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Sixty-second session

First Committee

8th meeting

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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 88 through 105 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We will start immediately, in the hopes that we will be able to reach the end of the speakers list as soon as possible and turn to the second phase of our work.

Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairperson of this Committee, a compliment that I also extend to the other members of the Bureau. Furthermore, my delegation joins others in congratulating Mr. Sergio Duarte for his appointment as High Representative for Disarmament, and commends him for his inspiring remarks addressed to the Committee in the opening ceremony on Monday, 8 October 2007. Zambia fully associates itself with the statements by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group respectively.

There is no doubt that the existence of weapons of mass destruction poses the greatest danger to the survival of humanity. Our commitment to the achievement of general and complete disarmament, within the framework of the United Nations, is therefore a commitment to the preservation of life.

That is why Zambia fully supports resolution 61/62, which calls upon all Member States to renew

and fulfil their individual and collective commitments to multilateral cooperation as an important means of pursuing and achieving common objectives in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. As called for in that resolution, States parties to the relevant instruments on weapons of mass destruction should consult and cooperate among themselves in resolving their concerns with regard to non-compliance, in accordance with the procedures defined in those instruments.

This Committee is meeting at a challenging time, when the catalogue of unaccomplished tasks in our efforts to achieve complete and general disarmament is very long. It is clear that urgent steps need to be taken to achieve the goals we set for ourselves. The concern of my delegation is not so much that we have not concluded effective international instruments to bring about general and complete disarmament. Apart from such landmark instruments as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and others, the General Assembly passes numerous resolutions every year on various aspects of disarmament.

In our case, the saying that “the devil is in the details” does not hold true. Our devil clearly lies in non-implementation and non-compliance. Take the Non-Proliferation Treaty for instance. Four decades

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ago, when it was signed, there were only five nuclear-weapon States. Today, the nuclear club is larger, and many countries are on the threshold of joining. Whereas four decades ago the two nuclear blocs held each other in check with regard to the use of nuclear weapons through what they called “mutually assured destruction”, today no one knows who might ignite a nuclear conflagration or where it might be ignited, because those weapons are so widely available.

The world of four decades ago was not safe, living as we did under the threat of a confrontation between the two nuclear blocs. But it was a world where we knew who had nuclear weapons, and we could hold the States responsible for the use or misuse of those weapons. Back then, only States had nuclear weapons. Today, faceless, nameless non-State actors are in possession of these weapons of mass destruction, largely because of non-compliance and non-implementation of the commitments that States undertook under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, while they are small in nature, uncontrolled access to them by non-State actors is a serious threat to the stability of nations. My delegation therefore urges the international community to implement the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2001.

We believe that some of those issues can best be addressed within the framework of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which will take stock of the state of world peace and security. We therefore strongly call for the convening of the special session as a matter of urgency.

I note that most of those who have been calling for the convening of the special session are non-nuclear weapon States, small States, such as my own country. The impression might be created that we are calling for the special session on disarmament because we have, after all, nothing to lose, or perhaps that we are calling for disarmament because we fear that, if it came to a confrontation with our nuclear weapon brethren, we would be defeated. Nothing can be further from the truth. We call for the special session and for the proscription of weapons of mass destruction because all of us, both the haves and the have-nots, are threatened by those weapons. In the event of the use of those weapons, there would be no survivors.

Sometimes we just wish that our brothers and sisters, the big and powerful countries, would stop and listen to the voices of the small, to the voices of wisdom. There is a saying in my language that, more often than not, wisdom moves from an anthill into the mountain. It was that wisdom that made us sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and forgo the option of acquiring nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction; it was not because we are incapable of acquiring them.

Ms. Majali (Jordan): I shall begin, Mr. Chairperson, by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and theirs and by assuring you of my delegation's support and cooperation. I would also like to extend my delegation's sincere appreciation to your predecessor for having successfully conducted our work during the sixty-first session, and we hope that it will not take another 61 years before another woman is re-elected as Chairperson.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to welcome the High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament and wish him success in his efforts as he, along with his team at the newly restructured Office for Disarmament Affairs, sets off to realize the Secretary-General's intent to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and give it the attention it warrants.

My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This year, we have seen positive movement in our work in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, demonstrating a will and a readiness on the part of Member States to do their best to break the deadlock in that area. The repeated disappointments have perhaps pushed delegations to try a bit harder, and deliberations were, as a result, conducted in a more constructive manner. It is hoped that we will build on that positive momentum as we seek to advance our agenda.

Once again, the Conference on Disarmament was able to conduct substantive discussions. We hope that similar positive developments will lead to agreement on a programme of work and to the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The Commission on Disarmament also continued on the right track in its second substantive session. It

was unfortunate that, for the second time, the Commission was only able to come up with procedural reports on the work of its subsidiary bodies. Next year, however, it is hoped that efforts will focus on adopting a substantial outcome and recommendations on the two agenda items that are currently under discussion.

The Open-ended Working Group on a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament concluded its three sessions and provided an opportunity to stress the need to work towards the convening of that important session, which we hope will materialize in the near future. More important is the fact that, despite the non-entry into force of multilaterally negotiated disarmament treaties, it was still possible for State parties to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to reiterate the need to comply with obligations under the Convention, as well as call for greater universality of the Convention. It is hoped that the April 2008 meeting will also enhance our undertakings in this regard.

The sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which was convened in December 2006, also successfully conducted its work, and Jordan welcomes the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit. All of these developments are welcome.

As the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs correctly pointed out at the Committee's 2nd meeting, today,

“as in the past, many of the world's deepest sources of insecurities arise from the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction ... since the very existence of nuclear, biological and chemical arms entails threats or risk of use”.

Jordan, like others, has realized this fact. As a party to all main disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, it has chosen for its part to comply with its obligations under those instruments and to work to promote them. From this stand, Jordan stresses the need to work on strengthening the implementation of all instruments on weapons of mass destruction and their universalization and calls upon States that have not signed or acceded to them to do so as soon as possible.

Jordan welcomes the agreement on the agenda for the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to

the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was concluded in the first Preparatory Committee meeting held in Vienna. It hopes that the remaining meetings will also yield fruitful outcomes. Needless to say, any future success in our endeavours will entail that we build on the outcome of previous Review Conferences, particularly those held in 1995 and 2000 and honour our obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones remains vital for maintaining the international non-proliferation regime and for consolidating international peace and security. This is especially true in the Middle East region, as has been acknowledged by the international community through the numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the NPT review conference outcomes on the issue and more recently, once again, by the Secretary-General in his report to this Committee on the establishment of such a zone (A/62/95). That is why in this respect Jordan reiterates its position, namely, that Israel should accede to the NPT and that it should implement International Atomic Energy Agency safety measures on its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities.

While the best way to prevent terrorists and non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction would be through their total elimination and destruction, the adoption and recent extension of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) has nevertheless made it possible to start addressing the threat posed by such a possibility. Complete and effective implementation of that resolution, as everyone is aware, requires constant cooperation and coordination among Member States, including through the exchange of information and by providing technical support.

In September, my country had the honour to host the first regional workshop for Arab States on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). This provided an opportunity for experts in the region to interact with experts from the Committee and from other relevant international offices and agencies on this important issue.

In this regard, my delegation would like to express my Government's great appreciation and gratitude to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her team, the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations in New York, the

Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), and all other partners and donors, in particular, the European Union, Norway and the United States of America, which have contributed towards preparations for the workshop and to its success.

The 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms represented, if nothing else, an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to that Programme as the necessary framework for our collective response at the national, regional and global levels. Next year's Biennial Meeting will hopefully provide another opportunity to examine our progress in the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action.

As part of its humanitarian efforts to ban landmines, the international community must complement the steady progress in the implementation of the Ottawa Convention through the mobilization of more resources and the provision of assistance to mine-clearance operations and the rehabilitation of victims, including their social and economic reintegration. Such efforts may be needed to help Member States to live up to their obligations under the Convention. Equally important is for States that have not yet done so to become party to this Convention.

In November, Jordan will have the honour to host the eighth Meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention. States Parties will meet once more to reaffirm their commitments and to discuss their experiences and the challenges they have encountered in implementing their obligations. It is hoped that the Conference will provide an opportunity for mine-affected countries to voice their concerns, needs and undertakings and that the Dead Sea Progress Report will bring States Parties and their partners closer to full implementation of the Convention, thus allowing us to move closer to a mine-free world.

As a State Party to the Ottawa Convention, Jordan has taken effective steps to comply with the Convention's provisions. Having completely destroyed all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines in 2003, Jordan hopes that it will be able to satisfy its treaty obligations by May 2009, without having to ask for an extension.

Jordan attaches great importance to the attainment of the universality of the Convention and welcomes the accession of the four new States. Jordan also considers that the accession of both Kuwait and

Iraq is of particular importance and hopes that it will serve as further impetus for other States in our region to follow suit. This session, Jordan, as President-designate of the coming Review Conference will join the current Australian President of the Meeting of States parties as well as the preceding President from Croatia in tabling, as a troika, the annual draft resolution on the Convention.

Finally, the First Committee provides us with a vital forum to pursue our deliberations on how best to address challenges and concerns in the area of international peace and security with regard to disarmament, non-proliferation and the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms. Therefore, my delegation can only be in total agreement on the need to ensure that the Committee fulfils its role, and it will do all that it can in this regard. It therefore reiterates its full support of your efforts, and hopes that our work will be concluded successfully.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): Mr. Chairperson, my delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chairperson of the Committee and assures you and the entire Bureau of its cooperation. It is a special pleasure to welcome Ambassador Sergio Duarte at the helm of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. His vast experience in the disarmament field augurs well for the fulfilment of his new responsibilities, at a time when the Secretary-General, with the support of the General Assembly, seeks to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation agendas.

A notable event this year was the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As the use of nuclear power expands in various parts of the world, the IAEA becomes all the more important. It needs and deserves stronger support from the international community. The Holy See, a founding member of the Agency, continues to fully support its goals and is convinced that the IAEA plays a key role in fostering the non-proliferation of nuclear arms, progressive nuclear disarmament and the use of peaceful and safe nuclear technology for development in a manner that is respectful of the environment and mindful of the most disadvantaged populations.

Especially at this tense moment in international relations, the world needs to be able to place confidence in the finding of the IAEA that no State

party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is abusing its legitimate right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful uses in order to produce nuclear weapons. All the tools of diplomacy must be used to defuse crises related to attempts by some countries to acquire nuclear-weapon capabilities and to dissuade others from ever taking such a dangerous road. Belligerence by anyone would only worsen a delicate situation and could inadvertently lead to a conflagration, with immense additional suffering for a humanity already overburdened with the ravages of war.

On the other hand, the continued failure to bring to a successful conclusion negotiations leading to the progressive elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as plans to modernize existing nuclear arsenals, jeopardize the viability of the Treaty. The nuclear-weapon States have a particular responsibility to lead the way to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation can either mutually reinforce or mutually weaken each other. Both are imperatives for full implementation of the NPT's provisions; there cannot be one without the other.

Preparations for the 2010 NPT Review Conference have begun. In spite of a disappointing 2005 Review Conference, we should not lose sight of the great accomplishment of the 2000 Review Conference, whose Final Document continues to represent legally and politically binding guidelines for full implementation of the NPT. At a delicate time such as this, we appeal to all parties to show the good faith called for by the NPT, in order to advance negotiations. We also appeal to both the political authorities and civil society to reject nuclear weapons.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the launching of negotiations for a verifiable ban on the production of fissile materials are long overdue. Those two steps would show a waiting world that all Governments are sincere in trying to stop a new nuclear arms race. It is not so much technical deficiency holding us back as it is a lack of political will. Here, recognition of the values of morality would play an instrumental role in bringing about political will. The Holy See has said many times in this Committee that nuclear weapons contravene every aspect of humanitarian law. They are an affront to our stewardship of the environment inasmuch as they can destroy life on the planet and the

planet itself. They must be done away with. By holding resolutely to those convictions, the Holy See hopes to awaken in the hearts of all people of good faith a renewed determination to ensure that the horrors of nuclear war will never again be visited upon humanity.

Moreover, the danger of a nuclear device falling into the hands of terrorists is real and present. Thus the Holy See welcomed the recommendation of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission that the General Assembly convene a world summit on disarmament, non-proliferation and terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction, and favours its being held in 2009. The time to prepare for such a historic summit is now.

This Committee is called to work hard to address not only the nuclear danger, but also other issues, such as conventional disarmament, the arms trade and chemical and biological weapons. Its work in those areas has our fullest support.

My delegation expects this Committee to take further steps on arms control in the field of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. My delegation shares the grave concern of conflict-ridden countries, whose experience tells us that the illicit trade in arms, their accumulation and their illicit production are a hindrance to the peaceful settlement of disputes. They push tensions into armed conflicts and are a key factor in prolonging them, thus severely compromising peace and development. Moreover, these weapons play a role in almost every conflict and are often used in violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law. It was in that spirit that, last year, the Holy See supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/89, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms". It is hoped that that objective will gain greater momentum in the coming years.

Finally, armed conflicts have offered irrefutable evidence of the humanitarian disasters caused by cluster munitions, especially among the civilian population, thus violating international humanitarian law. The Holy See continues to emphasize the urgency of beginning negotiations, preferably within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, for a legally binding instrument on cluster munitions and, in the meantime, for a moratorium on their production, distribution and use.

The Committee must muster all its resources of strength and will in order to exercise leadership in overcoming daunting challenges. We must be inspired by the values of responsibility, solidarity and dialogue so as to illuminate the way forward.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Permit me, on behalf of the Uganda delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to the high office of Chairman of the First Committee at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. We remain confident that you will bring your rich diplomatic experience to bear in steering the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion. We also congratulate all other members of the Bureau on their respective elections. Our hearty congratulations go also to Ambassador Sergio Duarte on his recent appointment as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Uganda would like to associate itself with the sentiments expressed last week by the representatives of Indonesia, at the 2nd meeting, and Nigeria, at the 5th meeting, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively. We reaffirm our sincere belief in the promotion of international peace and stability on the basis of the unequivocal principle of undiminished security for States. Accordingly, Uganda remains strongly committed to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under the auspices of international management and control, with a view to pursuing the goals of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in all its aspects.

We believe that multilateralism in the disarmament agenda is the only viable road map towards a peaceful and secure future, free of nuclear weapons. The fundamental pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — should be given equal and balanced treatment.

Uganda welcomes the strides made in preparations for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We are confident that it will be possible to build on the outcome of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, held in Vienna in May this year. That is especially so because the relationship between disarmament and development cannot be ignored; indeed, the reason for their linkage remains quite vivid.

While we welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Illicit Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons, we reaffirm Uganda's support for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, especially now that we have ably dealt with the banditry of the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda and the banditry of the so-called Allied Democratic Forces in the western part of our country. In that vein, we will continue to play a leading role among the countries of Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa that are signatories to the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

Uganda, being a country that has painfully endured the effects of internal strife over the years, believes it is only prudent to make a loud call to the international community and donors to devise appropriate mechanisms, within the framework of international law, for meeting their part of the bargain. We are optimistic that positive results will come much sooner rather than later in order to save the world from yet another tragedy.

Mr. Hijazi (Palestine): At the outset, allow me to convey my delegation's congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and your country, Senegal, upon your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We extend our best wishes to the Bureau as well and express our confidence that under your able stewardship the Committee will successfully conclude its important work. My delegation wishes also to express its appreciation to Mrs. Mona Juul for her commitment and hard work during the past session.

I also wish to state that Palestine aligns itself with the important statement made by Indonesia at the 2nd meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the interest of time, I will make my comments brief and limit them to a few important issues that we believe deserve the attention of the First Committee.

Palestine affirms that any serious international effort on disarmament must be directly related to the relevant international law instruments, including international humanitarian law, as this discussion and international efforts must be kept in context — the only acceptable context — which is the standing legal obligation of Member States to respect and abide by

international law. The irresponsible transfer of arms to States that are proven to act with utter disdain towards international law and to gravely violate the rights of other peoples must be at the heart of this Committee's attention, as the continued arming of such rogue States is tantamount to an assault on the violated peoples' rights and lives and exposes any statements professing respect for international law as a sham. A clearer and more decisive action, including an all-out ban, by the international community against such transfers is required.

In that regard, we believe that all Member States have a duty to avoid transferring arms and aiding States that seriously violate international humanitarian law, including grave breaches identified in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. That is particularly relevant to occupying Powers who do not respect their obligations towards international law and use excessive force against the civilian population.

Combating and preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is another important goal that the international community needs to address. Palestine believes that the issue of human suffering, whether caused by weapons of regular or irregular forces, also deserves our attention and commitment, since the suffering caused by either is real and usually devastating. In that regard, allow me to remind this assembly that small arms and light weapons are just as devastating when used by a regular army against a civilian population and in contravention of international law, specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We must also point out that official State arming and protection of militias — such as the Israeli settlers unlawfully transferred to occupied land, committing aggressions that terrorize and harm the civilian population — must be addressed, as those militias own small arms that are State-sanctioned and funded. In turn, those weapons only feed the conflict and perpetuate the occupation. Thus, we believe that Member States should afford due attention to that issue.

The proliferation of nuclear and non-conventional weapons is a threat to world security. Hence, it is imperative for the international community to ensure that the Middle East stays free of those weapons of mass destruction. However, that effort must be comprehensive, rather than selective. For what adds to

that existential threat is the turning of a blind eye by some world Powers towards States that have spent decades stockpiling and developing non-conventional and nuclear weapons while refusing to submit to international inspection. It is illogical and counterproductive to exert such extraordinary efforts to single out and pursue a Member State on the basis of suspicion and to prevent non-nuclear-weapon States from pursuing their inalienable right to peaceful nuclear activity while another, neighbouring and hostile Member State that openly admits to possessing and producing these unconventional weapons remains immune from so much as inspection or oversight.

Unfortunately, a nuclear-weapon-free zone has yet to be established in the Middle East, and Israel remains the only non-signatory in the Middle East to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Israel, the occupying Power, is a State proven to act with utter disdain towards international law and to violate the rights of other peoples. Therefore, the occupying Power, which has been repeatedly immune from international accountability for its repeated infringements upon other States' sovereignty and territory, must not be allowed to violate the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Instead, it must be pressured and called on to accede to the Treaty without delay in order to realize the universalization of the Treaty in the Middle East. Such a step would not only contribute to solidifying hopes for peace in the region, it would be an indispensable condition for stability and peace in the region for generations to come.

In that regard, we believe it is vital to push for the implementation of the outcome of the 1995 Review Conference on the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, together with the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament adopted in 2000.

Finally, we believe it is of crucial importance to review the real and devastating implications of key issues such as foreign occupation, underdevelopment and poverty for disarmament around the world. They induce violence, radicalism and hopelessness, which are key ingredients in raging conflicts across the world. The social and economic conditions produced by occupation, underdevelopment and abject poverty are also fertile ground for a host of illicit trades, which this Committee must address comprehensively and responsibly.

Such treatment must no doubt consider the undeniable fact that deadly conflicts and illicit arms trade will continue unless we treat the root causes of conflicts and combat comprehensively the efforts of some States to fuel conflicts in exchange for economic profit from illicit or illegal arms funding, hence ensuring the perpetuation of violent conflict and immeasurable suffering of the peoples affected. Treating the symptoms rather than the causes will undoubtedly prove a deadly failure.

The millions of defenceless civilians suffering the scourges of war and ground down by imposed poverty and deprivation have their hopes and dreams attached to the responsible consideration of our Committee. It is our legal duty and obligation not to let them down any longer and to give them hope that their children can enjoy a life free from the unnecessary and senseless suffering and death they have had to endure.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the Deputy Head of delegation and Legal Counsel of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ms. Pellandini (International Committee of the Red Cross) (*spoke in French*): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appreciates this opportunity to speak before the First Committee.

(*spoke in English*)

This year's 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 is an appropriate time to take stock of an important trend in the field of international humanitarian law regulating weapons. Despite the difficulty of agreeing on new measures in other arms-related fields during this period, States have banned anti-personnel landmines, adopted a Protocol assigning responsibilities for explosive remnants of war, and are now well on the way to developing new norms to address the tremendous suffering that cluster munitions cause to civilians. The manner in which those new international rules have been developed certainly varies from case to case. However, there is a strong common thread — the public conviction that weapons are unacceptable when they go on killing and maiming after the fighting has ended.

As a humanitarian organization, the ICRC welcomes that development, which is an outgrowth of

the efforts to ban anti-personnel landmines over a decade ago. We urge all States that have not yet done so to become part of this historic trend by adhering to the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines and the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War and by participating in efforts to end the suffering caused by cluster munitions.

The Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, also known as the Ottawa Convention, has already proven to be an effective tool for reducing the numbers of landmine casualties in countries implementing its comprehensive provisions. Its combination of commitments to non-use, stockpile destruction, clearance and victim assistance, and its model of cooperation between States, international organizations and civil society should serve as inspiration for efforts to ensure that the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War also has the desired effects on the ground.

As was highlighted by the representative of Jordan, in November 2007 the States parties to the Ottawa Convention will meet for the first time in the Middle East, at the Dead Sea in Jordan. The ICRC has used this opportunity to host conferences in recent months for the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council and of the Maghreb, which highlighted the problems of mines and explosive remnants of war in the region and promoted the international norms which address those problems.

The Dead Sea meeting comes at a crucial point in the life of the Convention. Increased efforts are needed by affected countries and those in a position to help to ensure that the mine-clearance deadlines beginning in 2009 are met, that any extensions are for the shortest possible period, and that those extensions are based on viable plans for completing clearance of mined areas within the period requested.

The first meeting of States party to the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, to be held in November 2007 in Geneva, will serve as an indication of how effective that instrument will be in addressing the massive problem of existing explosive remnants of war and in attracting affected States to 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 (CCW) as a whole. It is important for that meeting to produce clear guidelines on how all States parties

should proceed with the recording, retention and transmission of information required by the Protocol, and for it to establish an operational framework for addressing the massive problem of existing explosive remnants of war.

Turning to cluster munitions, it is encouraging that the long-standing problem of their effects on civilians is now the subject of concerted international action. The ICRC welcomes the fact that virtually all major States which have produced, used and exported cluster munitions now recognize their human costs and agree that those problems must now be addressed. We urge States to commit themselves to developing a new international treaty that will prohibit inaccurate and unreliable cluster munitions and ensure that existing stocks are destroyed. The treaty should also provide for the clearance of existing cluster-munition contamination and for assisting victims of conflicts in which they have been used. The forthcoming meetings of CCW States parties in Geneva and of those that have already committed themselves to urgent action under the Oslo declaration on cluster munitions will be decisive in developing an adequate international response.

The impact of cluster munitions on the civilian population has been well known and well documented since they were first used six decades ago. The implications of the continued proliferation and eventual use of the billions of ageing submunitions in current cluster-munition stockpiles are alarming. Now is the time to finally address that problem by adopting legally binding rules. Until such time as they enter into force, we urge States to refrain from using, producing or transferring inaccurate and unreliable cluster munitions.

While significant progress is being made in the aforementioned fields, the easy availability of small arms and light weapons continues to have a devastating impact on civilians in conflict and post-conflict societies throughout the world. When the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent convenes in Geneva in November, the States parties to the Geneva Conventions will be reminded of the commitments they made four years ago to strengthen controls on the availability of weapons and to make respect for international humanitarian law by recipients a key criterion for arms-transfer decisions.

The International Committee of the Red Cross considers the work of the United Nations Group of

Governmental Experts on arms brokering and the planned expert group on a future arms trade treaty to be central to preventing easy access to weapons by those who will use them to violate international humanitarian law. We urge all States to implement the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on arms brokering while continuing to pursue the development of a new legally binding instrument on the subject that will ensure the effectiveness and consistency of national measures. We also call on States to pursue, with urgency and determination, the drawing up of an arms trade treaty.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker inscribed on the list of speakers in the general debate on all agenda items related to disarmament and international security.

We have thus come to the end of the general debate, during the course of which we have heard 87 statements made by delegations of States members, seven on behalf of regional groups or political groupings, and three by observers. All those statements from the various delegations, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Chairman covered the different issues on the First Committee's agenda: nuclear disarmament, nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, and all disarmament measures, including confidence-building measures. Various statements also referred to matters of international security.

To sum up the situation, we all expressed our concerns. We want to press ahead with our demands so that we can determine where we are now and then be in a position to prepare draft resolutions and decisions that take into account the analysis that we have drawn up. Draft resolutions will, of course, be prepared and negotiated, and if possible, we will get all delegations participating in our work to accept them, in order to improve their chances of being adopted by consensus. Of course, consensus is not mandatory, but what would be the value of our draft resolutions then, were we to adopt them by a vote, which would in a way mean that we failed because it would suggest that we were not able to reach agreement? Thus, we would like to see as many of our draft resolutions adopted by consensus as possible. Naturally, we hope that adoption by vote will be the exception.

During this second stage of our work, the thematic debate, which we will be starting soon, we

will have the opportunity to return to all the issues mentioned earlier. At that point we will make analyses and assessments, express our concerns and voice our hopes in order to advance both the cause of disarmament and the cause of international security.

That is what I can say to sum up this first stage of our work, the general debate. Before returning to these matters in greater detail, I would like to thank all delegations that actively participated in the general debate, which unfolded, in a spirit of respect and listening to each other. I think that is what is important — listening to what the other says even if the other's point of view is not shared by all delegations.

We will now move straight into the next stage of our work. Without delay, to save time, I would like to say a few words by way of introduction.

The First Committee is now going to deal with the second stage of its work, namely the thematic debate on the items on the agenda, the presentation and examination of all the draft resolutions that will be submitted under the various agenda items related to disarmament and international security, that is, item 88 to 105 on the agenda of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

As I already explained with regard to the list of speakers for the second stage, delegations are requested to register with the secretariat for the specific thematic module of their choice. The secretariat will draw up a list of speakers for each module.

As participants know, particularly those who already know how the Committee works, this debate requires a certain flexibility, given that it is not always possible to strictly respect the timetable drawn up in working document A/C.1/62/CRP.2. Delegations are therefore requested to register to speak in the context of each thematic module and, above all, to be prepared to make their statements as necessary.

Accordingly, I would like to remind participants that tomorrow morning, as agreed, we will have a dialogue with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, who is present here, and other high officials of the United Nations, including the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, a representative of the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

and the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Tomorrow afternoon we will have a round table on nuclear disarmament. In order to allow us to take full advantage of the time allocated to us, I intend to reserve the remainder of tomorrow's morning and afternoon sessions for thematic statements. I therefore request that participants kindly register on the list of speakers for the theme of nuclear weapons and to be ready to take the floor by Wednesday morning or Wednesday afternoon. I remind participants that the meeting on the morning of Thursday, 18 October, will be devoted to nuclear weapons.

As previously agreed, we shall now immediately start our thematic debate and, together with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, tackle the issue of the follow-up to the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous session and the presentation of reports. As agreed, these discussions will be informal.

Without suspending the meeting, as I promised yesterday, so as to not waste any time, I think we can start right away.

I give the floor to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Duarte (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the First Committee on the subject of the implementation of resolutions. Although this is the first such statement from the new Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA), this is actually the fourth consecutive year that the Secretariat has provided this Committee with an update on that issue.

As long reflected in the work of the First Committee, especially since the adoption of resolution 59/95 on improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee, Member States have repeatedly stated their intention to reduce the annual number of resolutions and made efforts to biennialize and triennialize some of them. Each year, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the implementation of several of those resolutions and to report such views to the General Assembly.

That reporting process serves the constructive purpose of providing some feedback to Member States

on the results of the implementation of their resolutions. In making such reports, Member States signal the priorities they attach to issues and propose solutions to specific problems. Though those resolutions are non-binding, they do contribute to the evolution of international norms across the entire gamut of issues on the agenda of this Committee.

Monitoring the implementation of the resolutions is therefore a very important responsibility. While ODA has not been given any mandate to provide substantive analysis of the resolutions, it is able to provide this Committee with a summary of the implementation of last year's resolutions, based largely on information received in reports from Member States.

To illustrate how the resolutions requesting reports based on Member States' inputs have been implemented, the Office has prepared three tables, which have been distributed as attachments to my statement. Table I compares the number of responses received from Member States, including participation of the main sponsors, at the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions, respectively. Table II provides additional details concerning the timeliness of submission and regional distribution of inputs, while also indicating whether the submitted views have been updated. Table III, finally, contains a list of those reports that require substantive input from the Office.

The first conclusion to emerge from those reports is that there is a great discrepancy between the importance that Member States attach to their resolutions and the very low rate of reporting on implementation. That is a pattern that has been repeated for many years.

This year, the Secretariat submitted 29 reports to the General Assembly on disarmament-related issues in response to General Assembly resolutions. Of those, 13 reports contained the views of Member States, which include 12 recurring reports and one new report, which concerns the proposed arms trade treaty. Those Member States that provided their views generally did so within established deadlines. While some of the reports contained updated information, many reflected no change in content over the reports submitted in the previous year.

Of those 13 reports, the report relating to the arms trade treaty, pursuant to resolution 61/89, contained by far the largest number of responses — 96

in all, representing half of the membership of the United Nations. Of the 12 recurring reports, the largest response consisted of the 18 Member States that submitted their views concerning resolution 61/72 on conventional ammunition stockpiles. Though that was the largest response, it still represents only about 9 per cent of all Member States. The smallest response consisted of the two Member States that responded to the triennial resolution on the seabed — resolution 44/116 O — representing the views of only about 1 per cent of United Nations membership.

Compared with reporting in the year before, there were more responses this year in six reports concerning conventional ammunition stockpiles, regional confidence-building measures, conventional arms control, space confidence-building measures, multilateralism and information security. Yet there were also fewer responses in four reports relating to weapons of mass destruction terrorism, the International Court of Justice, the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the seabed. There was no change in the number of replies received concerning the resolutions on environmental norms and the Mediterranean.

Most striking about those numbers is the extraordinarily low response rate to requests for the views of Member States. Last year, all 12 of the recurring reports had fewer than 20 responses; in other words, less than one in 10 Member States submitted its views. Furthermore, seven of those 12 had less than 10 replies, while three had five or fewer replies. Equally noteworthy is the fact that many of the key sponsors of the resolutions creating those reporting requests often do not provide their own views. With respect to three of the 12 recurring resolutions, there was no reporting by any of their key co-sponsors.

In addition to resolutions seeking the views of Member States, there are two additional resolutions that encourage Member States to submit specific types of formatted data relating to the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The numbers of responses are much higher than the single-digit trend set by the other resolutions, with 73 replies received concerning the standardized instrument and 103 replies received concerning the Register. I note, however, that those figures were, respectively, 11 and 13 less than were reported the year before.

ODA is making every effort to encourage and assist Member States regarding the implementation of all resolutions. I would like briefly to survey some of those efforts, both ongoing and anticipated.

This year, ODA has undertaken proactive measures to facilitate Member States' timely submissions of views under current resolutions. For example, in addition to sending out notes verbales at the beginning of the year requesting Member States to submit their views, we have posted reminders of such requests and the deadlines for submission in the United Nations *Journal* and on the relevant websites of ODA.

As and when requested by Member States — and with their consent — ODA has also posted on its website the submissions of Member States, in the original language received, on a selected number of agenda items prior to the issuance of the respective reports on those items as United Nations documents in the six official United Nations languages. Those include, for example, submissions of Member States on an arms trade treaty — resolution 61/89 — and on conventional ammunition stockpiles — resolution 61/72.

In order for the Secretariat to comply with the page-limit requirement for United Nations documents, as well as to facilitate the timely processing of relevant documentation in all official languages, ODA intends to suggest that Member States provide an executive summary of their views in their future submissions. The executive summaries would be included in the reports of the Secretary-General, while the submissions in extenso would be posted on ODA's website, if so requested and agreed by Member States, prior to the issuance of the official United Nations documents.

ODA also intends to propose the introduction of a cut-off date after which no submissions from Member States will be issued as addenda to the main reports, but will instead be posted on ODA's website, if so requested and agreed by Member States. I am sure that delegations will agree that the current practice of issuing addenda well after the First Committee has concluded its work does not serve the intended purpose of facilitating the Committee's deliberations and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of its work.

ODA has also actively supported Member States in the implementation of resolutions, as seen in the great number of activities that we have undertaken since November 2006. ODA has organized, conducted, provided secretarial support to or co-sponsored some

40 events pursuant to specific mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General, created by the General Assembly or in support of ODA's long-standing mandated responsibilities.

These events include meetings of bodies of the United Nations disarmament machinery; meetings related to multilateral disarmament treaties, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; meetings of intergovernmental bodies, including the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa; and, finally, meetings of groups of governmental experts on illicit brokering and the issue of missiles in all its aspects. The ODA has also organized or participated in regional and subregional workshops on issues related to small arms and light weapons, an arms trade treaty, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and other weapons of mass destruction, such as biological weapons.

In addition, the period since November 2006 has seen a further increase in the demand on ODA staff to participate actively in international seminars and workshops organized by intergovernmental regional organizations and individual Governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, academia and civil society, on issues related to the subjects of resolutions. The Office has also actively promoted the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as well as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). ODA considers this increase in demand a demonstration of international interest in its expertise and experience, as well as in its first-hand information about United Nations activities in the field of disarmament. ODA also sees this work as consistent with the Secretary-General's own advocacy of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as with the General Assembly's emphasis on the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education efforts.

Significant progress has been made in making thematic discussions more focused and interactive following the adoption of Assembly resolution 59/95, on improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee. The Assembly encouraged the First Committee to introduce presentations of, and focus discussions on, reports on the work of expert groups, the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, the United Nations Institute for

Disarmament Research and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

This year, additional efforts have been made to commence the discussion under each cluster with a panel of experts. It is expected that that will not only help to increase understanding of the subject matter at hand, but also stimulate a debate among delegations.

In his 2004 statement to this Committee on the implementation of resolutions, one of my predecessors, former Under-Secretary-General Nobuyasu Abe, cautioned that “words are better weighed than counted”. I believe that that is good advice for assessing these various reports. It is somewhat misleading to draw broad conclusions from raw statistics on report compliance rates without exploring the actual content of the reports. In the absence of a mandate to undertake such assessments, however, the

Office for Disarmament Affairs will continue to do all that we can both to encourage Member States to submit their views and to promote full implementation of the resolutions adopted in the Committee.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Duarte for his statement, which very much enlightens us about the work carried out by his Office — work that had been requested by Member States themselves. I am sure that the delegations present here have duly noted all his information.

I now open the floor to delegations wishing to speak. I see none. That being the case, I propose to adjourn the meeting, after reminding all delegations that we have set a deadline for the submission of draft resolutions: tomorrow, Wednesday, 17 October, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.