility of this regime. Therefore, we hope that the two major possessors will accomplish the destruction process by April 2012, as the maximum permissible time.

The Convention requires all States parties to establish and reinforce administrative and legislative measures. In this context, for the past five years Indonesia has submitted its annual declaration for scheduled chemicals and has been under on-site inspection by the OPCW. As part of our legislative measures, we are now at the final stage of concluding a draft law on national implementation of the CWC.

We also stress the importance of economic and technological development, and reaffirm the undertaking of the States parties to foster international cooperation and assistance in the peaceful uses of chemicals, as guaranteed by the Convention.

In conclusion, we underline that the process of eliminating chemical weapons has become more advanced than similar attempts in the nuclear and biological fields. The implementation and verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention have been undertaken in a prompt and thorough manner. It is our view that the OPCW can, hopefully, set an example for the future organization for the prohibition of biological weapons.

Ms. Majali (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Kingdom of Jordan has ratified all the disarmament treaties, and re-emphasizes the need for adherence to them and for their universality. Jordan is sincere in working at the regional and international level to limit weapons of mass destruction. This position is based on the threat that such weapons pose to international peace and security.

Jordan welcomes the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention banning chemical weapons and its celebration to strengthen the collective commitment to implement the Convention. It also welcomes the fact that Albania has accomplished the total destruction of its arsenal of chemical weapons, as a step forward, as well as the declaration by Iraq of its intention to adhere to the Convention. It also commends the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for what it is doing to implement the Convention, and looks forward to the success of the Review Conference next year.

Jordan also welcomes the success of the Review Conference of the Convention on Biological Weapons and the establishment of the support unit in Geneva.

Jordan is free of weapons of mass destruction and it does not produce or export such weapons. It does not seek to acquire or develop any programmes relative to such weapons or establish installations that can develop them. It also bans their transit through its territory, directly or indirectly. Jordan provides no assistance whatsoever to non-State actors, including terrorist actors, that seek to acquire such weapons. It has rules and regulations that guarantee the above and takes several measures prohibiting any non-State party to produce, acquire or trade in such weapons.

For more than half a century our world has faced a serious security problem that does not discriminate — namely, the transfer of weapons of mass destruction to active non-State parties or to terrorists. The Security Council, in its resolution 1540 (2004) and in later resolutions, has emphasized the urgent need to face such threats. Like other countries, Jordan welcomed the adoption of the resolution and, in keeping with its obligations in that respect, has submitted its report on implementation of the resolution. It also welcomes the adoption of the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, convinced that terrorism must be combated in all its forms and of the need to face the threat of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons within the context of the United Nations and international cooperation in consonance with international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Jordan believes that full implementation of the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004) will undoubtedly lead to a considerable reduction of the threat, but the best means and guarantee of stopping weapons of mass destruction getting into the hands of terrorists and other non-State parties is to reach a comprehensive international convention. The optimal implementation of the resolution requires continued cooperation, exchange of information and technical support that provides the necessary technology and building national capacities by helping States shoulder their obligations.

Jordan hosted the first meeting of Arab States to consider the mechanisms necessary to implement resolution 1540 (2004) by strengthening coordination between their efforts at the national and subregional

levels in order to find a strong world response to this serious threat to international peace and security through several ways, including effective implementation of the resolution. The meeting was an opportunity for experts from Arab States to exchange experience and listen to the international experts who attended. Jordan expresses its deep gratitude to all those who helped achieve the success of the workshop: the Office for Disarmament Affairs, regarding the organization of the meeting, and the donors that helped finance it — Norway, the European Union, the United States — and international organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Secretariat, and the Chairman of the Committee established by resolution 1540 (2004).

The Middle East faces a special threat from weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons and the possibility of their falling into the hands of terrorists. The special initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of other weapons of mass destruction is one of the most serious attempts to face these apprehensions and fears at the regional and international level. The assistance by States to implement this commitment is important, if such assistance has been requested by the countries concerned.

Clearly, for reasons well known to all, the prerequisites and strategic and security needs of the region have led to the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and some countries have acquired them and hesitate to accede to international conventions banning their use and limiting their proliferation. However, Jordan believes that regional security cannot be realized not through an arms race, but through peace, cooperation and confidence-building between the countries of the region, in a manner that will help realize the common objective of stability and security.

The issue of disarmament in general and weapons of mass destruction in particular is a humanitarian problem first. Therefore, our work is based on our desire to protect people and avoid conflicts, with the huge destruction they bring to civilians, in addition to the environmental, economic and social harm that affects the lives of all those in conflict zones.

In conclusion, we call for international efforts and cooperation at all levels in order to limit the spread of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure that none

of them can be transported or transferred to non-State entities that may pose a threat to life. We also call for the combating of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and for solving its root causes, especially the conflicts in the region, which some groups take as a pretext to realize their own objectives.

Mr. Tashibayev (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): Kazakhstan's policy on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is determined by the foreign policy course of our State, which is based on our commitment to stable international security, the development of cooperation between States and the increased role of international organizations in regulating global problems and conflicts.

An important step that demonstrates to the world our foreign policy priorities has been our turning away from nuclear ambitions and the possession of the world's fourth deadliest arsenal. Over the years of independence the Republic of Kazakhstan has taken a number of steps that demonstrate its determination to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. For example, we have acceded to the NPT, the CTBT and the CWC.

In May this year Kazakhstan ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We regard this Convention as one of the most important international instruments in the area of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Scientific and technological developments over recent years in biology and biotechnology have provided the basis for the design and collection of new types of micro-organisms and toxins which have the potential of being used in biological weapons. The widespread dissemination of scientific and technical information via the Internet has made it easier for extremist and terrorist organizations to get hold of this new biological knowledge, which can be dual-use. We therefore believe that we must have an efficient suppression mechanism which will enable us to minimize or eliminate the risk of biological weapons being developed and produced.

One of the most important elements of such a mechanism is, we believe, a convention with comprehensive coverage, which means achieving its universality by involving all the States that have not yet acceded to it.

One of the urgent needs of our time is for a general and united effort to bar biological weapons and ensure the non-proliferation of controlled materials. This concern is evident from the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which aims to strengthen the non-proliferation regime in the new conditions of international security and to prevent access of non-State actors to weapons of mass destruction and related technologies and materials, together with their means of delivery.

We agree that there is a need to strengthen the BWC by developing a mechanism of international control designed to ensure effective verification of compliance with the Convention by all States parties. We also believe in the need to improve the corresponding national legislation, thereby ensuring the fulfilment of international obligations under the BWC, including export control systems and organs.

On 25 July this year the Republic adopted a new law on export controls, which stipulates the basic principles for the implementation of export controls, in particular the need for compliance with international obligations regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other forms of weapons and the full control of materials and technologies by the State. Export control in the Republic is based on a list of goods subject to such controls and on the relevant rules and regulations and other regulatory acts as well. Of course, results in this important matter of banning biological and toxin weapons will be achieved only by uniting our efforts. In this context, we endorse the decision of the fifth Review Conference on the holding of annual meetings of States parties which, we feel sure, will make a major contribution to achieving the main objectives of the Convention.

Kazakhstan is an active participant in international initiatives concerned with the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As we have always done, we favour multilateral dialogue to settle all the problems facing us. This is evident from Kazakhstan's participation in the programme to counter and curb common threats. We very much appreciate the support Kazakhstan receives from the United States within the framework of the programme for the elimination of strategic offensive arms and nuclear-weapon infrastructures, the conversion of defence enterprises, the establishment and improvement of systems of export controls and the improvement of accounting and inspection systems for

nuclear materials. The result of our joint work can be seen in the reconstruction and equipping in 2005 of the first epidemiological control station at the national veterinary centre in Astana and the elimination of the major facility of the former Soviet Union for the production of anthrax as a weapon in Stepnogorsk.

We are currently implementing a socially important project involving the establishment of a nuclear medicine and biophysics centre at the Nuclear Physics Institute in Almaty. This centre will accommodate a facility concerned with problem-solving for the industrial production of medical radioisotopes and with introducing modern diagnostic methods.

All these measures demonstrate Kazakhstan's firm will to implement international commitments for the strengthening of the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

To conclude, I call upon all States that have not yet done so to adhere to the BWC, and I call upon all States parties to the Convention to facilitate progress in ensuring its increased effectiveness as an instrument of international security.

Mr. Prasad (India): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", contained in document A/C.1/62/L.22.

This resolution, first adopted in 2002, has continued to command consensus and growing support in both the First Committee and the General Assembly. The representative character of the Assembly validates and reinforces the commitments we assume as Member States in regard to its objective. The draft resolution, therefore, has continuing relevance as a clear reaffirmation from a body that is both universal and democratic.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would give expression to the concerns of the international community and call upon Member States to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It would underline that the international response to this threat needs to be inclusive, multilateral and global. This approach has been widely endorsed by the Member States of the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of Eight, the European Union and most other regional forums, including in our region

the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The draft resolution, besides incorporating some technical updates, would have the General Assembly reiterate its request to the Secretary-General to compile a report on measures taken by international organizations on issues relating to the linkage between the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It would thus equip the Assembly with system-wide information on the work being done on this issue within the United Nations as well as in other bodies.

I appeal to delegations in the First Committee to continue their strong support for this initiative, especially through additional sponsorship of the draft resolution. This will underline the engagement of the entire United Nations membership on this vital issue.

Mr. Bródi (Hungary): As this is the first time I have spoken in the Committee, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of its chairmanship. I assure you of my delegation's full support in carrying out your important task.

I have the honour to introduce on behalf of Hungary the draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction". This document will be issued under the symbol A/C.1/62/L.37.

The current draft builds primarily on resolutions adopted in recent years, while introducing necessary updates to the text in order to reflect developments since the sixty-first session of the General Assembly — in particular, the successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference of the States parties, held in November and December 2006.

In this regard, the General Assembly would note with satisfaction the increase in the number of States parties and welcome the information and data provided by States parties through confidence-building measures. It would also welcome the successful outcome of the sixth Review Conference, which adopted a Final Document after a gap of 10 years, and recall the decision reached at the Conference to hold four annual meetings of the States parties of one week's duration each year, commencing in 2007, prior to the Seventh Review Conference, to be held not later than the end of 2011, and to hold a one-week meeting

of experts to prepare for each meeting of the States parties.

As in previous years, by the draft resolution the Assembly would welcome the reaffirmation made in the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference that under all circumstances the use of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention.

By the operative part of the draft, the Assembly would recall the decisions reached at the sixth Review Conference — including those relating to the establishment of an Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and the issue of access by States parties to the information exchanged through confidence-building measures — and call upon States parties to the Convention to participate in their implementation.

The Secretary-General would be requested to provide such services as might be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, including all necessary assistance to the annual meetings of the States parties and meetings of experts. Furthermore, under the final operative paragraph of the draft text Member States would decide that the BWC item will be included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. In this connection, we hope that Member States will again be able to support our draft resolution on the BWC this year, and that it can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Rapacki (Poland): I take the floor to introduce the draft resolution on Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, as contained in document A/C.1/62/L.7.

The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is the concrete input Poland has made for many years to promote the universality and full and effective implementation of all the Convention's provisions. Poland also attaches

great importance to the role of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would underline that the Convention and its implementation contribute to enhancing international peace and security, and emphasize that its full, universal and effective implementation will contribute further to that purpose. It would also emphasize the importance of universality of the Convention. It would call upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention without delay, and stress that the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention is in itself an important contribution to the efforts of the United Nations in the global fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The draft resolution contains the first reference in any General Assembly resolution stressing the importance of national implementation of a disarmament treaty in the fight against terrorism. By the draft resolution the Assembly would also reaffirm the obligation of States parties to destroy chemical weapons within the time limits provided for by the Convention. The draft resolution also contains a reference to the preparations for the Second Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is of special importance this year, when the international community celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force. Therefore, the draft resolution contains special reference to the high-level meeting at the United Nations in New York on 27 September 2007 and to all national and international events conducted throughout 2007 devoted to the tenth anniversary. They provided a special occasion for the international community to remember all the victims of chemical weapons and to reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism and the object and purpose of the Convention.

As in previous years, Poland remains the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thanks to the cooperation of all First Committee delegations, in past years the draft resolution on the implementation of the CWC has been adopted by

consensus. This year we conducted two rounds of consultations, and I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the valuable support of all delegations in the work on this draft, which led us to a text acceptable by all.

As in previous years, we request that the Committee adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We now move from our general debate and statements and presentations on the issue of other weapons of mass destruction to begin the thematic discussion on the subject of other disarmament measures and international security.

On this item, we have an honoured guest speaker, Mr. John Barrett, Chairman of the United Nations Panel of Government Experts on Verification in All its Aspects, including the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification, whom I warmly welcome.

Mr. Barrett (United Nations Panel of Government Experts on Verification in All Its Aspects, including the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to present to the First Committee the Panel's report, distributed as document A/61/1028 of 15 August 2007.

We are completing a process begun in late 2004. Resolution 59/60 of 3 December 2004 established the Panel of Government Experts on Verification and its mandate. On 6 December 2006 the General Assembly, by decision 61/514, encouraged the Panel to bring its work to an agreed conclusion as soon as possible.

My presentation today comes as the Committee is considering draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.47, by whose adoption the General Assembly would take note of the Panel's report. By the draft resolution the Assembly would also invite Member States to submit additional views to the Secretary-General on the substance of the report. I know that I speak on behalf of all Panel members in encouraging the Committee to give the broadest possible support to the draft resolution.

As Chair of the Panel, let me underline how much the credit for the achievement of a consensus report goes to those whose unflinching determination, persistence and personal commitment to the subject of verification and to the United Nations made it happen — the members of the Panel. To them I give my deepest thanks. Their names, as well as the names of all the

outside experts who gave presentations to the Panel, are listed in document A/61/1028.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Department of Disarmament Affairs — now the Office for Disarmament Affairs — for the unstinting support and timely advice its officials gave the Chair. They, like the members of the Panel, never lost faith in our two objectives on the subject of verification: first, to produce a relatively short, action-oriented report, along with forward-looking, practical recommendations, for consideration by Member States; and, secondly, to produce a report agreed by all members of the Panel. As Chair, I am pleased to say that we achieved both those objectives.

We have sought to build anew a broad consensus that verification has an important role to play in contributing to the security of each and every one of us — today and in the future.

I would like to touch on two items — Panel composition and outreach, and the key features of the report. Then I shall conclude with several brief reflections on the way forward.

Panel composition was determined by geographical representation and interest shown. The 16 members of the Panel were: Argentina, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The reduced size of the Panel was determined in order to maintain an action-oriented approach. Geographical representation was nevertheless maintained to the extent possible. Two countries from the Middle East were invited to participate but declined the invitation.

Some Member States initially expressed disappointment at not being selected for the Panel. To address this, the Panel members decided from the beginning to make their work as open as possible. They requested the Chair to use whatever opportunities were available to explain the approach taken by the Panel and to hear the views and concerns of other countries. To this end, the Chair held two lunch-time outreach sessions for United Nations Missions. The first was in New York on 25 April 2006, on the margins of the Disarmament Commission. The second was in Geneva

on 11 May 2006, on the margins of the Panel's second meeting.

The Panel also benefited from written submissions by a number of States on the subject of verification. Submissions were received from Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Finland, Guatemala, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Panama, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Suriname and Sweden. On behalf of the Panel, I thank them all for their contribution.

The Panel's work encompassed nuclear, radiological, chemical, and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery. It also encompassed conventional weapons.

We looked at verification as it applies to activities involving non-State actors as well as States. During the first two sessions we looked at existing verification regimes in their specific contexts, examining strengths and shortcomings in terms of methods, procedures and technologies. The first session concentrated more on verification of destruction of weapons of mass destruction. The second shifted the focus, as we examined conventional weapons and their means of delivery. The third session delved into aspects of United Nations sanctions and illicit transfers of conventional weapons, and the role of verification in such circumstances.

Given the short time available to the Panel, the detailed work on the 1990 and 1995 expert reports was not revisited. Nevertheless, those two earlier reports served as a point of departure for the Panel's work. Our focus was on how we could bring added value, not on repeating what had been said before. We therefore looked at what had changed during the decade in the international security environment and the security needs of States, how verification had addressed those needs, and how it could do so in future.

In the light of that approach, the report is structured organically, rather than being institution-centric. We identified and examined themes relating to verification, not the performance of specific treaty regimes.

As a Panel, we did not have the job of issuing a report card or critical evaluation of how well a verification regime was functioning. That is for those with a greater technical expertise than we possessed. Nor did we sit in judgement on issues relating to

States' compliance with specific international treaty obligations or political commitments. The responsibility for this kind of judgement belongs with sovereign States, not our Panel.

However, this is not to say that the relationship between verification and compliance was neglected. Indeed, the conceptual relationship between the two forms the backbone of the Panel's approach and the report itself.

During our discussions, certain themes emerged. These included the concept of verification; verification experiences; techniques and methodologies of verification; and the need to build synergies and complementarity among bodies or agencies with responsibilities in the area of monitoring and verification.

Other themes emerged, including capacity-building, both in verification related to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and non-WMD, or conventional, verification; the role of the United Nations; and the contribution of civil society in helping to build capacity for certain kinds of monitoring.

As for the report's recommendations, they are not portrayed as quick solutions to all the world's ills. We did not have a magic wand that, once waved, would somehow "fix" verification for eternity. Instead, we started on broad, general foundations, looking to point the way forward, in a practical way, to what States may themselves wish to take up and work on together. In this way, the report seeks to develop the basis for a new and widening consensus on the relationship of verification to the security of all States and how its role can be enhanced in contributing to that security.

Verification, as the report emphasizes, is a toolbox from which we can draw very useful instruments to enhance our security — that is, if States have the will and the determination to do so.

Allow me to conclude with a couple of reflections on the subject of verification, based on the work of the Panel.

First, much has been learned over the past three decades about verification, as a result of various treaties and agreements in the area of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. Many positive experiences have been associated with the monitoring, inspections and methodologies that have worked well in practice. The report builds on such achievements.

Secondly, verification technologies and methodologies continue to improve and be refined. What is particularly interesting is that these technologies are as much low-tech and available to all countries as they are high-tech. This means that participation in verification does not have to be limited to just a few countries. Countries can benefit from such developments to participate in the monitoring of agreements and activities most pertinent to them — including where non-State actors are involved.

Thirdly, the act of verification can often be a confidence-building measure in itself. Experience shows that successful verification builds trust. Countries can use it — indeed, have used it — as a means to establish better, more stable relations with one another. The good habits of cooperation in verification and transparency foster greater confidence.

Fourthly, we have also learned that verification's importance for our security lies in the fact that it is intimately connected with the implementation of treaties and agreements and compliance with them. There is little doubt that implementation and compliance are these days the subject of growing attention.

Each of those four areas is examined in the report. And for each of them we try to point the way forward for further work by Member States. The fact that we achieved consensus is therefore an important step in helping us reach our ultimate destination.

This reminds me of an old story about a man who has completely lost his way out in the countryside somewhere. He stops a local farmer, explains where he wants to go and asks for directions to get to his destination. The local fellow leans on his pitchfork, scratches his chin and says "Well, now, if I wanted to go where you're going I sure wouldn't start from here".

I hope very much that it is different with our report. That is, if we want to get to our destination, if we want to get to "there", we should in fact start from "here"; we should start with this report.

And what is the ultimate destination? It is to ensure that verification is and remains a useful, effective, credible instrument in addressing States' security needs: nothing more, nothing less.

It is on this basis that I commend to the First Committee the report of the Panel of Government Experts on Verification in All its Aspects, including the

Role of the United Nations, and request The Committee's support.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I shall now suspend the meeting so that we may continue our discussion in an informal mode with a question-and-answer session, which will allow delegations to make comments or put questions to Mr. Barrett following the excellent presentation of his report.

The meeting was suspended at 4.30 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We resume our formal meeting and move on to the issue of conventional weapons, which we shall deal with for the rest of today's meeting. We shall return to other disarmament measures and issues of international security tomorrow.

I shall now call on those delegations that wish to make presentations or introduce draft resolutions.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor as coordinator of the Central American Integration System (SICA), which is made up of Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, and with which Mexico is associated, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your chairmanship of the First Committee. Your leadership will facilitate the success of our debates.

For our countries, security has become an integral part of the regional agenda. As we have stated on many occasions, security must be viewed from a multidimensional standpoint, since there are multiple and varied sources of insecurity affecting our countries and the region. Those sources include not only the traditional threats to security or today's challenge of terrorism, but also the risks arising from an increase in crime in our cities, drug trafficking, organized crime, uncontrolled dissemination and illicit use of small arms and the proliferation of activities of armed gangs, as well as other phenomena, such as recurring natural disasters, that threaten our countries.

Within the theme of conventional weapons we would like first to refer to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the Programme's follow-up mechanisms. This is a priority issue for our countries because of the many

deaths such weapons cause in our region. Hence, the members of SICA and Mexico reaffirm their full support for the Programme's implementation. A collective effort is needed to deal with the problem.

In this connection, we encourage and support every initiative designed to lend international assistance and cooperation to strengthen the full implementation of the Programme of Action, bearing in mind that the main responsibility for implementation lies with each State. The States members of SICA and Mexico welcome the decision to hold a biennial meeting of States in 2008 to consider implementation of the Programme at the national, regional and world levels.

Our countries have been enthusiastic participants in the various meetings, conferences and seminars on the issue and have worked with great commitment. In May 2006 we held a successful regional conference in Guatemala, resulting in the Antigua Declaration, which established parameters and high standards in the struggle to eradicate the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. Regrettably, the expectations of our Declaration were not matched by the outcome of the Review Conference — hence our disappointment.

The Antigua Declaration reflects various aspects of the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons that are a priority issue for the region. We acknowledge the importance of the fact that almost all the members of the Organization of American States have ratified the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, and its Model Regulations. We have also committed ourselves to implementing the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as to redoubling efforts to achieve a legally binding instrument that includes ammunition. It is important to stress that the Antigua Declaration also acknowledges that the illicit traffic in ammunition is intrinsically linked with the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons; the one has no reason for being without the other.

The Declaration clearly states that the transfer of weapons and ammunition through unlawful intermediaries is a major cause of the danger of small arms and light weapons being diverted to illicit markets, including non-State actors. We therefore

support the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the trade — import, export and transit — in conventional weapons. The treaty should meet the criteria of being transparent and non-discriminatory, and should be negotiated multilaterally.

In this connection, we welcome the adoption of resolution 61/89 and the broad response by States. We also welcome the establishment of the group of governmental experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument to establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

Likewise, we urge all States to comply with the provisions of part II of the Programme of Action concerning management of stocks of small arms and light weapons, the destruction or other disposition of those that are confiscated, seized or collected, and the drawing up of appropriate, detailed standards and procedures for establishing where existing stocks are located, as well as identifying surplus stocks and disposing of them responsibly. In that regard, we reiterate our support for national, regional and civil society organizations' public awareness campaigns in the fight against the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

The countries of our subregion believe that there must be proper regulation of civilian acquisition and possession of such weapons, including limiting the type and quantity that civilians can acquire and own, as well as strict licensing, authorization and registration requirements.

Our countries have also played an active part in regional seminars this year: the fourth seminar on small arms and light weapons, concerning the future of the United Nations Programme of Action and the draft of an international treaty on the arms trade, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in February; and the regional seminar "Current initiatives in the field of conventional weapons — prospects for Latin American and the Caribbean", which took place in Buenos Aires in July. The seminars gave us an opportunity to exchange views about issues on the current international conventional weapons agenda, as well as to identify regional and subregional priorities.

We wish to record our acknowledgment of the assistance given by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in

Latin America and the Caribbean and by the United Nations Development Programme in the preparation of our national reports. Here we repeat the suggestion that a database be established within the framework of the Office for Disarmament Affairs for the publication of best practices on various aspects of the Programme of Action.

Most of the topics that we have touched upon should have been reflected in the outcome document of the Review Conference held in July 2006. Some form part of the Programme of Action, and others are certainly complementary to it. Regrettably, the lack of political will on the part of some States made it impossible to negotiate, and endangered the significant progress that we have made so far.

The States members of SICA and Mexico repeat our belief that the Programme should remain active and that work should continue at the regional and subregional levels to strengthen it. We commit ourselves to spare no effort in order to achieve success at the biennial meeting of States in July 2008.

In conclusion, we refer to the issue of cluster munitions. The Latin American Conference on Cluster Munitions was held successfully in San José, Costa Rica, on 4 and 5 September this year, as part of the work of giving impetus to the Oslo Process. That Process highlights the need to achieve, by 2008, a legally binding international instrument prohibiting the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of such weapons, and providing for cooperation to assist victims, rehabilitation, clearance of contaminated areas and destruction of stockpiles. It was reiterated at the Conference that cluster munitions cause unacceptable harm to civilian populations, particularly the most vulnerable groups, and the enormous harm to the development of populations was recognized.

The Conference called upon the international community, aware of the importance of the Oslo Process, to join this initiative, which is complementary to and does not exclude the various efforts made in the context of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted in 1980.

Unequivocal support for declaring the region a zone free of cluster munitions would be a clear signal of the firm commitment of the countries of the region

to the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, and the principles of general and complete disarmament. We call upon the countries that produce cluster weapons to discontinue their production immediately. As long as they continue to be produced there will be a demand for them.

Mr. Pereira Gomes (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the countries that align themselves with this statement. To save time, I shall shorten my oral statement. The full text is being distributed.

The illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread are at the centre of the security challenges of our time. The European Union is strongly committed to eradicating the illicit accumulation and trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. It aims to reduce their availability in areas of conflict or potential conflict.

The European Union has adopted a specific Strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Other specific instruments include a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, a Joint Action on combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, and a Common Position requiring member States to introduce national legislation to effectively control the activities of brokering.

The European Strategy on small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is global in scope, encompassing technical and financial assistance to a wide range of related programmes. In addition to action being financed by member States in their national programmes, the European Union and the European Community allocated for the years 2003 to 2005 some 105 million euros for relevant small arms and light weapons external assistance programmes. We call on others to join this effort.

The European Union is convinced that assistance to countries affected by armed violence should be provided as an integral part of development strategies. Given the close link between security and development, States are encouraged to integrate action to eliminate illicit small arms and light weapons and prevent armed violence into plans and strategies related to security, development and the reduction of poverty. In this context, we welcome the Geneva Declaration on

Armed Violence and Development, which highlighted the relationship between armed violence and development, and we call on Member States to subscribe to the Declaration.

The EU was deeply disappointed that the United Nations Programme of Action Review Conference was unable to agree on an outcome document last year. Notwithstanding that, we recognize the value of the Conference in reaffirming our commitment to the principles, measures and objectives of the Programme of Action. There is a continuous need to jointly reassess our efforts, achievements and shortcomings at national, regional and global levels. We look forward to coming together on a biennial basis, as established in both the Programme of Action and the International Instrument on Marking and Tracing. In this respect, we attach the utmost importance to the preparations for the next Biennial Meeting of States in 2008. In our opinion, the review cycles should continue to include review conferences.

The European Union continues to strongly encourage progress to strengthen small arms and light weapons transfer controls. Its Code of Conduct on Arms Exports has made an important contribution to this goal by setting up conditions for responsible transfers of arms by EU member States and associated States. The EU also continues to attach great importance to the efforts of the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-use Goods and Technologies in further strengthening arms transfer controls. The EU is determined to contribute to reducing the risk of diversion of small arms and light weapons into the illicit market, in particular through efforts to combat illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons by air, inter alia by increasing cooperation and exchange of information between States.

The fight against the illicit trade in ammunition continues to be another pressing task. Uncontrolled stocks of ammunition contribute to the risks of trafficking and proliferation and to the prolongation and intensification of armed conflicts. Furthermore, insufficiently secured stockpiles in storage depots constitute a threat to security, health and the environment. There is a growing awareness of the importance of the ammunition problem, reflected in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. In this regard, the European Union looks forward to supporting the work of the group of governmental

experts on conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, to be established in 2008, pursuant to resolution 61/72.

Global standards on marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons are essential in tracking the illicit trade in these weapons. The adoption of the International Instrument on Marking and Tracing was a first important step in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action in this regard. The EU supports full implementation, and further strengthening in the future, of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, inter alia by making it legally binding.

Brokering controls remain a high priority for the European Union, as illicit brokering is recognized as being among the main factors fuelling the illicit trade in small arms worldwide. We welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts established by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 60/81. We all need to implement the recommendations in the report as well as to continue consideration of further steps to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

The recent informal meeting organized by the Government of Canada in Geneva contributed to a better understanding of issues related to transfer control principles for small arms and light weapons.

On this occasion I would like to reiterate the European Union's position on the pressing need for an arms trade treaty. Every day, everywhere, people are affected by irresponsible arms transfers. The negative impact on peace, reconstruction, security, stability, human rights and sustainable development is especially damaging to developing countries, in particular in Africa. In addition, it diverts scarce resources from vital poverty alleviation and other development work.

The European Union firmly supports the elaboration of a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. It is convinced that the United Nations is the only appropriate forum to deliver a truly universal instrument. The growing support in all regions of the world is well documented by the overwhelming majority in the General Assembly for the adoption of resolution 61/89 and by the record number of States that responded positively to the

Secretary-General's request for views on feasibility, scope and draft parameters of an arms trade treaty.

We reiterate our view that the establishment of binding standards, consistent with the existing responsibilities of States under relevant international law, would be a major contribution to tackling the undesirable and irresponsible proliferation of conventional weapons, which undermines peace, security, development and full respect for human rights. The European Union is committed to playing an active role in this process. We urge other States to actively support the arms trade treaty process and the work of the group of governmental experts to be established next year.

The use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) by terrorists and non-State actors as a tool to threaten civil aviation demands further attention and sustained and comprehensive action. MANPADS are highly lethal, easily concealable and inexpensive. In this respect, the European Union firmly supports broader efforts, in various multilateral forums, focusing in particular on export controls, including the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe principles for export controls of MANPADS and the Group of Eight initiative. The European Union supports initiatives in the wider context of the United Nations Programme of Action as well as targeting MANPADS-related issues specifically.

European Union member States have been working with other States in the field of MANPADS destruction and stockpile and security management, and will continue to work proactively to help those States that are not in a position to do so themselves to secure their stockpiles and destroy surpluses of these weapons. The EU encourages other States to help in this task.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The European Union welcomes progress achieved in universalizing the Convention, destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting victims. Good progress has been achieved in these areas, although much remains to be accomplished.

The European Union remains fully committed to the Nairobi Action Plan, adopted at the First Review Conference in 2004. The Nairobi Conference agreed on this ambitious plan, valid until 2009, for the full implementation of the Convention. This will allow us to make progress towards a mine-free world without any new anti-personnel mine victims. In order to assess and reflect on the progress made and to overcome the remaining challenges, we welcome the Meetings of States Parties held in Zagreb in 2005 and in Geneva in 2006 and look forward to the next Meeting in Jordan later this year.

Promoting and achieving universal adherence to the Convention remains a priority. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

The EU and its member States continue to provide major financial and technical support for mine action around the world. Over the last 10 years this financial support has amounted to a total of around €1.5 billion. We urge other States in a position to do so to provide greater assistance to mine-affected States. The EU believes that particular emphasis should be put on mine clearance as well as on victim assistance. The rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors is a crucial task that must be seen in broader contexts linked to development and human rights.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons constitutes an integral part of international humanitarian law, and the European Union attaches great importance to it. That is why it is pleased to support the Plan of Action to promote universality of the Convention, adopted at the Third Review Conference last November. The European Union, which was an active participant in that successful Review Conference, calls on all States parties to join in supporting the universalization of the Convention and its five annexed Protocols.

During the last review cycle of the CCW Convention we were able to make some significant progress. We refer in particular to the entry into force of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War and the decision to hold the First Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V next month. The European Union also welcomed the adoption of the Sponsorship Programme and the decision on a compliance mechanism. The EU has adopted a Joint Action to promote the universalization of the

Convention and its Protocols and to support their implementation. The Joint Action includes a substantial contribution to the Sponsorship Programme.

I turn to the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines. The European Union provided a substantial input before and during the Third Review Conference of the CCW Convention, and it remains committed to bringing this important humanitarian issue forward.

The EU wishes to highlight the issue of cluster munitions. Recent events have again reminded us of the negative impact on the civilian population and the huge clearance burden these weapons can create. The EU member States and many other States from around the world have considered the issue of cluster munitions as a matter of humanitarian concern. The agreement to a discussion mandate on cluster munitions and the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts was a first step towards negotiating a new instrument aimed at addressing the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. The EU would be pleased to see the CCW Convention regime develop in a way that further strengthened international humanitarian law, taking into account both military requirements and humanitarian concerns.

The European Union is deeply concerned about the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. We consider that this issue is a vital element in the work of the CCW Convention. In this context, the EU submitted a draft mandate for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument, to be finalized by the end of 2008, that addresses the humanitarian concerns about cluster munitions in all their aspects. We have submitted this proposal with the aim of concluding a legally binding instrument that prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and that includes provisions on cooperation and assistance. We did so with the aim of enabling the Convention to clearly show its relevance to matters of international humanitarian law in general and humanitarian concerns about cluster munitions in particular.

The June meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts ended with a recommendation by the Chair that at the annual CCW Convention Meeting of High Contracting Parties in November 2007 the States parties should decide how best to address the

humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, as a matter of urgency, including the possibility of a new instrument. We call upon all the High Contracting Parties to support the European Union proposal for a negotiating mandate. The EU will make every effort for its proposal to obtain their support.

Transparency in the area of conventional arms, and in particular small arms and light weapons, is an essential component in fighting the uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons and in providing an atmosphere of confidence and security. The recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms during its fifth review were incorporated in resolution 61/77 on transparency in armaments. They pave the way for development and progress with respect to the overall aim of the Register, which is effective transparency in armaments. Member States that have not yet contributed to the Register are called upon to do so. In particular, the EU stresses the importance of including information on small arms and light weapons in Member States' annual report to the Register, using the newly adopted standardized form for small arms and light weapons notifications.

Objective information on military matters, including transparency on military expenditures, constitutes a key element of confidence between States and can thus contribute to conflict prevention. The European Union welcomes the fact — I refer to resolution 60/44 — that participation in the system for reporting military expenditures has increased almost steadily since its establishment in 1981. This indicates the growing understanding of the important role of transparency on military expenditures. In its reply to the Secretary-General, the EU suggested that the Group of Governmental Experts prepare a report on the operation and further development of the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, taking into account the views expressed by Member States on the subject. Member States that have not yet participated are encouraged to submit their reports.

Mr. Dobelle (France) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time I have spoken in the Committee in your presence, Mr. Chairman, I should like to say how pleased we are to see you leading it. You can be sure of our full support in your delicate task.

I fully agree, of course, with the statement of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union made on behalf of my country and the other 26 European partners.

Of all the questions dealt with here in the First Committee, those concerning conventional weapons have the greatest immediate impact on the security, well-being and survival of the inhabitants of our planet. For a long time the international community has been dealing with conventional disarmament whenever possible and in other cases with trying to control conventional weapons.

The greatest progress was made first at the regional level. I am thinking of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a complete and effective disarmament instrument for the control of existing conventional weapons that is transparent and can be verified. We would like to preserve its integrity. It is currently going through a crisis. In order to make progress now as we deal with other issues on the future of this instrument, my country is organizing in Paris on 5 and 6 November an informal conference to which are invited all States parties to the Treaty, as well as candidates for accession to the adapted Treaty.

Regional action is not enough. Uncontrolled dissemination of such weapons, often from one continent to another, and the irresponsible trade lead to the death of hundreds of thousands. Efforts by France and other Member States to regulate the traffic in small arms and light weapons are not yet proving adequate. Certainly, we have the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, but it deals only with the illicit trade and with only one category of weapons — small arms and light weapons — without their ammunition. Furthermore, it does not involve real international obligations.

We do not wish to minimise the Programme's merits. Let us not forget that it has also made possible major progress on the question of marking and tracing small arms and light weapons, as well as, more recently, on that of illicit brokering. But we need to accept its limitations. The Programme of Action can be further improved, particularly with regard to follow-up, and we regret that the recommendations of the European Union and France, in its national capacity, could not be taken into account by those who drafted

the omnibus draft resolution dealing with the Programme of Action.

Some of our national initiatives, such as those on combating the illicit air transport of small arms and light weapons and their munitions, are very much at the core of the objectives of the Programme. However, this in no way resolves the question of the legal traffic. As the Presidency of the European Union stated, we are among those countries that believe the time has now come to deal at the international level with the official trade in all conventional weapons, by means of a new instrument. We will play an active part in the work of the group of governmental experts to meet next year, in the hope of bringing about genuine progress in this area.

With regard to anti-personnel mines, the Ottawa Convention, whose tenth anniversary we are marking this year, is a remarkable advance, with an important, tangible impact. However, its universalization remains imperfect. Although the States parties now total 155, which is in itself a success, a certain number of major countries that are producers and users of anti-personnel mines still do not adhere to the Convention. France is determined to make its proper effort in fostering universalization of the Ottawa Convention as well as in demining of contaminated areas and assistance to victims.

More generally speaking, with regard to all weapons which may be considered to have an excessively traumatic impact on civilian populations, the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has made significant progress over the last two years. The Review Conference held in November 2006, under a French presidency, produced undeniable results. The strengthening of the general regime of the Convention by the adoption of an implementation mechanism, the Plan of Action to Promote Universality of the Convention, as well as the Sponsorship Programme and the complete review process that was conducted, shows that the Convention is in good health.

The entry into force in November 2006 of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War is also a considerable success for the Convention, which will be reflected in concrete results, particularly in the clearing of ground affected by explosive remnants of war. France, one of the first 25 States to ratify Protocol V, calls for its rapid universalization.

In the coming months the Convention will deal with areas of crucial importance, in particular mines other than anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. The forthcoming Conference of States parties should, as recommended by the Group of Governmental Experts last June, take a decision on the best way to respond to the humanitarian consequences of the use of cluster munitions. In the short term, France will spare no effort in responding to the humanitarian consequences of such munitions. It has therefore organized, together with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), a seminar on such weapons and their humanitarian consequences.

France has participated from the beginning in the Oslo Process, to which it accords a key role in providing an impetus.

In the longer term, France associates itself fully with the European Union statement proposing a mandate for well-balanced and ambitious negotiations. Essentially, what is at stake is the humanitarian effectiveness of norms which will have to be adopted on cluster munitions, to the extent that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons makes it possible to bring together all States that produce, export and use such munitions. France is fully involved in the work on these problems at the international level within the Convention and in the Oslo Process, which we consider should not compete, but, on the contrary, should reinforce one another.

France nevertheless believes that the Convention, which is within the United Nations framework and gathers together the largest number of partners, is the natural arena in which to negotiate an effective instrument to fight the harmful effects of cluster munitions, and that it can deal with questions quickly. Therefore, together with the other member States of the European Union, France calls upon all the States parties to the Convention to adopt in November a mandate, as proposed by the EU, to negotiate an instrument banning cluster munitions that cause unacceptable damage to civilian populations.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should now like to hand over to my predecessor at the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Rivasseau, who comes here today in his capacity of President of the Third Review Conference of the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention, to present his report.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): It is a great pleasure, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on the way in which you are carrying out your task, and it is an honour to see in the Chair so eminent a representative of the French-speaking world. I should also like to thank the secretariat and all those colleagues with whom I have had the privilege and pleasure of working for some seven years, some of whom are present.

In a decision taken during the third Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the 1980 Geneva Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects, which took place from 7 to 17 November 2006, the States parties tasked me to report to the Committee on universalization of the Convention.

The States parties were convinced that the Conference's first priority should be to achieve universal adherence, ensure the Convention's universality and bring about better application of it and its Protocols. In this context, they undertook to implement a Plan of Action, which states that all Member States of the United Nations should review their participation in the Convention and its Protocols, with a view to considering acceptance of the Protocols and the amendment to article 1; encourage the signatory States to ratify it as soon as possible; promote adherence to the Convention and its Protocols by all States, especially in regions of conflict or regions where the level of acceptance of the Convention remains low; take steps to prevent and suppress violation of the Convention by persons or on territory under their jurisdiction or control; and encourage involvement and active cooperation in these universalization efforts by all relevant partners.

In order to implement those actions, the States parties decided to undertake all appropriate measures, including seizing the opportunity of bilateral contacts and traditional diplomatic channels; enhancing knowledge of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, in cooperation with all relevant actors; and coordinating regional actions in accordance with the characteristics of each region.

The States parties regularly monitor and review the Plan of Action. The Convention secretariat, which is within the Office for Disarmament Affairs in

Geneva, thanks to the support of the United Nations Secretariat, will keep them regularly informed about its implementation.

Since I was last with the Committee, when the issue was discussed on 16 October 2006, the universality of the Convention has made some headway. Three countries — Cameroon, Gabon and Montenegro — have acceded to the Convention itself. They have also acceded to Protocol I. Cameroon and Montenegro have acceded to Protocol II. Cameroon and Niger have acceded to the Amended Protocol II. Gabon, Cameroon and Montenegro have acceded to Protocol III. Cameroon, Montenegro and Niger have acceded to Protocol IV. Australia, Austria, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay have all acceded to Protocol V.

Cuba, Chile, El Salvador, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ireland, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Niger and the Russian Federation have all ratified the amendment to article 1 of 21 December 2001.

That makes a grand total of 35 ratification processes successfully carried out over the last year, a result of which we can all be quite proud.

To complete the picture, I should also mention that I have co-signed a letter with Ambassador Franciscos Verros of Greece, in his capacity as Chairperson of the 2007 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, addressed to all the Convention's States parties. I have also co-signed a second letter with Ambassador Tomáš Husák of the Czech Republic, in his capacity as President of the Eighth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II. In both letters we have expressed our common conviction that each country's active participation in this universalization effort would indeed represent a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international law in the field of disarmament and humanitarian action. We have also invited States to consider taking appropriate supplementary actions that would serve the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention and its Protocols.

A number of important initiatives have been taken by various States and groups of States, such as the European Union, to support implementation of the Plan of Action. A number of States have taken bilateral

initiatives, in particular in the first half of 2007. I particularly note the efforts made by the German Presidency of the European Union.

The European Union has also — just last Friday — officially launched a Joint Action to promote the universality of the Convention on CCW.

All of this is quite naturally expressed through the Sponsorship Programme to assist the least developed States, as well as States affected by explosive remnants of war and mines, to participate in activities related to the Convention and facilitate its national implementation. This Programme, generously supported by a number of States, is now being put into practice under the able coordinatorship of Ambassador Edvardas Borisovas of Lithuania, an old friend.

The first group of States eligible for sponsorship have been chosen, and will take part in the upcoming three back-to-back CCW meetings to be held in Geneva in the first week of November.

The Sponsorship Programme is intended to enhance efforts to gain more accessions to the Convention as well as to assist States parties to become better acquainted with the workings of the Convention and the challenges facing its implementation.

Before ending, I would like to suggest to those who represent States parties to the Convention that during the next States parties meeting, in November, they express the wish that the universalization efforts be continued and task my successor as President to report to the First Committee on the results achieved in 2008. For multilateral diplomacy is not about our scoring goals against each other; it is about digging tirelessly the furrows in which we seed the hopes of a world that is more just, and therefore more peaceful and more secure.

Mr. Obisakin (Nigeria): I wish to present three draft resolutions on behalf of the African Group and then make a brief statement on behalf of Nigeria.

The first African draft resolution, A/C.1/62/L.24, concerns the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and comes under agenda item 99(c). The second, A/C.1/62/L.26, concerns the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and the third, A/C.1/62/L.25, concerns the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes.

The Secretary-General has stated that one of the key roles of the United Nations is to support Africa's institutions and its capacity for conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

We are aware that a draft resolution similar to draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24 was adopted three years ago, but we discovered that the African Regional Centre has been seriously handicapped by lack of funds. Therefore, a Consultative Mechanism was opened to all interested States — in particular, African States — for its reorganization, and the Mechanism has concluded its sittings.

By the draft resolution, the General Assembly essentially would endorse the recommendations of the Consultative Mechanism on the Centre's future work programme, as well as on its staffing and funding; invite the Regional Centre, taking into account the availability of financial resources, to focus its actions on the priorities identified in the recommendations of the Consultative Mechanism; recommend that three posts — one Professional at the P-3 level and two General Service (Other level) — be established and added to the structure of the Centre and funded from the regular budget, as recommended by the Consultative Mechanism; recommend that the operating costs of the Centre be funded from the regular budget; and urge all States, as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions in order to strengthen the programmes and activities of the Regional Centre and facilitate their implementation.

The General Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to continue to provide the necessary support to the Regional Centre for better achievements and results, and to facilitate close cooperation between the Regional Centre and the African Union, in particular in the areas of peace, security and development, and to continue to provide assistance towards stabilizing the financial situation of the Centre. It would further request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at the sixty-third session on the implementation of the resolution, and decide to include in the provisional agenda of the sixty-third session the item entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa". A new element is the conclusion of the work of The Mechanism.

The draft resolution is presented on behalf of Africa. We appeal on behalf of Africa that the draft resolution be adopted.

The second draft resolution, A/C.1/62/L.26, concerns the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, was signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996. The Cairo Declaration, also adopted on that occasion, emphasized that nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension, such as the Middle East, enhance global and regional peace and security. The signing of the Treaty was an important contribution by the African countries to the maintenance of international peace and security. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East, will enhance African security and the viability of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would call upon African States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty as soon as possible, so that it may enter into force without delay. Furthermore, while expressing appreciation to the nuclear-weapon States that have signed the Protocols that concern them, the Assembly would call upon those States that have not yet ratified them to do so as soon as possible. It would also urge those States contemplated in Protocol III to the Treaty that have not yet done so to take all necessary measures to ensure the speedy application of the Treaty to territories for which they are internationally responsible and that lie within the limits of the geographical zone established in the Treaty. The Assembly would also call upon the African States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that have not yet done so to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency pursuant to the Treaty.

The draft resolution is basically the same as the resolution adopted at the previous session. Such draft resolutions have always been adopted without a vote by the First Committee and the General Assembly. We would appreciate its being given similar consideration at the current session.

The third draft resolution, A/C.1/62/L.25, concerns the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes. I have the honour to introduce it on behalf of the African Group.

As the process of developing an effective radioactive waste management regime continues, the dumping of radioactive waste still poses serious threats to the security and development of our States. It constitutes a serious health hazard to those who inhabit the areas in which it may be deposited. Its harmful effects on the environment are too well known to require to be rehearsed now.

In 1988 and 1989 the Council of Ministers of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union, adopted a resolution concerning the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in Africa. Since then the international community has recognized the need to address the issue. Our pioneering effort was complemented by States members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), when on 21 September 1990 the IAEA General Conference at its thirty-fourth regular session adopted a resolution establishing a Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would call upon all States to take appropriate measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes that would infringe upon the sovereignty of States, and would take note of the resolution adopted in 1991 by the OAU Council of Ministers on the Bamako Convention.

I assure the First Committee that, with the exception of technical updates relating to the last preambular paragraph, the elements of the draft resolution are the same as those of the resolutions adopted previously.

On behalf of Africa, I appeal to the Committee and the General Assembly to adopt it.

I wish now to make a statement on behalf of Nigeria.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor in this round of the thematic debate, specifically on the conventional weapons cluster.

Earlier, during the general debate, the Nigerian delegation reaffirmed Nigeria's total commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We wish to highlight the question of small arms and light weapons. The threat to peace and stability posed by this category of weapons is enormous; it

represents a danger to mankind. These lethal weapons must definitively be controlled in a systematic way to make the world safe and secure for all, in accordance with the Charter and principles of the United Nations.

The Programme of Action adopted in 2001 at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade In Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a key element in promoting long-term security and thereby sustainable development for the developing world, and for Africa in particular. From this Programme, various countries and regional groups have developed legal frameworks for combating and tracing the menace presented by the illicit trade in or transfer of this category of weapons.

In this regard, it may be recalled that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) placed a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. This was originally signed in 1998 for three years and was renewed in 2001 for another three years. The Moratorium led to the establishment of focal points or national commissions in 13 of the 15 member States of ECOWAS, as recommended by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Heads of State in 1999 for the implementation of the Moratorium itself.

ECOWAS further demonstrated its unflinching commitment to the control of this category of weapons when, on 14 June 2006, in Abuja, Nigeria, the leaders signed the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. Nigeria has commenced domestication of this Convention.

Nigeria firmly believes that an arms trade treaty will not only help in tracing the movement of small arms and light weapons, but will go a very long way in combating their illicit use and trade. In the light of this, Nigeria welcomes the General Assembly's adoption in 2005 of the International Instrument on marking small arms and light weapons and tracing the movement of illicit small arms and light weapons. We believe it represents a credible step towards establishing international standards on the transfer of these arms and weapons as well as control of their illicit brokering.

We therefore warmly welcome the ongoing arrangement in the United Nations with a view to fashioning legal instruments at the multilateral level

that will effectively curb the serious threat posed by uncontrolled movement of these weapons of destruction. Nigeria hereby calls on all Member States to give their unalloyed support and commitment to an arms trade treaty.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): For Switzerland, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects remains a key instrument, as it will be for years to come, in combating this scourge.

Therefore, Switzerland supports the follow-up process at the global level and is pleased that a biennial meeting is to be held in 2008. We regard the two-year cycle established in the Programme of Action and in the International Instrument to improve the identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons as being appropriate and necessary.

The Instrument on marking and tracing was adopted at the end of 2005 by the General Assembly. The challenge today is to ensure the full implementation of this new Instrument. Switzerland will continue to work to this end, and encourages all Members of the United Nations to do likewise. Moreover, at next year's Biennial Meeting States will report on measures taken along these lines.

The informal working meeting organized by Canada and supported by Switzerland, held in Geneva in August, on principles for the control of transfers is an appropriate forum for us to make headway in our thinking about certain topics. The exchange of experience between the various actors — State, non-governmental and regional organizations — allows us to come up with specific proposals.

The next Biennial Meeting will be short but important. It requires planning and preparation, starting with the appointment as soon as possible of a chairperson and the choice of a limited number of priority subjects, such as the control of transfers, as well as brokering and marking and tracing.

Switzerland fully supports the arms trade treaty process, which is very important. We welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts, which is to start its work next February. Switzerland, as a participant, will strive to ensure that its work leads to substantial, tangible results.

My country is also committed to fostering better understanding and awareness of the negative impact of armed violence on development. In particular, it is important that the consensus expressed during the 2005 World Summit, following up the Millennium Summit, on the links between security, peace, human rights and development be reflected in our common effort at the international level. That is why in 2006 my country launched a new initiative to raise awareness among Governments of the importance of better integrating into development programmes issues of preventing and reducing armed violence.

Since the adoption at a ministerial summit in June 2006 in Geneva of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, Switzerland has been coordinating a small group of States working to ensure that all the signatories implement their commitments. The Geneva Declaration contains a series of measures that aim to reduce the harmful impact of armed violence on social and economic development and on human development. Some 50 States have signed it.

The States that are members of this small group are trying to make known and have adopted by the largest possible number of States the commitments in the Geneva Declaration. Regional meetings to take place in various parts of the world over the coming months should allow a regional colour to be given to those commitments.

We are also active in researching and developing knowledge on links between armed violence and development. In particular, we are endeavouring to tackle the problem of measuring armed violence and developing indicators. The work also focuses on the integration of the topic of armed violence in programming, at the level of donor countries as well as recipients.

I take the opportunity of this debate on conventional weapons to restate the importance Switzerland attaches to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, adopted in Geneva in October 1980, as well as the Protocols appended to it over time. Not quite a year ago, during the Third Review Conference of States parties, Protocol V, on Explosive Remnants of War, entered into force. My country welcomes this decisive step. In order to ensure that the Protocol has the desired impact for civilian populations affected by the scourge of explosive remnants of war, the first conference of States parties, in which my

country will participate, should decide upon measures essential for its implementation.

The ban on cluster weapons that cause unacceptable damage to civilian populations has been, and continues to be, fundamental for achieving the objective that Switzerland has set itself. Switzerland will work to ensure that the new legal provisions are effective on the ground and accepted globally.

At the next Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, to be held in Geneva, Switzerland will call for a negotiating mandate that is ambitious in both substance and time frame.

In adhering to the Oslo Declaration, Switzerland has also committed itself to the Oslo Process. The impetus that has transformed that process into an international movement in favour of the prohibition of certain cluster munitions should be supported and encouraged.

Mr. Kahiluoto (Finland): Speaking for Finland for the first time, I will be very brief.

The Presidency of the European Union has delivered a statement to which I fully subscribe.

Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee and assure you of the full and active support of this delegation.

Finland considers it of the utmost importance that the 2008 Biennial Meeting on small arms succeed in moving forward the practical implementation of the Programme of Action and in rebuilding the consensual nature of the small arms process. Practical implementation builds consensus; consensus moves forward practical implementation. Both maintain momentum for the small arms and light weapons process.

The Biennial Meeting should be prepared with an overall view on assistance, cooperation and capacity-building, but also with specific time allotted for marking and tracing, brokering, stockpile management and transfer issues. It could also look at, or even experiment with, new work methods, such as peer reviews on Programme of Action implementation.

The Biennial Meeting should also devote time to further development of the reporting of Programme of Action implementation and assistance needs, and on

the follow-up of the small arms and light weapons process.

I shall now address brokering. The report of the Group of Governmental Experts on brokering of small arms and light weapons (A/62/163) shies away from a specific recommendation on work for an international legal instrument on illicit small arms and light weapons brokering. That said, the report, with its good definition of small arms and light weapons brokering and associated activities, and the very broad descriptions of legislative and other measures taken by Member States and international organizations, serves as a benchmark for Member States willing to develop their legislation in this important field of implementing the Programme of Action.

In our opinion, the report of the Group of Governmental Experts will also be for the near future a

useful and composite basis for reporting to the United Nations on brokering-related activities in Member States.

Finland was proud to contribute as a member of the Group of Governmental Experts, and we are interested in continuing work on how to implement its recommendations.

Finland strongly supports further work and steps towards negotiations at the United Nations on an arms trade treaty. The treaty is in our opinion one of the core issues at the nexus of development, human rights and security. We assess it as both desirable and doable, and look forward to the Group of Governmental Experts on the treaty reporting to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session next year.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.