



# General Assembly

Sixty-third session

## First Committee

**12<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Monday, 20 October 2008, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Official Records*

*Chairperson:* Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo ..... (Honduras)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.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 have moved forward on the cluster pertaining to weapons of mass destruction. Today we will continue our discussion of that subject and then move on to the subject of outer space and conventional weapons.

I call on the representative of Poland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.17.

**Mr. Szczygiel** (Poland): Since this is my first time taking the floor, allow me to start by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on the occasion of your election to your prestigious function.

It is a real honour and pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of Poland, a draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (A/C.1/63/L.17).

The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention remains very timely this year. In our work on the draft, we concentrated on the progress achieved in the Convention's implementation since the adoption of this past year's resolution. There were real achievements, and they found their reflection in this year's draft. A special emphasis was placed on maintaining the importance of

the key provisions of the Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in April 2008 in The Hague.

Overall, we consider that the text of this year's draft resolution is well balanced. It gives the unequivocal support of the United Nations to the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention.

Our basic assumption and goal were to ensure, as in past years, a consensus approval for the draft resolution. Consensus is crucial to providing the unequivocal support of the United Nations to the implementation of the Convention. The content of the draft resolution and changes from the previous year were presented in the full text of the statement of the delegation of Poland, which will be distributed to delegations.

During extensive bilateral and two open-ended informal consultations attended by more than 50 delegations, we were assured of the support for this draft and the readiness of delegations in the First Committee to join consensus on it.

Allow me to express gratitude and thanks to all the delegations participating in the extensive consultations on the new draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. These consultations confirmed the existence of broad political support in all regions for the implementation of the Convention in its entirety. The draft resolution presented today is a material expression of this support.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



As in previous years, Poland remains the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Sole sponsorship, supported in the consultations, ensures regional and political balance and broad support for the draft resolution.

The delegation of Poland asks for the adoption of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention without a vote.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded our consideration of the cluster on weapons of mass destruction.

We will now proceed to hear representatives who have requested to speak on the theme of outer space and disarmament in all its aspects.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.44.

**Mr. Vasiliev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): One of the key factors in ensuring international security is preventing the placement of weapons in outer space. Russia is convinced that outer space should not become another sphere of armed confrontation. We believe that the positions of the overwhelming majority of States coincide on this subject.

Since we foresee the dangerous consequences of such a new situation in outer space, we have consistently advocated preventing the placement of any type of weapon in outer space and call on the international community to conclude a relevant agreement in this regard.

An important step in that direction is the drafting by the Russian Federation and China of the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. In February, we presented the draft treaty to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The treaty seeks to fill the gaps in international outer space law and to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which would be a real guarantee that outer space would not become an arena of confrontation.

Today, we have received comments and suggestions on the draft from many countries. We note that, for the first time, the United States has suggested

specific ideas on the substance of the draft. We are carefully studying all proposals. The primary task, ultimately, is to have a comprehensive discussion on this draft and to promote within the international community. We believe that the final text of the draft treaty should be the result of the collective efforts of States concerned.

Clearly, efforts to prevent the militarization of space could be advanced by transparency and confidence-building measures in space activities. We believe that activities in the area of transparency and confidence-building measures could become a consolidating factor for all States as regards outer space and lead to practical results towards forming a careful and responsible approach to the use of outer space.

A number of such efforts are already included in international agreements in the field of outer space activities. Certain measures are implemented by States as unilateral initiatives and have become political obligations. In terms of practical efforts to enhance confidence in outer space activities, we suggest that States join the Russian initiative, which is supported by the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, by pledging not to be the first to place any type of weapon in outer space.

In 2005, 2006 and 2007, the Russian Federation introduced to the First Committee draft resolutions on transparency and confidence-building measures. The draft resolutions were aimed at the development and introduction of concrete proposals on such measures. Last year, during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, the overwhelming majority of States supported the resolution (resolution 62/43), which was sponsored by 45 States. We thank delegations for supporting and sponsoring that resolution. In particular, we would like to thank the States that submitted concrete proposals on transparency and confidence-building measures to the Secretary-General: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chile, China, Cuba, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Qatar, Ukraine and France, the current European Union (EU) Presidency, which presented considerations on behalf of the EU member States.

In their responses to that resolution, countries expressed their support for efforts undertaken within the United Nations in the context of transparency and confidence-building measures, and noted that the joint

drafting of recommendations on possible new such measures would contribute to increasing mutual trust on the basis of a greater understanding of the intentions of States. That will require further study on new transparency and confidence-building measures in accordance with the current situation with regard to the use of outer space.

As we understand it, the EU has prepared a draft code of conduct on outer space activities in the course of developing ideas on transparency and confidence-building measures. We believe that such a code, should it be adopted, would contribute to creating an atmosphere of transparency and trust in outer space. However, it should also cover peaceful outer space activities and work in the interests of preventing the placement of weapons in outer space. We are prepared to undertake constructive dialogue with our European partners on this issue.

At this session of the General Assembly, the Russian Federation will present a revised draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space (A/C.1/63/L.44). Over 20 States have already become sponsors of the draft resolution. We are pursuing our consultations with groups of countries with respect to their possible sponsorship. We intend to inform all current sponsors of the outcome of those consultations and of the possibility of amending our draft. The sponsors will receive information from our delegation. We call upon all other countries to also become sponsors of the draft resolution presented by the Russian Federation and China.

At this session of the General Assembly, we have again sponsored the draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in space. We are fully committed to its aims and goals.

**Mr. Uhorich** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Each year, humankind grows ever more dependent on the results of activities in outer space, which are accessible to an increasing number of States. In that regard, Belarus believes it important to keep space demilitarized and supports full compliance with existing international instruments in the area of space law.

We advocate the further development of such instruments and welcome the emergence of new initiatives, such as the joint Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons

in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. The adoption of such a treaty could help fill gaps in areas not yet regulated by international law. As a supporter of preventive approaches, we believe that the international community should take every possible step to conclude negotiations on the proposed treaty before weapons become a reality in near-Earth space.

The Russian Federation's declaration of a pledge not to be the first to place weapons of any kind in space and the endorsement of that initiative by other States represent genuine contributions to preventing the weaponization of space. In 2005, a similar declaration was adopted by the heads of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Belarus therefore calls upon all States that have the capacity to launch spacecraft and that are carrying out programmes related to space research and exploration to join the moratorium on the placement of weapons in space. We are convinced that that would assist in the promotion and establishment of legally binding instruments to ensure a complete prohibition on the placement of weapons in space.

**Ms. House** (United States of America): The United States national security space policy is best characterized by continuity across many decades and many United States presidential administrations. That continuity includes the commitment of the United States to basic principles that it first advanced at the very outset of the space age more than half a century ago, and our support for the Outer Space Treaty, which we believe continues to provide the legal foundation for responding to the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century.

It has been the consistent policy of the United States to oppose arms control concepts, proposals and legally binding regimes that seek or impose prohibitions on the use of space for military or intelligence purposes. The United States also opposes any arms control proposals that fail to preserve the rights of the United States to conduct research, development, testing and operations in space for military, intelligence, civil or commercial purposes.

There is much rhetoric about the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For nearly three decades, the United States has consistently pointed out that it is not possible to define the nature of a space-based weapon.

The United States also believes that it is not possible to develop an effectively verifiable agreement for the banning of either space-based weapons or terrestrial-based anti-satellite (ASAT) systems. As we noted in document CD/1847, the Russian-Chinese draft treaty introduced in Geneva contains no prohibitions on the research, development, testing, production, storage or deployment of terrestrial-based anti-satellite weapons. Therefore, the treaty would do nothing to impede the development of military systems such as the direct-ascent ASAT weapon that China flight-tested in January 2007.

The United States and other spacefaring nations remain concerned about the lack of transparency surrounding China's development of direct-ascent ASAT weapons. China's unannounced test in 2007 was a military action that generated more than 2,750 pieces of orbital debris. The debris cloud created by that intentional act means that China is now responsible for more debris in low-Earth orbit than any other country. That debris will pose a hazard to human spaceflight and satellites well into the twenty-second century.

We are very interested in hearing from China regarding its intentions as to the further development and testing of direct-ascent ASAT weapons. We are particularly troubled by the Chinese Government's continued refusal to provide adequate responses to questions from the international community regarding China's military intentions for this and its many other counter-space programmes. As the United States has noted repeatedly, a decision by the People's Republic of China to conduct another ASAT test would further undermine the credibility of its declaratory statements regarding the so-called weaponization of space and China's commitment to act responsibly in space.

All countries that benefit from commercial and security-related activities in outer space should continue to register their concerns about the increased risk of collisions with debris and make clear their opposition to any further destructive ASAT tests. In that regard, we note that senior Chinese Government officials have made private assurances to the United States that China will not be conducting future ASAT tests. That commitment by China is an important step forward, and we expect China to live up to its word.

It is also our long-standing position that the existing in-force regime is sufficient to guarantee the right of all nations to access to and operations in space.

That international legal regime includes the four core space treaties: the 1967 Outer Space Treaty; the 1968 Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space; the 1972 Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects; and the 1974 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

International cooperation is also a fundamental element of the space policies of the United States and other responsible spacefaring nations. Although, as previously mentioned, we oppose legally binding arms control proposals, the United States enthusiastically supports voluntary and concrete measures that address practical problems. Our support for such best-practice guidelines and voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures, however, stops if they are tied to proposals for legally binding space arms control constraints and limitations.

The United States is pleased to support a recent initiative by France to establish an informal working group that brings together experts from the public and private space sectors to explore additional measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of space activities. As that group develops consensus on specific measures, the results can be forwarded to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for its consideration as part of a set of best-practice guidelines for safe space operations.

The United States also is considering initiatives based on our long-standing support for voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures. We have repeatedly noted in multilateral forums that some new transparency and confidence-building measures, implemented on a voluntary basis, have the potential to enhance satellite safety and reduce uncertainty in an evolving space security environment. In that regard, we have also welcomed the opportunity for transatlantic dialogue with the European Union regarding proposals for a set of transparency and confidence-building measures that focus on a pragmatic and incremental approach to space safety and security.

In preparation for this year's General Assembly session, we again sought to work with Russia and China on a draft Assembly resolution to explore the feasibility of new voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures. Unfortunately, we could not reach agreement. Russia and China refused to agree

to a neutral resolution on such measures, unencumbered by linkages to space arms control constraints and limitations.

The United States is also disappointed by Russia's continued inability to accept our invitations for experts from the Russian space forces to meet in Omaha, Nebraska, with their counterparts at the United States Strategic Command. Those invitations, which were relayed through both diplomatic channels and military-to-military channels, are part of the United States-Russian Federation interoperability workplan and seek to enhance mutual understanding on space and defence issues. The value of such a thematic workshop on space is affirmed by Russia itself in its 11 May 2007 submission to the Secretary-General, which noted that such a transparency and confidence-building measure can "make a significant contribution to improving inter-State relations and the development of dialogue and cooperation between countries" (A/62/114, p. 7).

It is in that spirit of cooperation that the United States seeks to sustain the principles that have helped to maintain international peace and security in outer space for the past half-century. Working from a set of shared values and aspirations, the United States, Europe and other established and emerging spacefaring nations around the globe are confident in our vision for space, and we are moving forward together. It is a world in which space leadership is defined not by imagined orbital spheres of influence or the phantom menace of space weaponization, but by free flows of information, technological innovation, economic growth and the defence of freedom. For, as President John F. Kennedy said in 1962,

"We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people."

**Mrs. García Jordán** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The legal instruments on outer space — such as the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water; the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the 1979 Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies — have played a positive role in promoting the peaceful uses of outer space and regulating space activities. They have also been significant factors in banning weapons of mass

destruction and certain military activities in outer space.

Preventing an arms race in outer space became a universal goal long ago. Regrettably, existing treaties and agreements have not eliminated the dangers of the militarization of space and are clearly insufficient to prevent the placement of weapons in that environment.

Cuba supports the efforts being made within the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament, in particular the negotiation within the Conference of an international legal instrument preventing the placement of weapons in outer space. To that end, we support the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee to initiate such negotiations.

At the Conference on Disarmament this year, the Governments of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China officially introduced the initiative of a draft treaty banning weapons in outer space. It has garnered the support of various countries and seeks to ban not only the development of space weapons, but also the use of force against satellites and other space objects. Cuba believes that concrete actions such as this deserve the support of the international community.

Another source of concern to the international community is the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space. Although only a few highly developed countries are currently involved in that area, it may have an impact on everyone in the future. Cuba believes that, until there is a clearly defined security framework and more concrete agreements in that regard have been initiated, the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space should be restricted as much as possible. Moreover, in cases of limited use, the State in question should provide other States with comprehensive and transparent information explaining the measures it has taken to guarantee security.

We are convinced that there is currently no justification for considering the use of nuclear energy sources in Earth orbit because the risks are much greater there and other much safer and demonstrably efficient energy sources are available.

The Non-Aligned Movement has expressed its concern about the negative consequences of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the quest for advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space.

These could trigger an arms race and the subsequent development of advanced missile systems, as well as an increase in the number of nuclear weapons.

While transparency and confidence-building measures are no substitute for arms control and disarmament measures, they can facilitate the implementation of disarmament agreements and verification activities. Transparency and confidence-building measures can play an important role in the formulation, adoption and implementation of a new treaty banning the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against space objects.

As in previous years, Cuba has decided to co-sponsor the draft resolutions on outer space that have been introduced in the First Committee. These are the draft resolutions entitled “Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities” (A/C.1/63/L.44) and “Prevention of an arms race in outer space” (A/C.1/63/L.4). We believe that those texts make a significant contribution to efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

**Mr. Wang Qun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China listened attentively to the statements made by previous speakers, in particular the statement made by the representative of the United States. However, China cannot accept the unwarranted allegations and charges that the United States levelled against the space tests carried out by China in January 2007.

China’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs has already expounded in great detail about those tests. Especially in the light of the current context, I shall not dwell on this issue. However, I wish to emphasize that China’s space tests were not directed against any particular country, threatened no country and violated no rule or provision of international law.

Not long ago, China successfully completed the Shenzhou VII manned space mission. That scientific and research exercise was another accomplishment on China’s journey of exploring and using outer space for peaceful purposes in an effort to scale new heights in science and technology. It made a significant contribution to humankind’s peaceful use of outer space. The test made us recognize once again that the distance between space and humankind is decreasing. Just like the land, the seas and the sky, space has become an essential part of human life.

With the swift development of space technology, space systems have been widely used, inter alia, in the fields of communication, navigation, remote sensing, early disaster warning and weather forecasting. Humankind’s reliance on outer space increases with each passing day. It is fair to say that the utilization of outer space is closely related to the well-being of all peoples.

However, the spectre of the weaponization of space has loomed ever since the day human beings first entered space. As recognized by an increasing number of officials and scholars, after more than half a century, the lofty frontier of space is no safer — or at least it has not appeared to be, particularly in recent years. Space is increasingly the subject of strategic and security considerations. It is considered strategically important by a number of countries and essential to the establishment of strategic and military superiority.

As certain countries continue to develop missile defence programmes, the possibility that military defence systems will enter space increases. It is regrettable that, while the threat of the weaponization of space is becoming increasingly real, the legal regime governing the use of space has remained unchanged since the 1970s, not having kept pace with the constantly developing field of space exploration and the swift progress made in space technology.

There is no denying that the existing international legal regime on space has played an important role in the maintenance of space security. However, it cannot prevent the placement in space of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction or prevent the threat or use of force against space objects. As the situation changes, the existing regime no longer meets the need to maintain long-term tranquillity in space.

China believes that, if we are to prevent a vicious circle of armament, disarmament and counter-proliferation, we must urgently fill the gaps in the existing space legal regime by negotiating a new legal instrument to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. The international community has already reached a common understanding in that regard. For more than two decades, the General Assembly has adopted, by overwhelming majorities of votes, resolutions banning the weaponization of outer space and calling for the negotiation of an international legal instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space.

China has always supported the conclusion of an international legal instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space through negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. For years, China, Russia and other countries have made many efforts in that regard. In February, China and Russia jointly submitted to the Conference a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. The draft treaty is based on a working document submitted to the Conference by China, Russia and other countries and takes account of the concerns of the relevant parties. It has been welcomed by the majority of members of the Conference. The draft treaty forms a basis on which the international community can negotiate a new legal instrument on space. It marks a significant step towards improving the space legal regime.

It is particularly noteworthy that, in August this year, China and Russia held a thematic symposium that served as a platform for detailed discussion. The participants engaged in frank and open discussions on the basic obligations, definitions and verification mechanisms related to the draft treaty. Many constructive suggestions and proposals were put forward, which greatly contributed to the further improvement of the draft treaty.

China notes that a number of countries, regions and academic institutions have made suggestions regarding the formulation of transparency and confidence-building measures in space. Such measures are conducive to the maintenance of space security. China has always been open to participating in relevant discussions by the international community. At the same time, we also believe that transparency and confidence-building measures are not legally binding and therefore cannot serve as substitutes for a new international legal instrument on space. Moreover, negotiating a new legal instrument on space will enhance mutual trust among countries and thus assist in the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures. Therefore, such measures in outer space are meaningful only within the framework of a legal instrument.

As humankind moves forward on the path of exploring and using outer space, the task of preventing the weaponization of outer space and maintaining space security is becoming increasingly urgent. China is willing to join with all parties concerned to improve

the international legal space regime so as to keep space free of all weapons, for the well-being of all humankind.

**Mr. Im Han-taek** (Republic of Korea): In the 50 years since the signing of the Outer Space Treaty, space technology has developed exponentially. Our daily lives have become more and more dependent on the peaceful use of outer space. All nations, spacefaring and non-spacefaring alike, have a common stake in ensuring that space is safeguarded as a common province of all mankind and should always be faithful to the responsibility to achieve that aim.

Many people in academia and the media are concerned about the possibility of militarizing outer space. Indeed, the damage that would be caused if satellite systems were to be targeted during a future war would be global. The devastating effects would become magnified, given the dual-use nature of space technologies such as those related to weapons of mass destruction. It is worrisome that the artificial barriers between civilian and military activities in space are already eroding.

On 12 February 2008, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China officially submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. The Republic of Korea takes the draft treaty as a meaningful basis for substantive discussions at the Conference on the agenda for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The draft treaty will provide a basis on which we can explore complex and abstract concepts and characteristics related to outer space. That will contribute to achieving a consensus on ways to enhance the peaceful uses of outer space for all humankind.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using the Conference on Disarmament as a forum to discuss ways to protect the peaceful use of outer space. My delegation believes that the Conference can address that issue in cooperation with other relevant international forums, such as the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the First and Fourth Committees of the United Nations and the International Telecommunication Union. We support enhanced dialogue among those forums. By sharing expertise and experiences, we will be able to find a viable solution to the matter.

My delegation would like to stress the need to enhance the security of space systems on the ground, given that the operation of a space object is connected through close contact with ground control centres. We must be alert to the vulnerability of the ground stations and control centres, since any disruptions or impingement on space systems on the ground may cause grave damage to the daily lives of innocent people worldwide. In that regard, my delegation would like to remind our colleagues here of the relevance of the physical protection of ground stations and control centres for sustaining the peaceful use of outer space.

The Republic of Korea has been actively pursuing peaceful space activities. In April 2008, Miss Yi So-yeon successfully completed her mission by carrying out 18 space science experiments during her 10-day stay at the International Space Station. In that process, the Government of the Republic of Korea worked closely with the Russian Federal Space Agency. That achievement, which fuelled the wholehearted support of the entire Korean people for space activities, marked a turning point in Korea's pursuit of the peaceful uses of outer space.

I should like to conclude my statement by reiterating my Government's full commitment to the collective efforts of the international community and to continue to cooperate with the international community on a peaceful space programme.

**Mrs. Wijewardane (Sri Lanka):** The Sri Lanka delegation attaches great importance to the consideration of the agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Sri Lanka, together with the delegation of Egypt, for many years introduced the First Committee draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, calling for the recommencing of stalled negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at the earliest. Last year, with an unprecedented number of sponsors, the resolution — resolution 62/20 — was adopted by 178 votes in favour.

It is well established that outer space must be maintained as the property of all humankind, and its exploration and use for peaceful purposes must be for the common good of humankind. While we acknowledge the positive role that progress in space technology can play in meeting global challenges, the potential threat of related dual-use technology is of great concern. My delegation is of the view that all

States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as a prerequisite to promoting and strengthening international cooperation in space exploration for peaceful purposes.

We note with regret, however, that the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has not yet come up with a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on that important subject. Therefore, we reiterate the call on the Conference to establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with an appropriate mandate for carrying out relevant negotiations in all its aspects.

Meanwhile, we have supported the important Russian-Chinese proposal on a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, presented at the Conference on Disarmament this year, as a constructive initiative. As human civilization enters the twenty-first century, the development of science and technology offers an unprecedented opportunity to explore and use outer space.

As we cheer every success in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, we are also concerned over a series of developments. Space military technology is advancing rapidly. New military and combat concepts and theories, such as control of space and occupation of space, are emerging, thereby triggering an arms race and what is known as a race to the bottom. An arms race in outer space has the potential to inflict catastrophe on humankind. Prior and informed awareness of that possibility should encourage the international community to conclude appropriate international instruments to regulate the security aspects of outer space.

The exploration and use of outer space benefit all humankind. However, the threats to space assets grow with our ever increasing use of outer space. Human activities are not only leaving waste on Earth, but also polluting space. Orbital paths are further cluttered by deserted spacecraft, discarded rocket debris and outer space junk, shed from hardware. Space debris is of great concern to countries that pursue space exploration. The accumulation of objects in Earth orbit has been increasing steadily in recent years and threatens space systems through the possibility of



collisions. Therefore, some scientists have warned that, if not controlled, the quantity of space debris will double in 100 years. The implementation of global action plans must start now before the loss of critical space systems occurs, but, more importantly, before the loss of human life results from that debris.

It is common knowledge that more and more satellites have been launched into outer space, more and more intelligent technology has been developed and more nations have become active in space. In effect, the world as a whole has become increasingly dependent on space activities involving vulnerable objects. All that heightens the importance of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. Concerted action to alleviate the threats to outer space security is an imperative need. Some advocate voluntary confidence-building measures, while others seek more ambitious proposals to prohibit the weaponization of space through multilateral negotiations.

Considering all the technical developments that have taken place in recent decades, it is important to acknowledge that the international instruments regulating outer space activities have not developed at the same pace. The existing legal regime for outer space fails to eliminate the danger of the militarization of outer space and is insufficient to prevent the deployment of weapons. There is a need for the international community to play a key role, as it has done so far, in defining the international legal framework so as to facilitate the peaceful uses of outer space and encourage international cooperation for the benefit of all mankind.

**Ms. Frost** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada believes strongly that continued access to and use of outer space by the global community in the future must not be jeopardized by human actions today. All countries must accept that as a common goal in the interests of future generations.

Canada commends this year's Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament and the other members for their efforts in working towards agreement on a programme of work. However, we are disappointed that those efforts were not conclusive. Our country remains convinced that the Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate forum for negotiating a legally binding treaty to prevent an arms race in space. Moreover, we welcome the informal

discussions of that issue this year at the Conference, which reaffirmed the need to address the deficiencies of existing mechanisms related to outer space. In particular, the Conference and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) should continue to cooperate to ensure complementarity of their efforts and thus avoid duplication.

Canada welcomes the contributions of many delegations to the discussions held thus far on the possible modalities of a negotiated treaty. Those contributions include the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, submitted by Russia and China at the Conference on Disarmament. The continuation of those discussions will prove useful to the clarification of certain legal and technical issues. While much certainly remains to be done, the progress made at the Conference in the debate on preventing an arms race in outer space will depend on members' ability to agree on a programme of work.

(*spoke in English*)

In addition to the Conference, Canada welcomes practical initiatives being pursued on a range of space issues in various forums to increase transparency, contribute to confidence-building efforts and maintain the sustainable use of the outer space environment. In that respect, for example, codes of conduct can serve as practical mechanisms for helping to define best practices and basic rules of the road for outer space. Canada also encourages all States to adopt and respect the COPUOS debris mitigation guidelines, a very meaningful step to help ensure the sustainable use of space for all.

Overall, we remain convinced of the need to develop an increasingly broad and encompassing approach to space security that includes not only addressing the weaponization of outer space, but also the broader military, environmental, commercial and civil dimensions. Practical steps towards achieving a common understanding of space security can serve to set in place a foundation for a more comprehensive regime, which may be built in the coming years.

The international community cannot allow divergences among our national security interests to blind us to our shared collective interest in preserving the secure and sustainable use of outer space for peaceful purposes. While progress towards a treaty

may be slow, there is much that we can all do today to build mutual confidence and prevent harmful incidents. Our discussions here in the First Committee and in other forums, including the Conference on Disarmament and COPUOS, require continued patience, but Canada holds out hope that they are moving us closer towards meeting our collective challenges relating to space.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.4.

**Mr. Aly** (Egypt): Since this is the first meeting to be held this week, Mr. Chairperson, I wish to strongly commend the leadership with which you have been guiding our work. I hope that we will make the best possible use of it.

I take the floor today to formally introduce the draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", contained in document A/C.1/63/L.4. It is similar in substance to General Assembly resolution 62/20 — which was submitted by Sri Lanka and adopted last year under the same agenda item — except for the necessary technical updating. Forty States have sponsored the draft resolution so far, and it remains open for further co-sponsorship until its consideration.

Since it is in the interest of all humankind that outer space remain exclusively for peaceful purposes, this draft resolution addresses an issue of particular importance. It emphasizes the importance of strict compliance with existing agreements, including bilateral agreements, related to outer space and with the legal regime concerning the use of outer space. It reaffirms that further measures should be examined in the search for effective and verifiable bilateral and multilateral agreements in order to prevent an arms race in outer space, including the weaponization of outer space.

Through this draft resolution, the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral forum with a primary mandate to negotiate multilateral agreements, is once again invited to establish an ad hoc committee on the issue as early as possible during its 2009 session. That would permit the close examination, in the context of negotiations, of a number of important initiatives that have been put forward within the framework of the Conference, including the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement

of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

We look forward to seeing this draft resolution enjoy the widest possible level of support this year and call on those States that either voted against or abstained in the voting on last year's resolution to reconsider their positions and to join the overwhelming majority of the members of the First Committee in supporting it, given the importance of this issue to the peace and security of humankind.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have just heard the last speaker on the theme "Outer space (disarmament aspects)".

I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind him that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second.

**Mr. Vasiliev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to make several comments regarding the statement made by the representative of the United States of America, specifically with respect to the possible joint formulation with the United States of a draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures.

In her statement, the representative of the United States stated that China and Russia "refused to agree to a neutral resolution on [transparency and confidence-building measures], unencumbered by linkages to space arms control constraints and limitations". Frankly, we did not begin our efforts in that area this year; we tried to carry out such work last year. The problem is that, both at the Conference on Disarmament and in the First Committee, we are addressing disarmament and arms control issues. If there is a need to elaborate a draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures within other bodies, specifically the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in Vienna, we could do so. Then, I believe, no one would try to encumber the draft resolution with the problems of disarmament and arms control.

In my view, when we discuss a treaty on weapons and non-proliferation, it is not correct to take the position that such treaties need to be neutral and unencumbered with the issue of disarmament

obligations. To the contrary, they are encumbered by obligations and, as I understand it, it is precisely the United States that intends to submit a draft resolution on compliance to the Committee at the present session. Indeed, that highlights the fact that such obligations must be carried out. Therefore, we continue to be open to discussions with the United States of America and other countries on issues related to the work of the First Committee or the Conference on Disarmament.

In the current climate, I do not know how politically correct it would be to refer to a statement made by a United States President belonging to the Democratic Party. However, I support the ideas expressed by the representative of the United States when, in her statement, she referred to a 1962 quotation from President John F. Kennedy:

“We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people.”

It is for precisely that reason that Russia wishes to engage with other nations so that we can ensure that space is peaceful and not think about how to use space to destroy one another.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded our debate on the cluster related to disarmament aspects of outer space.

We will now take up the next theme — conventional weapons. We will begin our consideration of this issue with an informal exchange with the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, Mr. Roberto García Moritán. I have the honour and pleasure of welcoming him to the First Committee and I invite him to make a statement.

**Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to say how pleased I am to see you presiding over the First Committee. Yours is a Latin American country of great prestige in regard to the issues before us, and I am very fond of it because it is where I learned to walk.

I would like to thank the Department for Disarmament Affairs and, in particular, Ambassador Duarte, for their great contribution to the work of the

Group of Governmental Experts on an arms trade treaty and, in particular, the contribution of the Group's Secretary, Ms. Pamela Maponga.

As representatives know, in 2006 a group of countries from various regions decided to present a draft resolution that would synthesize the efforts of the international community in recent decades to bolster transparency in the arms trade. The initial efforts were recorded in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978. In fact, there had been earlier such attempts in the twentieth century. We also know that quite a large number of countries have national controls on the transfer of conventional weapons.

However, over the years, it has been recognized that the implementation of arms transfer controls can take place only with international cooperation and that such cooperation requires a common language if it is to be effective. This common language would be offered by a single international instrument of global scope that would translate and synthesize the rights and obligations of States into international standards, in conformity with prevailing international law.

This was the spirit that guided the authors of resolution 61/89, introducing the initiative entitled “Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons”, adopted in 2006. The expectations generated by that resolution was reflected not only in the overwhelming majority that supported it — 153 votes in favour — but also in the record number of national responses, almost 100, sent to the Secretary-General in compliance with paragraph 1.

Resolution 61/89 was the beginning of a phased process to analyse the question without trying to force a negotiating process until there was a clear understanding of the aims of an international, legally binding instrument and, without building the necessary consensus to advance on this unprecedented measure within the United Nations.

For that reason, the creation of the Group of Governmental Experts which I had the honour of chairing was the first logical step of the initiative launched by resolution 61/89. The Group's task was not to negotiate or outline a draft treaty; on the contrary, its task was to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally

binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

The Group was composed of 28 delegates from a variety of countries and regions. This was a large number, but it enabled us to have a fluid exchange and highlighted the importance that many countries attach to this issue. The Secretary-General's choice of countries provided not only for an equitable geographical balance, but also for the inclusion of members' varying points of view on the subject. This is a very important point from the perspective of the sponsors, who were mindful of the need to guarantee a transparent and inclusive process in the framework of the United Nations.

Given these different points of view, the Chair faced several challenges, apparent in the voting pattern registered by the resolution in the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. However, the three sessions had their own dynamic and gave rise to progressive confidence-building among the experts. In other words, the sessions were very useful and evolved into an open and sincere exchange of opinions that promoted better understanding not just of the concerns of some countries about the feasibility of the initiative, but also of the favourable arguments in support of it.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that the Group's results would not have been possible without the contribution of the various experts, who, in very different ways, facilitated the work of the Chair in the substantive examination of the elements of the mandate and in the pursuit of a consensus report. In that regard, the final report of the Group of Experts was highly positive, given that it was the first opportunity for the United Nations to consider, under a General Assembly mandate, the elements that an international legally binding instrument on this question should contain.

I would now like to give a brief description of the issues debated throughout the three sessions of the Group of Experts. I will stress their importance and the different points of view of the participants.

Given the very careful wording of resolution 61/89, among the most important elements considered by the Group were the 101 opinions submitted by the Member States and two regional organizations in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/278) and its respective addenda, pursuant to paragraph 1 of the aforementioned resolution.

The research undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) was also very useful because it provided an analysis of these national responses. The research is organized around the main lines identified during the sessions of the Group. Some Member States offered specific proposals on how to outline an international instrument; others expressed doubts as to the need for one. As a result, the Chair's task was to try to strengthen the context in which the different issues could be examined and opinions exchanged, given the concerns of Member States regarding national defence and security and, of course, trade.

The Group of Governmental Experts also took into account existing regional and United Nations agreements, as well as progress made by the United Nations with respect to the Register of Conventional Arms.

I would like to stop here to consider the importance that debates on the Register of Conventional Arms has had on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts. That instrument is considered to be one of the starting points and perhaps the most important background in the consideration of drafting any arms trade treaty. Other instruments that are also considered to be important for an arms trade treaty are the Conference on Disarmament guidelines adopted in 1996 and the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In the light of those instruments, the Group of Governmental Experts worked to identify the efforts of the international community at the global level to promote transparency in the area of the transfer of conventional arms. Such efforts date from the time of the League of Nations.

While previous attempts to enhance transparency in the arms trade had been quite significant, it was also considered necessary to identify the characteristics and trends in the current international arms trade, including the effects of globalization and the diversification of the production chain. Thanks to the contributions of the experts, specific research was undertaken on the issue and is included in section III of the final report presented by the Group of Governmental Experts to the Secretary-General (A/63/334).

I would now like to raise some of those issues. First of all, regarding the question of the feasibility of an arms trade treaty, which is addressed in section IV of the report, we heard differing points of view and perspectives related to the general concept of that term and to the meaning of the words “feasibility” and “effectiveness”. Political and technical issues, which required us to consider the issue in very close relation to the other two aspects of our mandate — the questions of scope and parameters — were also addressed in our discussions.

We first considered the issues from the perspective of the characteristics an international instrument would need to have if it were to be feasible, such as definitions, transparency mechanisms, cooperation and assistance; it would have to be non-discriminatory, balanced and objective and not interfere in the domestic affairs of any State. These characteristics are just given as examples, given the fact that no universal instrument with such characteristics has been adopted at the global level.

Secondly, with regard to scope, our debates were very directly linked to the aforementioned debates on feasibility. In fact, in paragraph 21 of the report acknowledges that “no single existing instrument contains a list that might encompass the range of options raised in the submissions from Member States” on the question. In this context, once again, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was the reference tool of choice, with its seven categories that could be considered to be a minimum set of elements for delineating the scope of any possible instrument.

The question of small arms and light weapons was mentioned by many experts as a key element. Others also mentioned the need to include ammunition, explosives, weapons components and defence and technology services linked to the manufacturing of conventional weapons. The existence of broad definitions, alongside a periodic review process, would be one of the options to consider with regard to the future scope of a possible instrument.

Paragraph 22 of the report mentions the activities studied in the context of scope. In this context, several experts referred to the need to take into account illicit trade and illegal transfers to non-State actors. Several experts noted, as stated in paragraph 28 in the conclusions and recommendations section of the report, the issue of the diversion of legally transferred

weapons in the absence of the implementation of adequate international standards because such diversion could give rise to illicit trade.

Thirdly, the question of the parameters of a possible legally binding international instrument gave rise to intense exchanges of information regarding the elements to be taken into account when authorizing a transfer of weapons to prevent negative secondary consequences, including the question of diversion into the illicit market. Opinions differed, and the Group considered the possibility of applying international human rights standards and international humanitarian law. At the same time, it was emphasized that, in the implementation of such criteria, efforts would have to be made to ensure the objective and non-discriminatory application of standards that respect rights and obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 51, which is specifically mentioned in resolution 61/89. These debates also addressed all issues related to the operating parameters that an arms trade treaty must have in order to guarantee its full implementation, including transparency, cooperation and assistance mechanisms that would be essential to guaranteeing the effectiveness of a treaty.

As I mentioned previously, the Group of Governmental Experts that I had the honour to chair was the first opportunity for the United Nations to analyse the possibility of elaborating an instrument on the conventional weapons trade. For decades, the international community has striven to improve regulations on conventional weapons in order to avoid the destabilizing effects such weapons could have on international peace and security. The Group of Governmental Experts acknowledge, in paragraph 29 of their report, that,

“In order to begin improving the current situation, the Group recognized the need for all States to ensure that their national systems and internal controls are at the highest possible standards”.

However, it is acknowledged that the effective implementation of transfer controls can take place only through international cooperation. Such international cooperation, if it is to be effective, requires a common language. It is precisely that common language that would be included in a possible international instrument on the subject.

Resolution 61/89 and the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts have undoubtedly been one of the most important issues before this First Committee in recent years. The Committee must now consider the steps it must take, given the work achieved, and decide to what extent the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts are acceptable.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. García Moritán for his statement and excellent work. I think all delegations join me in thanking him for his substantial and comprehensive work. The fact that he took his first steps in my country makes me very proud.

We will now continue our discussion in an informal format.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.*

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now give the floor to those delegations wishing to make statements or introduce draft resolutions on conventional weapons.

**Mr. Danon** (France) (*spoke in French*): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, together with their accumulation and uncontrolled dissemination, are today the primary threats to the security of the great majority of the inhabitants of our planet.

The European Union is strongly committed to eradicating the accumulation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. It has adopted a specific strategy for that effort, as well as a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, a Joint Action on combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and a Common Position committing Member States to introduce national legislation aimed at the effective control of brokering

activities. The Union's Strategy on small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is comprehensive and includes technical and financial assistance for a broad range of programmes.

The European Union is convinced of the need to provide assistance to countries affected by armed violence. In that context, we reaffirm our support for the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Additional resources should be mobilized to support the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, particularly in developing countries. However, such goodwill and resources will not be enough to make a difference without the firm political will and resolve of national administrations to commit themselves to the objectives set out in the Programme of Action.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action resulted in the adoption of a substantive report whose content will truly make it possible to improve and strengthen such implementation. In that respect, we commend the remarkable work accomplished by Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis in presiding over the Meeting. We regret that, because of the attitude of just one delegation, the report had to be adopted by means of a vote. We reaffirm that, in our view, the review cycles must continue to include review conferences and biennial meetings to assess, on a consensual basis, the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The European Union is determined to play its full part in the multilateral effort to facilitate appropriate implementation of the International Instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. On 12 February 2008, its member States adopted a Joint Action allocating €300,000 in support of the Instrument.

States have become aware of the problem of the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons and, for the first time, have begun to address it at the global level through the United Nations Programme of Action. The European Union believes that the Programme's specific provisions on brokering should be implemented more robustly.

The Group of Governmental Experts met in 2007 and produced a substantial report. The report argues for intensified international cooperation and proposes ways to promote it. The Group also agreed — and this was not the least of its achievements — on a mutually acceptable definition of what is covered by the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. Now there is a need to move on to the implementation of all the recommendations set out in the report.

The fight against the illicit trade in ammunition remains another task that is urgent and inseparable from the anti-weapons campaign. Uncontrolled stocks of ammunition contribute to the risks of trafficking and proliferation and help to prolong and intensify armed conflicts. They are also a threat to security, health and the environment.

The work of the Group of Governmental Experts on conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, the establishment of which was initiated by two European Union Member States, Germany and France, led this year to the drafting and adoption of a substantial report that we would like to commend here. The report, circulated to Member States in document A/63/182, will be considered at this session of the General Assembly, which will decide on the content of a draft resolution to be adopted by this Committee. We welcome the report and its recommendations, and we shall build on it in order to involve the international community in this field.

The European Union continues strongly to encourage progress in strengthening controls on the transfer of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. This year, we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, which has made a significant contribution to that objective. The European Union also continues to attach great importance to the efforts made under the Wassenaar Arrangement.

Every day, people throughout the world are affected by irresponsible transfers of arms. The negative impact of this phenomenon on peace, reconstruction, security, stability, respect for human rights and sustainable development hurts developing countries, particularly Africa, most of all. That is why the European Union firmly supports the drafting of a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. The European Union

is convinced that the United Nations is the only appropriate forum for creating a truly universal instrument.

The European Union welcomes the very strong appeal launched by the States and civil society in favour of establishing a treaty so as to better regulate trade in conventional weapons. With the adoption two years ago of resolution 61/89 by an overwhelming majority, this movement led to the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts which has held meetings throughout this year. At the end of its discussions, it succeeded, by common accord among all its members, in providing the Secretary-General and all Member States with an opinion on this question that was enlightened, studied and representative of all sensibilities present.

The report (A/63/334) will be considered during this session of the General Assembly, which will decide on the appropriate follow-up to be given to it by means of a resolution that we shall adopt within this Committee. Based on the work already done by the General Assembly, the framework for which was provided under the terms of resolution 61/89, it recommends that the work started in the United Nations should be pursued.

The States members of the European Union believe that we must pursue our efforts along the path already engaged towards the establishment of a legally binding instrument by which the Member States would undertake, in particular, to examine applications for authorization of conventional arms exports on which they are required to give their national opinion, making full use of their sovereignty and employing a number of criteria. Such jointly defined criteria should in particular aim to prevent such transfers from contributing to actions constituting a violation of fundamental rights recognized by the United Nations Charter, undermining the regional stability of the zone concerned, or indisputably hindering the development of the countries concerned. To that end, the creation within the United Nations of an open-ended working group mandated to define the scope and parameters of such an instrument would appear to us to be the next most logical step in the process.

We have worked with other States on the destruction, storage and security management of man-portable air defence system (MANPADS), and shall continue to work very actively to assist those States

that are unable to do so to secure their stockpiles and destroy their surpluses of such weapons. The European Union urges other States to contribute towards this task. The European Union fully supports the intensification of efforts to prevent the illicit transfer of and unauthorized access to MANPADS, especially through the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions adopted each year by consensus.

The European Union welcomes the progress made in the universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Significant progress has been made in clearing mined areas and assisting victims, but much still remains to be done. The European Union remains fully committed to implementing the Nairobi Action Plan adopted at the first Review Conference in 2004. The Nairobi conference adopted the ambitious Plan, which will remain our road map until next year. We hope that next year's Review Conference will enable us to give new impetus to the efforts required to reach the objective of a world without anti-personnel mines or any further victims. The meeting of the States parties last year in Jordan was a significant step in this respect. We thank the Kingdom of Jordan for the energy and resources it put into hosting that meeting.

Promoting the universality of the Ottawa Convention remains a priority. Ten years ago, more than 15 countries were producing and selling anti-personnel mines. A major effort has been achieved since then to prohibit the production of and trade in those weapons. Almost 80 per cent of States have now acceded to the Convention, but several important countries remain outside the Convention. We call on all those States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

The European Union and its member States continue to provide major financial and technical assistance to anti-mine action worldwide. Over the past 10 years, this financial support has totalled €1.5 billion. We encourage other States that are able to do so to give more sustained assistance to countries affected by mines. The European Union believes that particular emphasis should be placed on demining and assistance to victims. The rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors are crucial tasks that must be incorporated into a broader context.

The European Union remains very committed to conserving the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), which is a key element of humanitarian international law. It has decided to actively support its universalization through a Joint Action of more than €800,000 which it launched here last year in the margins of the First Committee.

The European Union is deeply concerned by the humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions. It considers it essential to make strong commitments in this area that are likely to have concrete results on the ground and for the victims of these weapons, and to have a true humanitarian impact. All European Union member States, either as stakeholders or as observers, attended the Diplomatic Conference held in Dublin last May, at which the text of an ambitious convention was adopted that will be open for signature in Oslo in December 2008.

The European Union considers that this initiative and the discussions pursued in parallel to the CCW were mutually enriching and reinforced each other, and that the outcome of the Dublin Conference represents a strong signal that should encourage States parties to the CCW to pursue their efforts with the firm commitment to concluding a credible legally binding instrument in Geneva. In any case, the European Union stresses that the future instrument will have to be compatible with the text of the document adopted in Dublin by two thirds of the States parties to the CCW, even if the two instruments may vary as to their States parties, their field of application and their implementing procedures.

The European Union hopes that an agreement may be reached on this matter between States parties to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons by the end of 2008 and that the negotiating mandate approved in November 2007 will thereby be entirely fulfilled. The success of this negotiation in the context of the CCW, which brings together most States producing and using cluster munitions worldwide, would send a strong signal of the desire of the States parties, and in particular those with large stocks of such weapons, to strengthen the role of the CCW as the preferred instrument for addressing cross-cutting issues of disarmament and international humanitarian law.



The European Union feels that the results of the four working sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts in Geneva in 2008 are encouraging. The proposed field and scope of the prohibitions and restrictions of a future instrument may serve as a starting point for the November negotiations. It is also encouraging that a number of countries which hitherto had serious reservations on the very principle of bans have initially assessed the text in a positive manner.

Transparency in the field of conventional weapons is a key component in combating the uncontrolled circulation of such weapons and for promoting an atmosphere of trust and security. We recall the very useful contribution made in this respect by the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. As expressed in the common response to the Secretary-General, European Union member States favour the expansion of the Register in 2009 through the inclusion of a separate category for small arms and light weapons.

Transparency in the field of military expenditure is a key element for trust between States and for conflict prevention. The European Union welcomes the fact that, through implementation of resolution 60/44, participation in the mechanism for national reports on military expenditure has increased regularly since its establishment in 1981. However, the increase in global military expenditures since 1999 emphasizes the need for an effective mechanism, which is why the Union welcomes and supports last year's decision to set up a group of governmental experts to examine the implementation and development of a standard instrument to account for military expenditures. The European Union is devoting particular attention to the preparations for the group's work, which will begin in 2010. States not yet having done so are urged to submit their report.

**Mr. Guimarães (Brazil)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of member and associated States of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR): Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my country, Brazil.

MERCOSUR member and associated States believe that confidence-building measures are an important tool to attain global peace and security as a

complement to the efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation. The implementation and consolidation of such measures help to reduce uncertainties, prevent conflicts and constitute an effective mechanism to foster greater political, economic and cultural integration through greater transparency and cooperation in the fields of defence and security.

Our region has been a pioneer in the implementation of confidence-building measures and as such has witnessed their benefits in terms of the strengthening of peace and the consolidation of democracy through increased transparency and dialogue between countries in the hemisphere. Confidence-building measures have thereby become essential and irreplaceable components of a network of bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation agreements that have historically evolved as complements to security institutions. At the same time, we recognize the need to develop and implement new confidence-building measures to address the multidimensional nature and scope of security and therefore have agreed to develop non-military measures to complement the activities and initiatives undertaken by other forums with the goal of improving confidence among States.

In the light of this understanding, since the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly we have actively supported the resolution promoted by Argentina on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We therefore invite all States to support the draft resolution to be presented at this session, and we encourage them all to contribute to the electronic database created under these resolutions, which simplifies the regular search for updates in the global design and implementation of confidence-building measures.

The issue of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is of great importance to MERCOSUR member and associated States. We have spoken on this matter on previous occasions, underlining our support for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and expressing the need for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism for it.

We welcome the fact that a substantive document was approved at the conclusion of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which took place in July

2008 in New York. We believe that this instrument examines important issues and underscores recommendations that, if implemented, will allow progress to be made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

In this respect, we wish to recall some of the views expressed by MERCOSUR member and associated States in the working paper presented during the Third Biennial Meeting with the intention of fostering commitments and encouraging action on issues of fundamental importance to this issue. We believe that the development and adoption of such commitments and actions are important steps towards the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Such commitments would include the inclusion of ammunition and explosives under the concept of “all its aspects” referred to in the Programme of Action in such a way as to allow for a comprehensive approach — this is one of the challenges for the effective implementation of the Programme; the establishment of legally binding instruments on marking, tracing and illicit brokering; the establishment of effective verification systems of end-user certificates and the development of an international framework for their authentication, consolidation, reconciliation and standardization; and, finally, the promotion and strengthening of cooperation, international assistance and national capacity-building as cross-cutting issues of the Programme of Action.

We believe that only through the active participation of all States can we tackle the problem of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We reiterate our commitment to continuing to work to that end.

MERCOSUR member and associated States believe that the Ottawa Convention is effective proof of what can be achieved when there is clear political will to address a grave humanitarian challenge, and we support its universalization. In this regard, we welcome the fact that Palau late last year became a State party to the Convention, which now has 156 signatories. We urge States that have not yet done so, in particular those that still produce and stockpile anti-personnel landmines, to adhere to the instrument.

MERCOSUR member and associated States reaffirm their support for the efforts to ban the use of cluster munitions and, in particular, to reduce the

injurious humanitarian effects of the use of such weapons. In this context, we note the convening of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, held in May 2008. We also take note of efforts made in the context of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We hope that both processes enjoy widespread support and universal participation.

In 2006, we witnessed the adoption by a broad majority of resolution 61/89, in which the international community recognized that the absence of common international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is a factor contributing to conflict, the displacement of people, crime and terrorism, thereby undermining peace, reconciliation, security, stability and sustainable development. In this context, there is growing support for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, to establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

While respecting the premise that no regulation shall undermine the inherent right of States to legitimate self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter, or the right of all States to produce, import, export, transfer and possess conventional weapons for their legitimate defence and security needs and to participate in peacekeeping operations, we take note of the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts established to consider the issue.

In that regard, we support further consideration of measures relating to the international trade in conventional weapons in a balanced, open and transparent manner in the context of this Organization. Also, we agree that, in order to improve the current situation, it is necessary for all States to ensure that their national systems and internal controls abide by the strictest possible standards and that States in a position to do so provide assistance in that regard when requested.

**Mr. Ruddyard** (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). NAM reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms for their self-defence and security needs. We express our concern about unilateral

coercive methods and emphasize that no undue restriction should be placed on the transfer of such arms. We recognize the significant imbalance in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons between the industrialized and the non-aligned countries and call for a significant reduction in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons by the industrialized States, with a view to enhancing international and regional peace and security.

NAM remains deeply concerned over the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their accepted accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. We recognize the need to establish and maintain control over the private ownership of small arms. We call on all States, in particular major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited to Governments or entities duly authorized by Governments and to implement legal restrictions that prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We encourage all initiatives by States to mobilize resources and expertise and to provide assistance to strengthen the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

NAM emphasizes the importance of early and full implementation of the Programme of Action and, in that regard, emphasizes that international assistance and cooperation are essential aspects for its full implementation. We express our disappointment at the inability of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 26 June to 7 July 2006, to agree to a final document.

We note the Third Biennial Meeting of States, held in New York from 14 to 18 July 2008, which considered the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme. We reaffirm the full validity of the Programme and encourage Member States to coordinate efforts within the United Nations with a view to reaching agreement on a follow-up to the Programme, in order to ensure its full implementation.

We call for the full implementation of the International Instrument adopted by the General Assembly to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons.

NAM continues to deplore the use, in contravention of international humanitarian law, of anti-personnel mines in conflict situations aimed at maiming, killing and terrorizing innocent civilians, denying them access to farmland, causing famine and forcing them to flee their homes, eventually leading to the depopulation of and preventing the return of civilians to their place of original residence. We call upon all States in a position to do so to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to landmine clearance operations, and to ensure the social, economic rehabilitation of victims and full access to affected countries for material, equipment, technology and financial resources for mine clearance. NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction invite those States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Convention.

NAM States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions and Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and its Protocol encourage States to become parties to the Convention and its Additional Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War. We recognize the adverse humanitarian impact of the use of cluster munitions and emphasize the Movement's principled position on the central role of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and arms control. We take note of the continuing consideration of the issue of cluster munitions in the context of the CCW. We also take note of the Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, held in Dublin from 19 to 30 May 2008.

**Mr. Degia** (Barbados): As this is the first time, Sir, that my delegation has taken the floor during this session, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I am confident that you will acquit yourself admirably in guiding the work of the Committee, and I assure you that you have the full cooperation of my delegation.

I have the honour to intervene in the thematic discussions on the issue of conventional weapons on

behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM considers the following points to be of crucial importance to the region in the discussions under the agenda item.

In any discussion of conventional weapons, and particularly small arms and light weapons, and indeed of disarmament in general, CARICOM's primary assertion is that CARICOM countries are not arms producers, do not import weapons on a large scale or re-export them. Yet, the region still finds itself afflicted by the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which in many respects is largely due to external factors and its unique geographical position.

The serious challenges and threats posed by the clear linkage between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and related transnational organized crime require concerted action and a multidimensional approach at all levels. Issues such as brokering, stockpile management, marking and tracing, binding arms transfer controls, ammunition and possession by non-State actors and civilians are all inextricably linked and must be addressed as part of an holistic approach to the fight against small arms and light weapons.

CARICOM remains fully committed to the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and participated actively in the Third Biennial Meeting of States in July 2008. We welcome the report of that Meeting and the renewed emphasis it has placed on the role of the United Nations in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

CARICOM agrees that national responsibility and national and regional action are important in any effort to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Community has devoted significant effort and resources towards enhancing national and regional security through various processes. Indeed, in February 2007 CARICOM heads of Government made a decision to recognize security as the fourth pillar of the Community and have sought to widen the regional integration movement beyond an economic level to encompass a comprehensive strengthening of regional security. However, the fact that the problem is largely an externally imposed one in the Caribbean and that we live in an interdependent world where the illicit trade

pays no respect to borders means that there are limits to regional cooperation.

Action at the international level, centred within the context of the United Nations, and enhanced international cooperation and assistance are crucial. The international community, and particularly those States that engage in the trade of arms, are morally and ethically obliged to play a much larger role than they do currently.

International cooperation and assistance should be wide-ranging in scope and based on the specific needs of countries and regions. The provision of international cooperation and assistance must not be subject to any conditionalities, and the link between illicit trade and its impact on development should not be used in any way to impose conditionalities on assistance.

CARICOM believes that there is an urgent need for greater transparency in the manner in which the international trade in weapons is conducted. The greater transparency, responsibility and accountability of those engaging significantly in the trade are critical, and CARICOM fully supports a strong, legally binding arms trade treaty in this regard. CARICOM looks forward to the implementation of the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts and the start of negotiations towards an eventual final treaty.

The region has always placed great emphasis on the link between illicit trade and the impact on development. The region also places great emphasis on human development and the burdens posed by the illicit trade on our efforts at improving socio-economic development are great. On the other hand, poverty and stagnation in socio-economic development can lead to increasing crime and security problems and the study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) last year on these issues in Central America and the Caribbean speaks to this. However, we must stress here that CARICOM opposes any attempt to use in any way as a conditionality the fact that illicit trade impacts negatively on development.

Finally, CARICOM has felt that despite the serious threat to our security, stability and development posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, our situation is sometimes marginalized and our voices ignored. The closing of the UNODC regional office in Barbados, which served a total of 29 States

and territories in the Caribbean, is a primary example of that, and CARICOM calls for the urgent reopening of the office, a move that would serve to demonstrate the commitment of the United Nations system and the international community to assisting the region in its efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

**Mr. Reina Idiaquez** (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I am speaking as Acting President of the Central American Integration System (SICA) — composed of Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, and to which Mexico associates itself — I congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. It is an honour for our subregion to see you presiding over the work of this Committee devoted to disarmament and international security. We also acknowledge the work of the other members of the Bureau.

The members of SICA and Mexico believe that security is and has been an essential factor in the development of peoples and the international community. We are aware that the concepts of security and development have not always gone hand in hand or been part of our agenda, yet are both essential to the future of humanity. Today, we are seeking to consider them from a broad and multidimensional perspective through various initiatives to establish links of cooperation and coordination in the political, legal and security fields that would facilitate, in accordance with international law, actions to prevent, combat and to eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all of its aspects.

Sources of insecurity include not only traditional threats or even the contemporary challenge of terrorism, but also the dangers arising from the increase in crime that is indiscriminately threatening our societies in the form of drug trafficking, organized crime, the growing activity of armed gangs fuelled by the illegal traffic in these arms, and other phenomenon such as natural disasters, the consequences of which also threaten our nations. In Central America, according to statistics compiled by one police force, 50 per cent of murders result from gunfire. That is why we are increasingly concerned by the illegal trade of these weapons.

With respect to conventional arms, we would refer first and foremost to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and to its follow-up mechanisms. In this regard, the members of SICA and Mexico welcomed and participated actively in the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in July last year. As proof of the importance and the commitment of our subregion to this process, we presented a working document that contributed to the consideration of all items on the agenda.

The final document of the Meeting emphasized the importance of establishing follow-up mechanisms for the Programme of Action that would allow us to identify progress made towards the established objectives and to move ahead on the recommendations, including those in the report.

In this context, we cannot fail to mention the issues of importance to our subregion. They include the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on illicit brokering; the adoption of standards to regulate the civil possession of firearms so that they do not end up on the illicit market; the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the marking and tracing of weapons; consideration of the issue of munitions, which is intrinsically linked to the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons; and the strengthening of cooperation and international technical and financial assistance on a responsible and complementary basis without pre-existing conditions. This is a priority issue for our countries, given the great number of deaths that these weapons cause in our subregion. We therefore reiterate our full support for the implementation of the Programme of Action. We believe that ongoing joint efforts will be required to address this problem.

SICA members and Mexico know that the arms trade has a devastating effect on our societies. That is why we participate in the work of the First Committee and are convinced of the need for a legally binding instrument regulating the conventional arms trade. We also therefore welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms (A/63/334), in particular the

recommendation to continue to examine measures dealing with the international arms trade.

In this respect, SICA members and Mexico fully support the draft resolution coordinated by the delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of seven sponsors, proposing the establishment of an open-ended working group to pursue discussions on the issue in a staggered, open and transparent manner in order to ultimately reach a legally binding treaty on the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons.

We would also like to address the issue of cluster munitions. As countries that do not produce, use or stockpile such weapons, and aware of the grave humanitarian consequences of such munitions for civilian populations, we welcome the results of the process that began with the Oslo declaration, which culminated in the recent adoption, at the Dublin Diplomatic Convention, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Convention prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions and establishes a framework for cooperation, assistance for victims, the demining of contaminated areas and the destruction of arsenals.

We therefore call on the international community to keep the importance of the Oslo process in mind and to join this initiative, which complements and in no way contradicts the efforts undertaken in the context of the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. Unequivocal support for the goal of declaring the region a zone free from cluster munitions would be an unconditional sign of the firm commitment of the countries of the region to the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, and of general and complete disarmament.

In this respect, we would also like to call on countries that manufacture cluster munitions to immediately discontinue their production. So long as cluster munitions are being produced, it will be impossible to suppress demand for them. We reiterate our call on the international community to join the support for the instrument adopted in Dublin, which was opened for signature on 3 December 2008 in Oslo.

Central America, which has witnessed a series of conflicts in the past, has suffered from the massive mining of terrain in various areas throughout the

region. Some 176,332 mines have been laid in Nicaragua alone, representing 98.1 per cent of the total number of mines laid in Central America, according to the records kept by the mine-clearance programme created with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1993.

The percentage of mines laid in the 1980s in other Central American countries is as follows: 1.37 per cent in Honduras; 0.31 per cent in Guatemala; and 0.2 per cent in Costa Rica. El Salvador, for its part, thanks to international cooperation efforts and the resources made available in 1990, has begun its own mine-clearance programme. Thanks to the mine-clearance programme undertaken by the OAS, all of the countries of the region, with the exception of Nicaragua, have been declared mine-free.

The delay in the operations in Nicaragua is due to the recent discovery of new mine fields; difficulties of access to the mine fields; inaccuracies in the mine installation registries, when they exist; the suspension of the canine teams due to budgetary issues; and the displacement of mines by water flows resulting from intense rains. All of these factors have led Nicaragua on several occasions to push back the estimated date for the completion of mine-clearance efforts throughout the country.

There remain 124 communities in Nicaragua, with a total population of approximately 27,000 people living within five miles or less of a mine field. The National Commission for Mine Clearance in Nicaragua therefore, with the support of the OAS Assistance Programme for Demining in Central America, carries out preventive education campaigns aimed both at reducing unsafe behaviour and at mitigating the risky behaviour that is observed in some of the affected communities.

Faced with this situation, we call on the donor community to provide, in the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the technical and financial support necessary to complete the mine-clearance efforts in Nicaragua. In addition, we call on that community to support, in the framework of the Convention, the measures proposed in the Nairobi Action Plan, in particular by supporting rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for the victims of anti-personnel mines in all countries of the region.

Allow me to conclude by expressing the commitment of SICA members and Mexico to the disarmament, non-proliferation and international security agenda that inspires this Committee. We reiterate our conviction that only a multilateral focus on and common responsibility in these matters will enable us to maintain international peace and security.

**Mr. Harris** (Denmark): Denmark fully associates itself with the cluster statement on conventional weapons made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union. I would, however, like to add a few points to highlight the importance that Denmark attaches to the efforts made towards the early adoption of an international arms trade treaty.

Denmark has strongly supported the arms trade treaty initiative from an early stage. The Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs was expressing his support for a legally binding treaty at the General Assembly as early as 2005. We were therefore pleased to note the wide support obtained for resolution 61/89 in 2006 and strongly encourage all States to support this year's draft resolution entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms", contained in document A/C.1/63/L.39. We also continue to appreciate the active involvement in and substantive contributions of civil society to this important matter.

The absence of international standards for the arms trade is contributing to an aggravation of armed violence, conflicts, the displacement of people, crime and terrorism. A comprehensive international binding instrument to provide a regulatory framework for the transfer of conventional arms is therefore needed. Denmark thus strongly supports the adoption of an arms trade treaty within the United Nations system that establishes legally binding common standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, while respecting the right of States Members of the United Nations to acquire arms for legitimate self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter.

The treaty should cover all conventional weapons in order to effectively support the efforts of the United Nations towards international peace, security, stability and sustainable social and economic development. An arms trade treaty must also include strong provisions regarding respect for international law, including human rights law, humanitarian law and the United Nations Charter. We must prevent weapons from being

transferred when there is a serious risk that they will contribute to the violation of human rights and humanitarian law.

For a more detailed account of the Danish position, allow me to refer to the Danish response to the Secretary-General's request for views on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument, establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

Denmark welcomes the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established in 2008 and its recommendations. Denmark strongly supports further efforts within the United Nations to address the need for common standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, including the establishment of an open-ended working group, and we encourage all Member States to actively support further work towards the adoption of an arms trade treaty.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I have been informed that all delegations have submitted their draft resolutions on time, for which I offer my deep thanks. The secretariat is now preparing the draft resolutions in draft working documents. We have 58 draft resolutions registered so far. As of tomorrow, they will be put to the Committee for its consideration. I reiterate my thanks to representatives for respecting the deadline. That is a definite step forward in our work.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to make an announcement.

**Mr. Sareva** (Secretary of the Committee): On behalf of the secretariat, I would like to announce that those delegations that wish to appear as additional co-sponsors of draft resolutions can sign up with the secretariat now, as indicated last week, in the meeting room to the right of the podium. Co-sponsorship lists will be available for each and every one of the drafts. Of course, if the sponsor has previously indicated that it would like to keep the list closed, naturally, additional co-sponsors will not be accepted.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the United Kingdom has asked to make a statement.

**Mr. Duncan** (United Kingdom): There will be a meeting in conference room A at 3 p.m. for sponsors of the arms trade treaty draft resolution.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*