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Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo (Honduras)

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

Agenda items 81 to 96 (*continued*)

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

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall continue our thematic discussion on nuclear matters that we began two days ago.

I call on the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.30.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): I welcome the opportunity to introduce the New Agenda Coalition's First Committee draft resolution pertaining to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", contained in document A/C.1/63/L.30. In this regard, I take the floor on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition partners, namely, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa.

In the New Agenda Coalition's statement during the general debate of the Committee on 6 October 2008, we stated that the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again. In this regard we emphasize that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is of vital

importance in order to achieve nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as it remains the only international instrument that not only seeks to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons but also contains a legal commitment to eliminate these weapons.

The New Agenda Coalition draft resolution this year specifically focuses on the NPT and explicitly recognizes and seeks to underline the importance of the NPT and its universality to achieve nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It also recalls the three decisions on the strengthening of the review process for the Treaty, the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

The draft resolution seeks to convey a specific message about the importance and need to implement commitments already made on nuclear disarmament, in particular the commitment stemming from the outcomes of the NPT Review Conferences in 1995 and 2000. The New Agenda Coalition partners firmly believe that these outcomes contain a step-by-step process that outlines detailed elements in a balanced way in the areas of both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation that would reduce the threat posed by nuclear weapons, de-emphasize their importance and lead to their elimination.

This year's draft resolution builds on previous New Agenda Coalition resolutions and presents an

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approach that emphasizes compliance with nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation commitments. It also reaffirms that the issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring urgent irreversible progress on both fronts. As such, it reflects the New Agenda Coalition's view that efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons proliferation cannot be sustainable without parallel efforts being made to eliminate nuclear weapons themselves.

The partners of the New Agenda Coalition believe that their draft resolution is drafted in a manner that all States should be able to support, since it seeks to uphold previous commitments arrived at by consensus. We therefore encourage all States to show their commitment to nuclear disarmament by supporting the draft resolution.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): May I congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment and assure you of my delegation's support. The United Kingdom associates itself fully with the statement delivered by France on behalf of the European Union (EU). The United Kingdom is committed to strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with the aim of working towards a safer world without nuclear weapons, our ultimate goal. We stand by our undertaking to accomplish their total elimination. This requires balanced implementation of all three pillars of the NPT and for all parties to live up to the spirit and letter of their respective commitments.

We support the disarmament obligations set out in article VI of the NPT and have an excellent record in meeting these commitments. We are fully committed to the decisions and Final Document of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT, including the relevant disarmament measures. And we are committed to the implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution on the Middle East.

Since the end of the cold war the United Kingdom has made substantial progress towards implementing our disarmament obligations. First, on infrastructure and platforms, we have withdrawn and dismantled our maritime tactical nuclear capability, withdrawn and dismantled the Royal Air Force's WE177 nuclear bomb and terminated the nuclear Lance missile and artillery roles that we undertook with the United States of America under dual-key arrangements. Consequently, the United Kingdom is

the only nuclear-weapon State recognized under the NPT that has reduced its deterrent capability to a single nuclear-weapon system.

Secondly, we have made deep cuts in the size of our nuclear arsenal, retaining only a minimum deterrent. The number of operationally available warheads has recently been cut further to fewer than 160, part of a reduction of the total explosive power of our nuclear forces of more than 75 per cent in the past two decades. The United Kingdom's nuclear weapons account for only a small fraction of the global inventory. We have also significantly reduced the readiness of our remaining weapons. Normally, only one Trident submarine is on deterrent patrol at any one time. That submarine is at several days' "notice to fire". Its missiles are not targeted at any country. United Kingdom nuclear weapons are not on high alert nor are they on "launch at warning" status. We do not believe that the circumstances currently exist for the United Kingdom safely to choose now unilaterally to renounce its nuclear weapons. We have therefore taken the steps necessary to maintain a minimum deterrent beyond the life of the current submarines. However, this does not mean that we have taken an irreversible decision that commits us irrevocably to possessing nuclear weapons in 40 or 50 years' time.

We continue to explore further opportunities to complement the disarmament measures taken to date, where national security and non-proliferation constraints will allow us. Since June 2007 the United Kingdom has undertaken innovative work to address some of the technical challenges posed by disarmament. We have tasked the United Kingdom's Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) with some detailed work on key stages in the verification of the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons, including the authentication of warheads, chain of custody problems in sensitive nuclear weapons facilities and monitored storage of dismantled nuclear weapons. The AWE has also participated in trilateral work with Norway and the verification non-governmental organization, Verification Research, Training and Information Centre, on managed access to sensitive nuclear facilities and the authentication of nuclear warheads.

The United Kingdom was pleased to support a major study published last month by the independent International Institute for Strategic Studies on the conditions required for the abolition of nuclear

weapons. Their report is a thoughtful, detailed and constructive contribution to our debates. We are pleased that the authors came to New York on Tuesday to present their findings in the margins of this Committee.

The United Kingdom is also discussing with our partners among the permanent five members of the Security Council (P-5) plans to host a P-5 conference next year as proposed by our former Defence Secretary, Des Browne, in Geneva earlier this year. Our aim is to build mutual confidence on issues associated with nuclear disarmament, including the technical challenges of verification. The United Kingdom has adopted a transparent approach to disarmament wherever possible. We have produced historical records of our defence holdings of both plutonium and highly enriched uranium. We ceased production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons in 1995. All excess fissile material stocks declared as surplus to defence requirements have been placed under international safeguards and we no longer exercise our right as a nuclear-weapon State to withdraw material from such stocks for use in nuclear weapons. We have not conducted a test nuclear explosion since 1991, and we ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1998.

The United Kingdom welcomes the bilateral agreements, which have greatly reduced the major nuclear arsenals since the end of the cold war and looks forward to further progress. It is clear to us that considerable bilateral progress will have to be made in reducing the large nuclear arsenals, before it will be helpful and useful to include the small fraction of the global stockpile that belongs to the United Kingdom. We welcome the announcement earlier this year that the United States and Russia will work towards a legally binding successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks Treaty and, as they are the countries with the greatest stockpiles of weapons, we continue to encourage them to go even further with their reductions.

In signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty, all States assume a responsibility to create the kind of security environment in which we can achieve a world free from nuclear weapons. That means sending a strong, united message that the international community will not tolerate nuclear proliferation. Let us be clear. Non-proliferation and disarmament are not in competition. The road to a world free from nuclear

weapons certainly does not lie through new nuclear-armed States. It does not lie through the flouting of United Nations Security Council resolutions requiring compliance with nuclear non-proliferation norms, and it does not lie through anything other than the highest standards of nuclear safety and security and the scrupulous implementation of the appropriate safeguards.

There is no alternative. The emergence of a new nuclear-armed State or States would bring back the spectre of a nuclear arms race. It would destabilize the regions concerned and it would put nuclear disarmament back for a generation. It is vital that we work together to strengthen the NPT by responding with vigour to the proliferation challenges and by strengthening the international and regional verification regimes. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must have the tools and authority it needs to detect clandestine nuclear activities and properly address non-compliance cases. The United Kingdom reiterates its call for all IAEA member States that have not yet done so to sign and implement the comprehensive safeguards agreements. We firmly believe that the Additional Protocol is the minimum required standard for the IAEA to uphold confidence that the development of nuclear energy threatens no one's security. Collectively we must do all we can to ensure that nuclear weapons and fissile material cannot fall into the hands of terrorists and criminals.

The United Kingdom, both nationally and through the European Union, makes a major contribution to the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and to the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We warmly welcome the expansion of the Global Partnership announced at the Tokyo Summit and the extended and strengthened mandate of the United Nations 1540 Committee under Security Council resolution 1810 (2008). We will continue to play a leading role in both these key areas. The United Kingdom also restates its commitment to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Proliferation Security Initiative and urges those countries that have not yet done so to join the many States that have already come together to support these initiatives.

There is more that we can all do now to cement an inevitably downward trend in the numbers of weapons in the world. The next step for nuclear

disarmament is a global cap on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and explosive devices. It would mean that for the first time since the nuclear age began more than 60 years ago that there would be a ceiling on the amount of fissile material available for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It is impossible to imagine the ultimate achievement of nuclear disarmament without the establishment of such a ceiling. To this end we continue to press for negotiations to start, without preconditions on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. We call on all members to agree on draft presidential decision CD/1840 so as to allow the Conference to get back to the work it was designed to do. We should also put in place a ban on further explosive testing of nuclear weapons, and we encourage all States that have not yet done so to join and ratify the CTBT.

As we continue to work towards nuclear disarmament the United Kingdom understands and respects the desire of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive multilateral guarantees from nuclear-weapon States that they will not be threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons. In this regard we remain committed to the negative and positive assurances we have given to non-nuclear-weapon States in our letter to the Secretary-General in 1995.

The United Kingdom believes that the best way to achieve the guarantees sought by the non-nuclear-weapon States is through the protocols annexed to treaties creating the nuclear-weapon-free zones. We hope that the Treaty of Pelindaba will, in this respect, come to fruition soon, and we encourage those African States that have not yet done so to ratify it.

We are strongly committed to our nuclear disarmament obligations. We have outlined the substantial progress made to this end and the new areas that we are exploring. It is clear, however, that the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world is something on which all nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike have to work together. We have to agree on the long-term vision. It is the responsibility of all of us to do all we can to make this vision a reality.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Mongolia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.28.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): I will touch briefly upon two issues: cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the promotion of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Like many others my delegation would like to underline the important role that the IAEA is playing as the only internationally recognized competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance of States with the international safeguards regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and enriched by the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. The Director-General of the Agency recently pointed out that the focus of safeguards continues to shift from mechanistic verification of declared nuclear material to an information driven system aimed at understanding and assessing the consistency of information on a State's nuclear programme as a whole.

However, in order for the Agency to fully fulfil its obligations and further strengthen the effectiveness of the safeguards system, it needs the support and cooperation of all its member States, the same States that are represented in this Committee.

Effective nuclear verification requires, as we all know, four basic preconditions: state-of-the-art technology; timely access to all relevant information; sufficient human and financial resources; and adequate legal authority. Though the Agency is working hard to meet those prerequisites my delegation believes that the international community, for its part, also needs to work to strengthen the Agency's legal authority by promoting universalization of the NPT, scrupulous and balanced implementation of its provisions, and making sure that all the parties to the NPT bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency. Parties to the Treaty must conclude additional protocols with the Agency. That would enable the Agency fully to perform its functions as the watchdog. Otherwise, the Agency will not be able to provide full assurances about State activities nor credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities.

With regard to support for nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is generally accepted that as concrete regional measures, nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important role in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Today the entire southern hemisphere is nuclear-weapon free. However, it should be pointed out that

nuclear-weapon-free zones are still in the phase of establishment and consolidation and face considerable challenges. As the United Nations Secretary-General pointed out last August, while two thirds of the world's States are signatories to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, the majority of the world's population still lives in countries that possess nuclear weapons. Moreover, two out of five regional zones are yet to enter into force and a considerable number of the members of zones have yet to bring the required safeguards agreements into force.

On the other hand, nuclear-weapon States need to provide effective guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. Just like the provisions of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, security assurances should, in order to be credible, be legally based, clear and unconditional. In the case of nuclear-weapon-free zones, nuclear-weapon States need either to sign or ratify the protocols to the relevant zone treaties, or modify or withdraw altogether reservations and unilateral interpretations that affect the denuclearized status of the relevant zones.

An important objective is to promote the establishment of new zones where necessary and feasible. The last decade has seen the establishment of only one additional zone — in Central Asia. We agree with the view that the effectiveness of these zones could be greatly promoted by better coordination and cooperation between existing zones and by the prompt entry into force of the African and Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. It is our hope that the second nuclear-weapon-free zone conference, scheduled for 2010, will mark an important step in this regard, as well as in contributing to a productive and successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Following the decision of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone conference held in 2005 in Mexico, Mongolia has established its national focal point to deal with nuclear-weapon-free-zone-related issues. The focal point has already established formal relations with the focal points of other treaty agencies. In order to contribute to the preparations for the second conference, Mongolia has offered to host a meeting of the focal points in spring 2009.

More than three decades have passed since the General Assembly had mandated and considered a

comprehensive study on nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, and almost a decade has passed since the Assembly adopted guidelines for establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation believes that the changing political environment, the need to make progress in consolidating the existing zones and in establishing new zones in some regions, especially in the Middle East and North-East Asia, calls for a new comprehensive independent study on nuclear-weapon-free zones. The study could be asked to evaluate the role that the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones have been playing so far, what role nuclear-weapon-free zones can play separately and jointly in the future in promoting the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, in conflict prevention and confidence-building, and what the challenges are and how they can be addressed.

Mongolia's commitment to the cause of nuclear-weapon-free zones is underlined by the fact that it is working to establish a single-State zone, bearing in mind its exceptional location. Last year my country presented a draft trilateral treaty to its neighbours, which is intended to define and institutionalize that status. The content of the main provisions of that draft is similar to that of the treaties establishing regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, reflecting at the same time Mongolia's unique geographical location and friendly relations with its neighbours. At the margins of this Committee's meetings my delegation held informal consultations with the representatives of its neighbours on how to move further on this issue. My delegation expresses the hope that in due course we would be able to report to this Committee on the outcome of these consultations. Bearing that in mind, my delegation will be introducing a draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/63/L.28, of a procedural nature and expresses the hope that it will be adopted, as similar resolutions have been in the past, by consensus.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.30/Rev.1.

Mr. Larson (United States of America): I take the floor today to underscore the commitment of the United States to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I will also address our commitment to assist other States in the voluntary reduction of the amount of weapons-usable nuclear material they hold. Both these efforts advance the common interest in reducing the risk of

proliferation and the possibility that such material could end up in the hands of non-State actors.

In 2002 President Bush and Russian President Putin signed the Moscow Treaty, which will reduce the number of both countries' operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012. In addition to that Treaty, President Bush directed in 2004 that by 2012 the size of the overall nuclear-weapon stockpile — both reserve and operationally deployed — be reduced nearly 50 per cent from the time he entered office. That goal was met five years early, so he further directed that the stockpile be reduced almost 15 per cent more by 2012. Currently, the stockpile is the smallest it has been since the end of the 1950s and some weapon types, such as the W79 and the W56, have been completely retired. The last nuclear weapon in the current stockpile was produced in 1991.

When weapons are removed from the stockpile, the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration schedules the weapons for dismantlement. United States nuclear-weapon stockpile dismantlements have increased by 20 per cent over last year's level. We continue to dismantle nuclear weapons in a safe and efficient manner, ensuring that they can no longer be used. While the plutonium cores that are removed from the weapons are initially placed in highly secure storage, eventually the excess material will be turned into fuel. We are also removing nuclear-weapon materials from nuclear-weapon sites in the United States. This fiscal year, we placed a total of 12 metric tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium (HEU) on the path to quick and safe disposition. To date, we have eliminated well over 100 metric tons of United States highly enriched uranium.

We continue our cooperation with the Russian Federation to secure nuclear material and down-blend HEU to low-enriched uranium. Jointly we have down-blended 322 metric tons of highly enriched uranium from Soviet-era dismantled nuclear weapons and 10 metric tons of Russian weapons-usable material. That down-blended HEU is sold to United States utilities for power production. The United States continues to work with more than 100 countries to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Since its inception in the 1990s, the fuel removal programme for fuel of United States origin, now part of the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, has returned 45 shipments of United States-origin fuel from 27 countries for a total of more than

1,190 kilograms of highly enriched uranium fuel, enough for more than 45 nuclear weapons and more than 8,500 fuel assemblies. The programme has removed all eligible United States-origin HEU fuel from 16 countries.

The United States remains steadfast in its commitment to reducing its stockpile of nuclear weapons and the amount of nuclear-weapons usable material in the United States and in other countries. Our efforts are a solid contribution to strengthening international security and non-proliferation and to reducing the risk that such dangerous material could end up in the hands of non-State actors. The United States will also continue to be as transparent as possible about its efforts in this area, as shown not only by our intervention today, but also by repeated briefings by United States experts to international organizations and their member States, including the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

With your indulgence, Sir, I should like to yield the remainder of our allotted time to our Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation, Ms. Paula DeSutter, who will introduce our draft resolution.

Ms. DeSutter (United States of America): As the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation, I am pleased to have this opportunity to address this body on the issue of compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments and, on behalf of my country and the sponsors, to offer for this body's consideration a draft resolution on the subject. As some may recall, this body collectively last considered and adopted a resolution on compliance three years ago.

The draft resolution that we and the sponsors are bringing before the Committee this year, contained in document A/C.1/63/L.30/Rev.1, is both a reiteration of the commitment of the membership of this body to compliance and recognition of the strides we have made and the challenges we continue to face. The draft resolution, which is entitled "Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments", seeks, in the first instance, to bring again the issue of compliance to the attention of the international community. Like its predecessor resolution in 2005, it also seeks to

underscore that compliance is critical to international peace and security and to exhort Governments to seek common cause in pursuit of diplomatic means to bring violators back into compliance. This draft resolution, however, goes beyond the 2005 text in that it also seeks to encourage countries to provide assistance, as appropriate, to build national, regional and international capacity for the implementation of verification and compliance obligations.

In looking back over the past three years, I believe that we can all agree that there has been notable progress in both our collective appreciation of the relevance of compliance to peace and security and of the role that each of us can play in ensuring both our own compliance and encouraging the compliance of other States. We seek to move towards consensus on the idea that compliance by States with their non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament treaties, agreements and commitments is critical to international peace, stability and security and is at the very foundation of the international system. This is reflected in, for example, the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency and the decisions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It is also reflected in the discussions of compliance, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and withdrawal that took place at the 2007 and 2008 preparatory conferences for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. And it is reflected in the consensus report of the 16-nation United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification.

But awareness of the importance of compliance, while essential, is but one necessary step. The next is to undertake to strengthen national, regional and international capacities for effective verification, compliance and enforcement of non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament obligations. This means helping countries that need and request help to implement their obligations. It also means helping countries that wish to strengthen their confidence in a regime to conduct their own compliance assessments, develop regional capabilities or contribute more fully to international efforts. Five of the recommendations of the Panel on verification addressed steps to build and strengthen such capabilities. The practical work that Member States and regional organizations such as the

European Union have undertaken to provide support and assistance, pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), is a concrete manifestation that States take seriously the relevance to compliance of building the capacity to implement obligations fully.

Very significant challenges to international security and stability remain, most notably but not exclusively, in the sphere of nuclear non-proliferation. For this reason there is no more important time than now, when the international community is facing significant non-compliance challenges, for the community to use all available tools, including this draft resolution, to express its strongest and broadest endorsement of compliance and to urge States that are not currently in compliance with their obligations to come back into compliance.

The United States, the other sponsors of this draft resolution and the overwhelming majority of the other nations represented here today take into consideration the state of compliance of other States parties with their non-proliferation, arms limitation, and disarmament agreements and commitments when making their calculations of how best to maintain and ensure their own security. Few if any of us sitting here today would be likely to enter into any agreement — be it multilateral or bilateral — if we believed that other parties were unlikely to comply with its terms. When we adhere to a treaty, we want to know whether the other parties are also complying. We want to discover non-compliance early enough to be able to deny violators any benefit from such non-compliance, and we want to know that the international community will work diligently to encourage and induce violators to reverse their non-compliance and come back into full compliance.

The draft resolution that we are offering for consideration today can be an important component of our collective diplomatic efforts to underscore the importance of compliance, to develop our individual and collective capacities for compliance, and to encourage a return to compliance by States that are currently not in compliance with their obligations.

The strides that we collectively have made to date towards recognition of the impact of non-compliance on our collective security and towards holding States accountable for their non-compliance are very important. But more must be done. Non-compliance

continues to pose significant challenges to our collective security and to the integrity of the international system. There are no easy answers to the non-compliance issues that we face. The question is: are we up to the challenges they pose? The United States believes that we are and that this draft resolution can make a useful contribution in reflecting our commitment to act together to strengthen compliance. We welcome broad co-sponsorship and encourage widespread support for this important draft resolution. Again I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee for your attention to these issues.

Mr. Kang Yong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Promoting the nuclear disarmament process and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in national security policies are of great relevance and significance in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, enhancing mutual trust and improving the international security environment. Currently, multilateral nuclear disarmament is faced not only with challenges but also with opportunities. On the one hand, the multilateral nuclear disarmament process is at a stalemate. The nuclear non-proliferation regime needs to be refined and problematic regional nuclear non-proliferation issues remain outstanding. The road to a world free of nuclear weapons is expected to be a long and bumpy one. On the other hand, the new review process on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has started and States parties are making efforts to achieve a positive outcome. A number of nuclear disarmament initiatives have been put forward. All these represent a rare opportunity for the international community to promote the nuclear disarmament process.

The thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons are the common wish of the international community, and China has striven to make its contribution to achieve this goal. China actively advocates and practises the new security concept based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, and it has long committed itself to building up a sound regional and international security environment. As a nuclear-weapon State, China has always pursued a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances.

China has committed unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free

zones. China has supported the conclusion of international legal instruments on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China has faithfully carried out its obligations under the NPT. It has never taken part and will never take part in any nuclear arms race, and it has never deployed nuclear weapons outside its own territories. China respects and supports efforts by relevant countries and regions to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of consultations among themselves and voluntary agreements in light of actual regional conditions.

China has signed all the protocols of the treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones that are open for signature. China attaches great importance to the new NPT review process and has taken an active part in it. China will work with other States parties in order to continuously maintain and enhance the authority, universality and effectiveness of the treaties.

China has actively promoted the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and committed itself to the early ratification of the Treaty. China has also actively participated in the preparatory work for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Before the entry into force of the CTBT, China will honour its commitment of a moratorium on nuclear tests. China hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and start negotiations on a multilateral, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty on that basis.

China has always believed that any nuclear disarmament measures, including various intermediary measures, should observe the guidelines of promoting international strategic stability and undiminished security for all. Nuclear disarmament should be a just and reasonable process of gradual reduction towards a balance at a lower level. The two States with the largest nuclear arsenals bear a special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament. They should further reduce their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner and seriously implement the nuclear disarmament treaties already concluded, so as to create conditions for the final realization of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament.

The authority, universality and effectiveness of the NPT should be continuously safeguarded. The

nuclear disarmament principles and measures set out in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference should be reflected in the new NPT review process. International efforts on issues such as nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space are mutually reinforcing and complementary. Safeguarding and enhancing the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as ensuring the impartiality of nuclear non-proliferation efforts will discourage States from seeking nuclear weapons. Preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space is conducive to maintaining the global strategic balance and stability and to preventing an arms race, including a nuclear arms race.

Mr. Mutavdžić (Croatia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

In order effectively to promote the nuclear disarmament process China maintains that the nuclear-weapon States should adopt the following measures: abandon policies of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons and lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons; undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances; refrain unconditionally from use or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and conclude relevant international legal instruments thereupon; honour their commitment not to target nuclear weapons against any countries nor list any countries as targets of nuclear strikes; withdraw and repatriate all nuclear weapons deployed outside their own territories; abandon the nuclear umbrella and nuclear-sharing policies and practices; not develop easy-to-use, low-yield nuclear weapons; and take all necessary steps to avoid accidental or unauthorized launches of nuclear weapons.

China is ready to work with other countries and make unremitting efforts to continuously promote the nuclear disarmament process and realize a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. Bin Huwaidin (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I should like to express the support of my delegation for the statements made on this item by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Lebanon on behalf of the Arab Group.

The fact that some nuclear-weapon States continue qualitatively and quantitatively to develop their nuclear

arsenals and their delivery systems and the fact that some non-nuclear States are trying to acquire some of these dangerous weapons constitute flagrant violations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the non-proliferation regime. It also contributes to undermining confidence in the system of international relations, which in turn threatens the maintenance of regional and international peace and security. We therefore call for the following. First, we call for the complete and balanced implementation of all the provisions of the NPT, including bringing about a balance between disarmament, on the one hand, and non-proliferation, on the other, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, which requires, as a priority, the engagement of nuclear-weapon States in immediate and serious negotiations with a view to gradually reducing their existing nuclear arsenals and transforming them for peaceful purposes within a specific time frame.

Second, all parties of the international community without exception must ensure full adherence to and compliance with the principles of the multilateral system and the provisions of all relevant treaties and international arrangements in order to attain the objectives of vertical and horizontal non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Third, we must underscore the universality and inclusiveness of the NPT — which requires the international community to put pressure on countries that have not yet acceded to the NPT to do so very soon.

Fourth, it is necessary to develop a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument that provides the necessary security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against any threats or risks that might result from the use of existing nuclear arsenals against them.

Fifth, we must urge States that have not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so very soon so as to allow the Treaty to enter into force.

Sixth, it is necessary to reaffirm the leading and principal role that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays as the only international body legally entrusted to monitor nuclear activities and programmes and to resolve all relevant outstanding issues.

Seventh, we must reiterate the importance of the implementation of article IV of the Treaty and avoid reinterpreting the inalienable right of all States Parties to the Treaty, without any discrimination, to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the permissible safeguards of the IAEA. In this context we call upon the developed countries to support the legitimate need of developing countries to acquire nuclear energy, allowing them to obtain nuclear material and equipment to the extent permitted, as well as scientific information and technology for peaceful purposes.

The United Arab Emirates, while it underscores its adherence to the principles of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, reiterates its continued and full commitment to the principles of total transparency and complete cooperation with the IAEA and affirms in this context that its nuclear energy development programme is being carried out for peaceful purposes, which demonstrates its adherence to transparency and sets an example to other countries in the region.

We reiterate our appeal to make the Middle East, including the Arab Gulf zone, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and emphasize the importance of demanding that Israel ensure that it complies with the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review Conference and with the relevant United Nations resolutions, which call for the placement of all of Israel's nuclear installations and facilities under IAEA safeguards. Israel must also unconditionally accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as have all other countries in the region. We also urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its cooperation with the IAEA and the international community in order to dispel any fears and doubts surrounding the nature and objectives of its nuclear programme.

In conclusion, we call upon all delegations to demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility in their positions in order to reach a consensus on pending matters under this item. We call upon delegations to vote in favour of the two draft resolutions included in documents A/C.1/63/L.1 and A/C.1/63/L.2.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As my delegation stated during the general debate, over the past year there have been very few positive events or initiatives that are worthy of note, for paralysis has continued to prevail in the disarmament machinery.

Notwithstanding this, expectations for change have grown, and in this context I think it is worth taking note of certain efforts. Above all, I would highlight the establishment of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, whose purpose is to make a substantive contribution to the review process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) scheduled for 2010. Mexico is convinced that this initiative, launched jointly by Australia and Japan, will help to secure a compromise at the highest possible level among nuclear-weapon States and those that do not possess these weapons, so as to make genuine progress towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We therefore lend it our fullest support.

At the same time we note the promising signs of the past year from some of the nuclear States concerning actions adopted to reduce their nuclear arsenals. However, it is vital for the nuclear Powers to review their security plans in keeping with the new challenges and new patterns that the international community faces. Those Powers must also become aware that their doctrines based on deterrence are obsolete and ineffective. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only rational path forward towards guaranteeing collective security. The elimination of those truly inhuman weapons is also the responsibility of humankind as a whole.

Without any doubt the lack of transparency measures on the part of the pertinent actors, the uncertain prospects for the coming into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the adoption of a working programme for the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the failure to achieve universality for the NPT, are some of the immediate challenges that we must confront. But we must also face the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their potential use by non-State actors. Let us accordingly recognize, above and beyond the speeches we may make, that, as has been repeatedly noted by the New Agenda Coalition, nuclear disarmament, on the one hand, and non-proliferation, on the other, are two facets of the same coin, and we will not make progress without the other, given their political, moral and legal interdependence.

Let us recognize that we cannot call for compliance with obligations and commitments from some parties and not from others, nor can we pick and choose the commitments that we wish to honour and

those that we will disregard. In this regard Mexico once again stresses the need to revitalize the NPT, particularly bearing in mind the 2010 Review Conference, and states its conviction that this will be possible only if the Treaty becomes universal, if there is full respect for its provisions, including those that refer to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and if there is full respect for the commitments undertaken in the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. As I indicated earlier, Mexico unequivocally rejects the discriminatory application of the provisions of the NPT or the selective implementation of its arrangements and commitments.

We believe that a weakening of the NPT would not only erode efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation and impede the peaceful use of nuclear energy, but would encourage nuclear proliferation. For this reason it is essential to identify which existing measures need to be bolstered and which new measures need to be promoted in order to move forward to the implementation of the practical steps agreed to in 2000 and to translate them into specific recommendations for the 2010 Review Conference.

Some countries are insisting on giving priority to non-proliferation, and they have been the principal promoters of efforts to this end, overlooking the intrinsic relationship between non-proliferation and disarmament, and hence the lack of results from their efforts. We would press the point that, until this unequal treatment is reconsidered and corrected, paralysis will continue to prevail in the disarmament machinery and the threat of nuclear proliferation will continue. Let us all recognize the urgent need to implement steps that will make it possible to make progress on both aspects. For this reason it is essential to take mutually agreed confidence-building measures through transparency. Nuclear Powers must report in a systematic manner on the actions that they are taking in keeping with article VI of the NPT. A universal and legally binding mechanism that helps to keep track of the progress in the field would give fresh impetus to the current state of the nuclear debate.

Before I conclude, I wish to reaffirm once again the importance of encouraging cooperation among the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the need to make progress in creating new zones. At the most recent session of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

(OPANAL), which was chaired by my country and took place at OPANAL headquarters in Mexico City last week, OPANAL suggested the holding of a second meeting of States parties and signatories to treaties of established nuclear-weapon-free zones, including Mongolia, in May 2009. The meeting would take place in New York prior to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference for the purpose of analysing the contribution that nuclear-weapon-free zones could make to that preparatory process and to strengthening cooperation and coordination among the zones.

I therefore call urgently on all member countries of those zones, which represent the majority of the international community, and other interested States to support that proposal and take an active part at that meeting. I would also highlight the important role in this initiative that the Office of the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs will play and I wish in advance to thank Ambassador Duarte for his support for this objective.

Mr. Etensel (Turkey): Turkey favours global overall disarmament and supports all efforts towards increased international security and stability through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Turkey is a party to all major international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes, and wishes to see the universalization, effective and coordinated implementation and further strengthening of these measures. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) lies at the heart of these measures. Turkey regards the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

We are committed to the full implementation of the NPT in all its three mutually reinforcing pillars, namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Universalization of the Treaty, strengthening the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reinforcement of export controls and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are the essential elements for the sustainability of the NPT regime in the long run. Turkey welcomes the recent ratification of the CTBT by Colombia, Malaysia, Barbados, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Palau. Turkey has been participating actively in article XIV conferences. We call on all States, especially those listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty,

to sign and/or ratify the CTBT at an early date. Turkey will continue to advocate the early entry into force of the CTBT, which we see as instrumental in restraining vertical proliferation. We also welcome Iraq's recent decision to sign the CTBT. We look forward to Iraq's ratification of the Treaty at its earliest convenience. In this framework, we are happy to see increasing participation in the universalization of disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, particularly from our region.

Turkey supports the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We are dedicated to full compliance with the NPT regime, including the comprehensive safeguards agreements and the additional protocols. We underline the essential and unique role of the IAEA in verifying the nuclear non-proliferation commitments of States and in ensuring the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy by those countries aspiring to develop their capacities in this field. We welcome the satisfactory outcome of the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, held in Geneva from 28 April to 9 May 2008. Turkey will continue to work constructively towards a substantive outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Turkey will also actively contribute to the work of the IAEA during its present tenure on the Agency's Board of Governors. Turkey also welcomes the establishment of nuclear-free zones, freely arrived at by the countries of various regions. In this context we support in principle the establishment of an effectively verifiable zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

Turkey strongly supports efforts aimed at helping the Conference on Disarmament to resume its negotiating role as the world's single multilateral disarmament forum. After a decade of impasse we also believe that the time is ripe for finally cutting the Gordian knot. During Turkey's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament last March, a compromise package, document CD/1840, was submitted on behalf of the 2008 Presidents of the Conference. I consider myself lucky, because most of them are here this afternoon. Turkey continues to hold the view that members of the Conference on Disarmament may wish to take this opportunity to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and to bring up

any issues that they may deem relevant during the negotiation process.

The Conference on Disarmament will, perhaps, eventually take new initiatives in other areas, including parallel advances on negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Turkey appreciates the positive steps taken by the NPT nuclear Powers towards nuclear force reduction. We insist that this momentum ought to be maintained, as should the declining role assigned to nuclear weapons.

Turkey attaches great importance to the solution of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomacy. We will continue to support and facilitate the process. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula remains a regional and global priority. We consider the agreement of 13 February to be an important step towards achieving the goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Turkey welcomes the recent United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea agreement on denuclearization verification measures. The agreement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to a series of verification measures constitutes a positive development towards the verification of North Korea's denuclearization actions. Turkey hopes that conditions can be created for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at the earliest possible date and for the resumption of comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

To conclude, Turkey, like many other countries, is concerned at the deteriorating situation in the field of disarmament and international security in recent years. We would therefore like to add our voice to those delegations that have appealed for the increased flexibility and political will that are necessary to make progress in this area, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Ms. Ahmed (Bangladesh): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in the debate on the cluster on nuclear weapons. I take this opportunity to highlight Bangladesh's position on the issue.

Our deliberations in the First Committee are taking place against a backdrop of little progress in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The world has been increasingly facing multiple emerging challenges of economic crises, food scarcity, climate change and natural and man-made disasters. In spite of

all these difficulties, we are confronted with the challenge of a reduction in nuclear danger. As the difference between the nuclear States and non-nuclear States has kept on growing, we have remained concerned about the threat emanating from nuclear weapons. Total elimination of such weapons is the only absolute guarantee against that threat.

The failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to produce a consensus outcome was a major setback. It is worrying that the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, has for years been unable to adopt a substantive programme of work. Similarly, its deliberative counterpart, the Disarmament Commission, has remained incapacitated by the deep divide among its members. What is lacking in these important United Nations entities is the political will to move ahead, the will to engage in any fruitful negotiations without setting any preconditions, and the political will ultimately to free this planet from the threat of nuclear weapons.

We believe that the failure at the NPT Review Conference has not weakened our achievements in 1995 and in 2000. We must build on those successes. We must implement what we have agreed upon. The 13 practical steps adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference for the systematic and progressive implementation of article VI of the NPT continue to be the benchmark for the disarmament process. At this point we emphasize the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States towards total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We also underscore the implementation of the security assurances, particularly the commitment of the non-use of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon States.

We reiterate our call today for the Conference on Disarmament to resume its substantive work in line with the unanimous conclusions of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Let me underscore the words "good faith" here. Without this, it is difficult to remove the existing inaction and obstruction in the negotiations for nuclear disarmament. It is regrettable that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not achieved universal adherence on the twelfth anniversary of its

adoption. Bangladesh has subscribed to the Ministerial Declaration that was adopted at the recent conference of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization that was held in New York as a sideline of the sixty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. We expressed our continued support of its work towards the universalization of the Treaty. Without the CTBT entering into force the world is a far less safe place, so we reiterate our appeal to the nine remaining Annex 2 States, whose ratification is essential for entry into force of the CTBT. We urge all others to observe a moratorium on nuclear testing in the meantime.

Despite calls from the international community, nuclear-weapon States have demonstrated little will or progress towards disarmament. Some old warheads evidently have been destroyed. It appears, however, that this is more for modernization rather than out of the desire to conform to any treaty obligations. Moreover, newer types of weapons are being developed and precision is being added to them. Needless to say, these measures enhance the propensity for use and have serious and adverse destabilizing ramifications. We call on the nuclear States to adhere to the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability, while reducing their nuclear arsenals. Bangladesh strongly advocates that everything must be done to prevent acquisition by non-State actors. We urge all to remain vigilant and take safeguard measures in this regard.

Bangladesh has impeccable credentials with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. We were the first Annex 2 nation in South Asia to have signed and ratified the CTBT. We are also a party to the NPT and have concluded safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, including the Additional Protocols. We believe these bear adequate testimony to our unflinching and constitutional commitment towards the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call for the establishment of more nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in South Asia and the Middle East. We would like to persuade each and every nuclear State to shun this deadly option and join the NPT regime. Let us make this world a nuclear-risk-free planet for your citizens and ours.

The Acting Chairperson: I call on the representative of Myanmar to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.14.

Mr. Lwin (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/63/L.14, under sub-item (v) of agenda item 89, on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Congo, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Uganda, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

Draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.14 addresses nuclear disarmament, to which the sponsors of the draft attach the highest priority. We believe that the continuing existence of nuclear weapons poses one of the greatest threats to the future of humanity. These weapons have the potential to destroy civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet. The security of a nation can be assured without nuclear weapons. The fact that there are countries that have voluntarily given up the nuclear option attests to this. Additionally, billions of dollars spent on nuclear forces could be spent to alleviate the plight of the world's poor and hungry people.

The only defence against a nuclear catastrophe is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the International Court of Justice reaffirmed that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In short, our planet will be safer and more secure without these weapons. International peace and security will also be greatly enhanced.

The draft resolution is sponsored by all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, many countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and others. I do not intend to dwell at length on the content of the draft resolution as the substance is essentially the same as that of similar resolutions in previous years. I just wish to highlight that this draft resolution addresses the issue of nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive manner and by this draft resolution we call for the full and effective implementation of the 13 practical steps

for nuclear disarmament contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. My delegation seeks the valuable support of member States for the draft resolution.

Mr. Im Han-taek (Republic of Korea): Since the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) here by the General Assembly 40 years ago, the NPT has served as the cornerstone of global peace and security. The Republic of Korea believes that the NPT should continue to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The three pillars that the NPT stands on, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, are mutually reinforcing and should be promoted in a balanced manner. Preserving a delicate balance among these three pillars is vital to the credibility of the NPT regime. In this regard, the 2008 NPT Preparatory Committee session held last May was meaningful, in that most States parties shared the view that the success of the 2010 Review Conference is crucial to the future of the NPT and the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The primary task for nuclear disarmament falls upon the shoulders of nuclear-weapon States. Although significant progress has been made thus far in reducing nuclear arsenals, the five nuclear-weapon States still possess 26,000 nuclear warheads. There also remains a significant perception gap between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States. The best way to close this gap and restore trust and confidence between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States is for the nuclear-weapon States faithfully to implement their article VI obligation, as indicated in the outcome documents of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. My delegation reaffirms its belief in the goal of nuclear disarmament aimed at realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon States must do their part by making progress on nuclear disarmament, while non-nuclear-weapon States should maintain their commitment to non-proliferation.

In this regard, my delegation acknowledges the achievement of the United States and Russian Federation under the Moscow Treaty to reduce the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons to the level of 1,700 to 2,200 by 2012 and also welcomes the ongoing bilateral discussions for a follow-up to the current

Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which expires in December 2009. The Republic of Korea hopes that the two countries continue their constructive dialogue, considering its significance to international security. We also welcome the recent announcement by the United Kingdom and France of their unilateral nuclear reduction measures. This will contribute to confidence-building by making their nuclear reduction plans public.

In this regard, we appreciate the recent gesture of transparency by France to invite international experts to observe the dismantling of the military fissile material production facilities at Pierrelatte and Marcoule. However, it must be remembered that any qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of advanced new types are contrary to the obligation to work for nuclear disarmament in good faith.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another task waiting for our decisive action. The Republic of Korea calls upon those States that have not yet ratified the Treaty — in particular the remaining nine Annex 2 States — to do so immediately and also stress the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing until the entry into force of the CTBT. The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is indeed the logical step to the CTBT, not only for nuclear non-proliferation but also for nuclear disarmament. My delegation believes that the time is ripe for the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament and calls on all Conference on Disarmament members to show more flexibility and political will for the adoption of a programme of work, so that negotiations on an FMCT can begin at the earliest possible date. We also urge all relevant States to declare and observe a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons use until an FMCT enters into force.

With regard to the North Korean nuclear issue, the Republic of Korea has continued its efforts to achieve a comprehensive resolution of the North Korean nuclear issues within the framework of the Six-Party Talks. The peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is vital to securing lasting peace and prosperity on the

Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia, as well as to sustaining the integrity of the non-proliferation regime.

The Government of the Republic of Korea welcomes the Six-Party Talks being brought back on track through the recent agreements on verification, through the subsequent United States action to remove North Korea from the list of State sponsors of terrorism, and through the resumption of disablement measures by North Korea. The Government of the Republic of Korea hopes that these measures will contribute to moving the Six-Party process forward towards the goal of achieving the abandonment of all nuclear weapons and nuclear programmes by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in accordance with the 19 September joint statement. To this end, the Government of the Republic of Korea requests the continued and unswerving support of the international community.

The 2010 Review Conference should be the occasion to find realistic and practical ways to revitalize the NPT process by reflecting on the evolution of the international situation over the past 10 years, and its success is crucial for the credibility of the NPT regime. My delegation sincerely hopes that the third session of the NPT Preparatory Committee next year will serve as a stepping stone towards achieving this important goal.

Mr. El Hadj Ali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It is indeed difficult to take up the subject of nuclear disarmament following a series of events that continue negatively to impact the multilateral process of disarmament. The successive setbacks of the last Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the 2006-2008 cycle of the Disarmament Commission and the passivity affecting the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the lack of prospects for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, are for us a source of great concern.

In such a context and given the lack of a political will to successfully achieve the objectives that flow from article VI of the NPT and the decisions taken at the NPT Review Conferences in 1995 and 2000, there is a risk of seriously jeopardizing the hopes cherished throughout the past three decades to lay down the bases for the system of collective security that we all hope to see. Here the holding of the next NPT Review Conference in 2010, as well as its third preparatory

session next May, provide us a real opportunity to revitalize the multilateral framework for concerted action in negotiations on nuclear disarmament, which remains the highest priority, and to provide comprehensive and lasting solutions to questions of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Today there is no justification for continued references to outdated doctrines that are preventing the process of nuclear disarmament from moving forward. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence and the practice of the qualitative development of new types of weapons are likely to create an atmosphere of distrust and further escalate the arms race. It is quite clear that the complexity of work on disarmament requires great efforts to be made to overcome those obstacles that block its achievement. An objective that is within our grasp as long as the real political will of States prevails, and that of the nuclear States in particular, is an overall type of joint action designed to relaunch the debate on this issue in all of its aspects. Such action requires from us a strategic approach that would mark the end of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and the implementation of commitments unequivocally undertaken by nuclear States under article VI of the NPT to fully eliminate their nuclear arsenals by beginning in good faith negotiations for the full elimination of nuclear weapons.

Here, the 13 practical steps for the implementation of article VI of the NPT adopted during the sixth Review Conference are part of a genuine programme of action charting the way to disarmament and supporting the keen desire of all mankind to see the world once and for all freed from weapons of mass destruction, and in particular to see the dismantling of nuclear arsenals. We are convinced that the full elimination of nuclear weapons is the sole, genuine guarantee of security, both for the non-nuclear-weapon States and for the nuclear-weapon States.

In the meantime, non-nuclear-weapon States have the right unconditionally to benefit from guarantees prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them, under any and all circumstances, by the nuclear States. For these guarantees to be credible they must be codified in a legally binding instrument. These security guarantees form a fundamental element in the balance of the non-proliferation regime and help to right the imbalances and drawbacks of the NPT. They are also designed to strengthen the principle of undiminished security for all.

It is in that spirit, too, that we see the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an effective way of strengthening the non-proliferation regime and for supporting efforts undertaken to provide real content to the work of nuclear disarmament and an important instrument contributing to the primary objective of peacebuilding and security at the regional and international levels. Here we have taken due note of the commitment of the nuclear Powers regarding security guarantees flowing from the regime of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

I must recall, however, that my country belongs to a subregion that straddles the African zone, which is still working to obtain the ratifications required for its treaty to enter into force, and the zone of the Middle East, where a treaty has become unrealistic over the years. The strengthening of the NPT regime is necessary, since it goes hand in hand with significant progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. For any effort designed to ensure the continuation of the imbalance between the two would be likely to fuel suspicions engendered by unilateral approaches. Initiatives designed to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime cannot alone provide a collective response to the global threat formed by the continued presence of nuclear weapons. The prevention of proliferation, as well as initiatives aimed at strengthening non-proliferation measures, cannot serve as a pretext to block the access of States parties to the NPT to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for development purposes.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): Since this is the first time I am taking the floor in this Committee at this session, let me join previous speakers in congratulating the Chairman on his assumption of his high post and in wishing him success in steering the work of this body. I also express our appreciation for the work carried out by Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and his Office.

Earlier this week the delegation of Kyrgyzstan made a comprehensive statement on the theme of nuclear weapons on behalf of the five States parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and my delegation associates itself with that statement. Therefore, I should like to touch upon the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which represents and will be one of the most important instruments of global security. Kazakhstan signed the CTBT in 1996 and supports its early entry into force.

We adhered to the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT, which was endorsed at the ministerial meeting on 24 September this year in New York. Our country actively participates in all major programmes within the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Organization (CTBTO).

As Mr. Tibor Tóth, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, mentioned yesterday at the panel discussions, in September 2008 a large-scale integrated field exercise was conducted at the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan with the participation of more than 100 experts and observers from throughout the world. The exercise has been crucial for the development of operational guidelines for their on-site inspection and for the preparation of a full-scale on-site inspection field exercise in 2012. This field exercise is an important event for Kazakhstan, a country that has convincingly demonstrated its commitment to disarmament policies and is actively engaged in strengthening the non-proliferation regime. The renunciation of the nuclear arsenal was the only natural choice for a country that suffered so much from nuclear testing.

We know today that, during the period of almost 45 years of the operation of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, there were 459 nuclear explosions, including 113 in the atmosphere, and more than 500,000 people were subjected to radiation exposure. As a consequence of the nuclear tests not only have the lives and health of the population been affected but so also has the environment of a vast territory. Today, the Semipalatinsk test site serves as a unique contribution by Kazakhstan to non-proliferation, global security and the implementation of CTBT objectives. The site infrastructure is used for the CTBTO project in such a way that it is increasingly becoming an international peace ground, a neutral site for resolving sensitive issues in the field of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Kazakhstan calls for the prohibition of all nuclear tests, including so-called peaceful ones. We share the view that it is virtually impossible to determine whether a nuclear explosion took place for peaceful or military purposes. Consequently, such explosions may create a loophole for the spread of nuclear weapons. Today, there are no established procedures for verification in this area. Moreover, no proof exists of the usefulness of actual nuclear explosions for peaceful

purposes rather than computer simulations. In this regard, we believe that abandonment of such explosions would not affect the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

As the Committee may be aware, during the existence of the Soviet Union, 23 peaceful underground nuclear explosions were carried out on the territory of Kazakhstan. There is no doubt that they inflicted enormous damage on human health and the environment. Practical implementation of the initiative to create a global nuclear energy infrastructure has currently started within the framework of the CTBTO. Kazakhstan became a party to the International Uranium Enrichment Centre created at Angarsk, Russia. This is a practical contribution to the establishment of mechanisms for the development of nuclear energy whose programmes provide a reliable supply of nuclear fuel on the basis of international cooperation, which provides an alternative to the spread of sensitive nuclear technology.

Kazakhstan, as a country that contributes to global nuclear disarmament and strictly complies with its obligation under the NPT, reiterates its strong position for a general and complete ban on nuclear tests and calls on all involved parties to make maximum efforts towards achieving the early entry into force of the CTBT.

The Acting Chairperson: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/63/L.1 and A/C.1/63/L.2.

Mr. Aly (Egypt): I wish to associate myself with the statements made earlier under the nuclear weapons cluster by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Lebanon on behalf of the Arab Group.

I have the honour of formally introducing two important draft resolutions today, entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East” and “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”, respectively.

The draft resolution entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, contained in document A/C.1/63/L.1, has the same text as General Assembly resolution 62/18 adopted last year by consensus under the same agenda item and has only been technically updated. The draft addresses one of the most important goals foreseen

since 1974 as a recipe for lasting peace, security and stability in the Middle East. It represents both a regional and an international vision for the future of the Middle East and presents the need for confidence-building and mutual trust between the States of the region despite the existence of unbalanced obligations in the nuclear area. Indeed, our vision for a nuclear-weapon-free zone is sincere and strengthened by the collective agreement and lofty aims we have maintained and protected in this resolution throughout all those years. We look forward to the continued adoption of the draft resolution by consensus in order to renew our common determination to fulfil its objectives and to bring a more stable, safer, and more secure Middle East for all its peoples without exception.

The second draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/63/L.2 and entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", represents the same unchanged text as General Assembly resolution 62/56 under the same agenda item and has been only technically updated for this session. As is traditionally the case, the draft resolution is presented by Egypt and sponsored by other Arab States members of the League of Arab States. They are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Palestine.

We believe that Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its placement of all its nuclear activities and facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency will establish the long-awaited universality of the NPT in the Middle East and positively reflect a wide range of international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regimes. It will also address a serious imbalance in nuclear commitments between States of the region, representing an unsustainable situation that can easily ignite arms races and bring nothing but havoc to our region.

Last year, resolution 62/56 on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East enjoyed the support of 170 States in the General Assembly. We hope that this significant international support will indeed continue and increase this year and we invite the few States that voted against the resolution or abstained on it last year

to reconsider their positions and to join the international community in supporting the draft resolution this year. Indeed, the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is one that requires strengthened resolve and commitment from the whole international community.

Mr. Al-Subaie (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I should like to express gratitude to the Chair for his sustained efforts at the head of the First Committee on disarmament and international security.

Nuclear weapons are one of the most important items on the agenda of the Committee, since these are the destructive tools that in fact are indiscriminate and could send man back to the Stone Age. We need to keep on working. Qatar adheres to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which our country hopes to see implemented and complied with immediately. Qatar is also involved in producing a treaty on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons in order to achieve full nuclear disarmament and free the international community from these destructive weapons.

Qatar supports all draft resolutions likely to promote peace and international security and spare us the danger of nuclear war. In that respect, we cite the draft resolutions entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", "Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium", "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", and "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East". Qatar, in cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat, has been providing support for the implementation of these obligations under the relevant resolutions. We emphasize here that the information presented by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, also emphasized the cooperation of Qatar in this field.

Qatar supports all the draft resolutions regarding the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. We support the implementation of these objectives through Israel's adherence to the NPT in accordance with the decisions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, decisions that were

reaffirmed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We also support the implementation of all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council to the effect that Israel's adherence to the NPT would strengthen existing cooperation in the Middle East.

For these reasons, failure here could cause a failure of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which would send the wrong signal and undermine the credibility of the Treaty. However, certain influential parties have not been sufficiently forceful in providing for the universal character of this Treaty. Such parties are also engaged in hurling accusations at various parties to the Treaty that they are remiss in their obligations. A discriminatory approach will work against the establishment of peace and security.

Qatar reaffirms the right of States parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We would like to emphasize the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the need for the Agency to remain independent in discharging its functions. Qatar also reaffirms the need to settle disputes on nuclear issues through peaceful means under the United Nations Charter and international law — principles that were approved by the summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council held at Doha in 2007.

The Acting Chairperson: I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/63/L.15, A/C.1/63/L.16 and A/C.1/63/L.34.

Mr. Singh (India): It is a pleasure to see the Chairman leading the thematic debate on nuclear weapons. India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

India has consistently attached the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament, both as a national position and as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement. When speaking at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly on 26 September this year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reiterated India's proposal for a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and providing for their complete elimination within a specified time frame (*see A/63/PV.12, p. 9*).

We recall that the only document on nuclear disarmament adopted by consensus by the international community, the Final Document of the first special

session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. This year we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the holding of that session. We would like to convey our appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for highlighting some of the important points of the Final Document adopted by the session.

This year we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Action Plan for ushering in a nuclear-weapons-free and non-violent world order, presented by India's Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, to the United Nations in 1988. This statement was a milestone in the global quest for nuclear disarmament. The Action Plan begins with the following words, which remain valid to this day:

“Humanity stands at a crossroads of history. The world has lived too long under the sentence of extinction. Nuclear weapons threaten to annihilate human civilization and all that humankind has built through millennia of labour and toil. Nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike are threatened by such a holocaust. It is imperative that nuclear weapons be eliminated.” (*A/S-15/12, annex I, para. 1*)

The Action Plan proved a holistic framework for seeking negotiations for a time-bound commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons so as to usher in a world free of nuclear weapons and rooted in non-violence. The Action Plan remains by far the most comprehensive initiative on nuclear disarmament. Its central premises remain valid: first, a binding commitment by all nations to eliminate nuclear weapons in stages; secondly, the participation of all nuclear-weapon States in the process of nuclear disarmament. All other States must also be part of this process; thirdly, the demonstration of good faith and the building of confidence through tangible progress towards the common goal; and fourthly, changes in doctrines, policies and institutions to sustain a world free of nuclear weapons.

An international conference was held in New Delhi on 9 and 10 June this year to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan. The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. About 200 experts participated in this conference. In inaugurating the conference, Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh said, “The Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan was a comprehensive exposition of India’s approach towards global disarmament and continuity in our thinking”. He expressed the hope that other States would agree to a dialogue on these proposals and would join us in committing to nuclear disarmament.

Over the years, several international groups and bodies have lent their voice in favour of nuclear disarmament, including the United Nations General Assembly, the International Court of Justice and national parliaments of several countries. The goal of a world free of nuclear weapons has received the support of eminent people such as Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, William Perry and Sam Nunn, all knowledgeable and experienced in this field. The Government of Norway took the initiative to host a major international conference on the subject in Oslo in February this year. Another initiative has been launched by the Governments of Australia and Japan focusing on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. High-level pronouncements in favour of nuclear disarmament have been made by such countries as France and the United Kingdom.

While the individual merits or defects of the various proposals need to be discussed, we must recognize that the shifting currents of informed opinion are now moving ever stronger in favour of nuclear disarmament. This provides the United Nations General Assembly an opportunity to create a new political momentum and for the United Nations disarmament machinery to bring about coherence, integration and universal consensus on the way forward. In this regard, we reiterate the significance of convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, a position supported by all NAM countries.

As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, there is a heavy burden on the Conference on Disarmament to make progress on nuclear disarmament. The first priority is binding commitments, accompanied by the negotiation of specific steps that would reduce and finally eliminate the nuclear threat globally in a verifiable and irreversible manner, where no State would claim exclusive security based on its possession of nuclear weapons. In fact, a nuclear-weapon-free world would enhance the security of all.

As in previous years, India will be introducing several draft resolutions. First, on behalf of the sponsors, I would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”, contained in document A/C.1/63/L.15. This draft resolution reflects the belief of the sponsors that a multilateral, universal and legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons will contribute to the mitigation of the nuclear threat and create a climate for negotiations for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. It will thus serve as an important interim measure, until we reach agreement on a step-by-step process for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The operative part of the draft resolution reiterates the call to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

I also have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution entitled “Reducing nuclear danger”, contained in document A/C.1/63/L.16. This draft resolution highlights the fact that the hair-trigger posture of nuclear forces carries with it the unacceptable risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, which could have catastrophic consequences. The operative part of the draft resolution calls for a review of nuclear doctrines and immediate steps to reduce the risks of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through the de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons, and requests the nuclear-weapon States to take the necessary measures to reduce nuclear dangers.

On behalf of the sponsors, India is also introducing, as in previous years, a draft resolution entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”, contained in document A/C.1/63/L.34. This draft resolution highlights the concerns of the international community and calls upon all Member States to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It underlines that the international response to this threat needs to be at the national, multilateral and global levels. This year the draft resolution has been updated to take into account the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which was launched jointly by the Russian Federation and the United States. It also incorporates some suggestions for

improvement in paragraph 3 and paragraph 5, so as to provide clarity on the issue of national measures.

We hope that these draft resolutions will receive the broadest possible support. As with similar resolutions in previous years, we hope that the draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting Chairperson: I call on the representative of Switzerland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.5.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland): I should like to start on a positive note. In fact, there have been laudable efforts by some nuclear-weapon States to improve transparency regarding their nuclear arsenals. France, for instance, has communicated the total number of nuclear weapons in its arsenal. It also invited international experts to witness the dismantling of its former production sites for fissile material. Furthermore, we welcome the fact that a number of other nuclear-weapon States have put forth information within the Conference on Disarmament and in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) about their steps towards nuclear disarmament. In this sense, publication by some States of their stocks of fissile material represents another positive aspect. Yet, Switzerland calls on nuclear-weapon States that have not done so to take steps to increase transparency. In addition there is still a long way to go to implement article VI of the NPT and to achieve what was agreed in the outcome documents of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences.

Switzerland appreciates the constructive atmosphere at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We consider it crucial that the upcoming Preparatory Committee session be similarly constructive, which would enable us to agree on a substantive report. We feel that it is very important that the next session of the Preparatory Committee set a solid basis for a successful 2010 NPT Review Conference.

There needs to be more discussion on reducing the importance that nuclear arsenals play in military strategy doctrines. We therefore call on nuclear-weapon States to refrain from modernizing and further developing nuclear arsenals. We find it difficult to understand that nuclear-weapon States speak about

disarmament while continuing to build new types of nuclear weapons. Such steps, in the view of my country, run counter to the spirit of article VI of the NPT. Furthermore, the continuing blockage of the adoption of a programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament means that no progress has been made towards negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty. We urge States to overcome the current deadlock and to enter negotiations without preconditions. As for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty we hope that in the near future this Treaty can finally enter into force. Nine of the 44 States mentioned in Annex 2 of the Treaty have still not ratified it. Switzerland calls on those States to ratify the Treaty without delay.

Switzerland also takes note of the fact that the United States of America and the Russian Federation, the two States with the largest nuclear arsenals, have not to date been able to agree on the follow-up to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which expires at the end of 2009. My country hopes that discussions will not only send out positive signals to the international community but also lead to a meaningful and verifiable follow-up agreement, which would represent real progress in nuclear disarmament.

Regarding nuclear non-proliferation, the situation remains complex. There are still unresolved issues relating to the Iranian nuclear programme. The International Atomic Energy Agency has not been able to make progress in the alleged studies, and Iran has continued its enrichment activities. This development is all the more regrettable, because we have witnessed a number of constructive moments that culminated in the Geneva talks in July. I refer, in particular, to the exchange of packages on both sides and the agreement of the parties to hold discussions on the basis of a reciprocal freeze on their actions. Switzerland considers that the prospect of a diplomatic solution remains realistic and that such a solution is the only viable one. My country therefore encourages Iran to work as rapidly as possible to enable the "freeze-for-freeze" concept to be implemented.

The adoption by the Nuclear Suppliers Group of an exception to its rules allowing nuclear supplies to be sent to India despite the absence of International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards for its country can be seen as a constructive element. Nonetheless, it raises questions about the future of the

non-proliferation regime. These conflicting aspects have to be taken into consideration en route to and within the framework of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The Chairperson returned to the Chair.

Since I have the floor, I would like formally to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems", contained in document A/C.1/63/L.5, which we introduce again this year together with Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria and Sweden. The draft resolution acknowledges and welcomes all steps that have already been taken in this direction. It calls on all States possessing nuclear weapons to take further steps to decrease operational readiness.

The draft resolution deserves support for a number of reasons. First, today's post-cold-war environment no longer justifies such a high level of alert. Secondly, the estimated thousands of nuclear weapons that remain on high alert pose one of the greatest risks of accidental nuclear war. Decreasing the operational status of nuclear weapons reduces the risk of unintended launches caused by technical malfunction, accident or acts of terrorism. Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons also allows for more time for communication, which further contributes to lowering the risk of a nuclear conflict. Lastly, further decreasing operational readiness is a much welcomed confidence-building measure, not only among nuclear-weapon States but also between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. In this sense, further reducing operational readiness would be a highly welcome step in the lead-up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

We agree that reductions in deployment and operational status cannot substitute for irreversible cuts in the number of nuclear weapons possessed. Nonetheless, ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high alert in the interim would be a significant improvement for our collective security. The main sponsors of this draft resolution hope for broad support.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): As has been stressed by many delegates at the current meeting, the core issue of disarmament is nuclear disarmament. As long as nuclear weapons remain in the world, humankind will never be free from the danger of a nuclear war. The root cause of nuclear proliferation, which some

countries are so worried about, lies in the very existence of nuclear weapons and the threats of their use. The adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) 40 years ago was possible because, at that time, non-nuclear-weapon States had high expectations of article VI, which stresses the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to general and complete nuclear disarmament, and ultimately approved the Treaty.

However, the problem facing us now is the failure by nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments in good faith. There still exists a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons, enough to blow up this planet a number of times. Behind the screen of nuclear disarmament, nuclear weapons are being made more sophisticated and nuclear doctrines are being revised, still envisaging the tactical utility of nuclear weapons. In addition, threats of the use of nuclear weapons have been escalating against non-nuclear-weapon States. Pre-emptive nuclear strikes, surgical nuclear strikes, and so forth, are typical examples of the ever-growing threat. In the light of such circumstances it is quite natural that non-nuclear-weapon States with security concerns will consider self-defensive measures. That certain countries are entitled to possess nuclear weapons, while others should be subject to nuclear threats, is no longer acceptable.

These facts indicate who is to blame for the current deadlock on nuclear disarmament. For significant progress to be achieved in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the nuclear-weapon States should demonstrate and translate into action their political will for nuclear disarmament. Only then will the issue of nuclear proliferation be duly addressed.

Allow me to take this opportunity to assist the better understanding of some countries, such as France, Japan and Australia, with regard to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. First, I am very disappointed at the lack of knowledge on the part of the French representative, whose country currently holds the European Union presidency in the Six-Party Talks. The final goal of the Six-Party Talks is to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula as a whole. It is not the unilateral nuclear disarming of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Contrary to what the Japanese representative said yesterday, our nuclear deterrent is a reliable guarantee of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and beyond. Japan is the only country that refuses to comply with its

obligations under the Joint Agreement adopted at the Six-Party Talks. As a matter of fact, Japan's presence at the Six-Party Talks is not necessary at all. I therefore urge Japan to behave with the knowledge of where it stands as of now.

Secondly, Security Council resolutions 1695 (2006) and 1718 (2006) are the product of irresponsibility and unfairness on the part of the United Nations Security Council. It should be recalled that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly rejected those resolutions. If the United Nations Security Council is to become an organ fulfilling its mandate for international peace and security, it should have focused its attention on the country that caused the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, not on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's and its justifiable exercise of its right to self-defence. Claims about the need to implement the above-mentioned resolutions only reveal an ulterior motive to create a fuss blocking a resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

The Chairperson: That concludes the list of speakers for this afternoon. That also concludes our work on the issue of nuclear weapons.

In order to have a transparent exchange of information, I have asked for certain notes from the Secretariat with reference to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As members know, according to article XIV of that Treaty, 44 Member States are required to ratify it in order for the Treaty to enter into force. As of today, nine States are still required to complete this process. Those countries are China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America. If we want to work constructively in this Committee, I plead with those delegations to do their utmost in order to complete the ratification process so that the CTBT can be fully implemented. I just wanted to share that information, and I hope members will accept it.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.