



# General Assembly

Sixty-third session

## First Committee

**4**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 8 October 2008, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Official Records*

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

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

### Agenda items 81 to 96 (*continued*)

#### General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

**Mr. Kim Bong-hyun** (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to join others in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee and also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I am confident that under your able leadership we will be skilfully guided through the deliberations ahead. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in these noble endeavours.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery remains the gravest challenge facing humankind. The possibility of their use by terrorists is not a mere hypothesis. At the same time, the integrity of and confidence in the nuclear non-proliferation regime are being challenged by several cases of non-compliance, while the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament is deepening the rift between the nuclear haves and have-nots.

Despite all of the setbacks and challenges, the central role of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the foundation of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament remains unchanged, and it is vital that the regime be strengthened and improved. As the upcoming 2010 NPT Review Conference will be a very important milestone for the future of the NPT regime,

all our common efforts should be pursued in earnest to make it a success.

Aside from the ongoing efforts to achieve the universality of the NPT, we believe that the Treaty's monitoring and verification mechanism needs to be strengthened through the universalization of the Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This has assumed even greater importance in view of the current renaissance of nuclear energy amid the challenges of the energy crisis and climate change.

Also, if an increase in civilian use of nuclear energy is an irreversible trend, we should make efforts to minimize the risks entailed in the increase in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In this regard, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are both priority issues.

The peaceful resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue is vital in securing lasting peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula and beyond, as well as in sustaining the integrity of the non-proliferation regime. The Republic of Korea maintains a firm position that a nuclear-armed Democratic People's Republic cannot be tolerated and that that nuclear issue must be resolved peacefully through the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

Currently, the Six-Party process stands at a crucial juncture. We need to complete the outstanding measures in the second phase of the denuclearization process agreed at the Six-Party Talks, in particular the adoption of a verification protocol. We should also

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commence negotiations on the next phase, in which the Democratic People's Republic will abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in accordance with the September 19 Joint Statement adopted by the Six-Party Talks.

In this regard, the recent move by the Democratic People's Republic to restore the disabled facilities is highly regrettable. We urge the Democratic People's Republic to immediately resume disablement measures so that the momentum generated by the Six-Party Talks process can be maintained and the denuclearization process can move forward. The Government of the Republic of Korea requests the continued support of the international community to that end.

Parallel efforts should be made to strengthen the disarmament norms for other classes of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), particularly the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

The Republic of Korea has attached great importance to the full and effective implementation of the CWC and has done its best for the achievement of the Convention's goals. In that regard, we note with satisfaction the steady increase in the membership of the CWC and the progress made in the destruction of chemical weapons by States parties.

With respect to the BWC, we reaffirm our commitment to build upon the momentum created at the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties and to make further progress towards the seventh Review Conference. We also welcome the extension until 2011 of the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004), which has a substantial role to play in curbing the proliferation of WMD to non-State actors. We note with satisfaction that the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has succeeded in producing a report (A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3) with a substantial set of recommendations to address the four key issues, namely, international cooperation assistance, illicit brokering, stockpile management and surplus destruction, and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. As part of our contribution to this process, the Republic of

Korea hosted a regional workshop on the International Tracing Instrument in Seoul last May and assumed the role of facilitator for the illicit brokering session of the Third Biennial Meeting.

We also welcome the reports issued following substantial exchanges of views by two groups of governmental experts, namely the Group of Governmental Experts on an arms trade treaty (see A/63/334) and the Group of Governmental Experts on the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (see A/63/182). With regard to cluster munitions the Republic of Korea fully recognizes the need to reduce humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions and supports international efforts to regulate their use. We are of the view that due consideration should be given in the negotiation process to the differences in security conditions, military utility and economic and technological capabilities of each State.

In that regard, my delegation believes that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which is participated in by major producers, users and stockpilers, is the right framework in which to discuss the issue. The Republic of Korea hopes that the CCW negotiations will bear fruit, leading in November to the establishment of an international instrument to address the humanitarian effects of cluster munitions.

Before closing, my delegation would like to call attention to the annual United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues which the Republic of Korea has been co-hosting with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs since 2002. This year's meeting will take place on Jeju Island from 24 to 26 November under the title of "The Nuclear Renaissance and the NPT: reinforcing the three pillars of the NPT". We hope that the conference will serve as a valuable opportunity for an extensive exchange of views on the three pillars of the NPT and will contribute to international efforts towards a successful 2010 review process.

Finally, allow me to offer a few words on the new draft resolution that the Republic of Korea and Australia will submit to the First Committee under the tentative title of "Prevention of illicit brokering activities". Based upon the understanding that all types of proliferation activities can be effectively addressed by focusing on illicit brokering per se, the draft

resolution calls upon States to establish appropriate national laws and/or measures and encourages States to fully implement existing relevant international treaties, instruments and resolutions. The draft resolution reaffirms that such actions should not hamper legitimate trade and also underlines the inherent right of States to determine the specific scope and content of domestic regulations. We would like to request the support of all Member States for that draft resolution.

**Mr. MacKay** (New Zealand): It is a great pleasure, Sir, to see you in the Chair of the First Committee. You can certainly be assured of my delegation's full support as you lead us through the Committee's comprehensive work programme.

The stand-out achievement for disarmament in 2008 was the will of international community to deal with the humanitarian impact of the cluster munitions even if it meant stepping outside the comfort of traditional consensus arms-control frameworks. The new Convention on Cluster Munitions endorsed by over 100 States in May demonstrates the value of committed partnership between disarmament, humanitarian and civil society experts in order to achieve substantive results for civilians on the ground. New Zealand is proud to be a member of the core group that drives the Oslo process, and we will sign the treaty on 3 December in Oslo, along with many other countries. We need to ensure that any outcome under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons complements this significant humanitarian achievement.

The Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects also illustrated this year that consensus should not be a goal in itself. Fortunately, the Biennial Meeting was able to achieve substantive progress on a number of detailed measures for furthering the international community's work on small arms, and put the implementation of the Programme of Action back on a firmer footing after an uncertain few years.

Ongoing progress in the Group of Governmental Experts examining the prospects for an arms trade treaty has also been encouraging. And New Zealand remains a strong supporter of a new, legally binding international instrument governing the trade in small arms and light weapons as the outcome of that work.

While progress was possible on some disarmament issues in 2008, the constraints of consensus continued to block efforts to enable the Conference on Disarmament to recommence negotiations. We continue to believe that using procedural objectives to prevent the commencement of negotiations is an unfortunate and unnecessary use of the consensus principle, to say the least, particularly given that there are several layers of safeguards required during the negotiation and adoption phases of the work of the Conference on Disarmament so as to ensure that the security interests of all States are accommodated. We support recent suggestions that the Conference should review its procedural mechanisms in 2009, and we urge all delegations in the Conference to exercise maximum flexibility to enable the Conference to recommence substantive negotiations.

Creating a world safe from nuclear weapons remains one of the international community's most urgent priorities. It is clear that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) requires a sense of renewed ownership and energy from all of its States parties in support of its full implementation. Priority areas for New Zealand are nuclear disarmament, revision of nuclear doctrine, transparency and confidence-building measures and the de-alerting of nuclear weapons. I will expand further on those issues during the nuclear disarmament segment of our work.

We commend the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, in verifying that nuclear technologies are employed solely for peaceful uses. The IAEA additional protocol is a key tool in this respect and, in New Zealand's view, is the contemporary verification standard. We urge those States that have not yet concluded the additional protocols with the Agency to do so without delay.

New Zealand shares the concerns of the international community about the questions that remain regarding Iran's nuclear programme. Iran's failure to comply with the provisions of the relevant Security Council and the IAEA resolutions continues to be a serious matter. We call on Iran to comply with those resolutions as a matter of priority and to offer its full cooperation to the IAEA in its efforts to ascertain the nature of Iran's past and present nuclear activities.

New Zealand welcomes the ongoing attempts to achieve the denuclearization of the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea, and we continue to support international efforts to encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to meet fully its Six-Party Talks commitments within a reasonable time frame. Steps now being taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to restore its nuclear capacity will, however, seriously undermine the good faith and confidence it has been building with the international community. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations, including an early return to IAEA safeguards and the NPT.

New Zealand continues to support the Group of Eight (G8) Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Through the G8 Global Partnership, we contributed this year to a Japanese-led project to dismantle a decommissioned nuclear submarine in the Russian far east. This is another tangible example, we believe, of New Zealand's commitment to improving international security.

In conclusion, we have made some substantial progress in 2008. The conclusion of a new international instrument prohibiting cluster munitions will result in significant humanitarian benefits in terms of protecting civilians in conflict situations. The re-energized Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons will enable States to more effectively combat those weapons, which have the most widespread impact on civilian populations on a day-to-day basis.

However, there is still a great deal to achieve. The Conference on Disarmament is one arena where the mechanisms relating to procedural consensus should be further explored with a view to commencing negotiations in 2009, in accordance with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the membership of the Conference. We need to pursue concrete progress on NPT implementation goals by 2010. This will require renewed ownership and engagement on the part of all States parties. New Zealand is committed to playing a constructive and effective role in these and all other international security processes.

I would like to thank you once again, Sir, for taking on the chairmanship of the Committee and to say how much we look forward to working under your leadership.

**Ms. Rocca** (United States of America): The United States delegation congratulates you,

Mr. Chairperson, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We look forward to working with you and pledge our support for your efforts to ensure that this session of the First Committee is productive.

The United States continues to be a leader in disarmament and in fighting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). I should like to highlight today a number of key accomplishments we have made in the past few years. The United States has taken and continues to take unprecedented steps to reduce its nuclear stockpile. The scale of disarmament by the United States and the former Soviet Union since the end of the cold war is unparalleled. The United States continues to work diligently in the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We believe that a ban on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices would enhance global non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We introduced a draft treaty in 2006 and call upon all nations to join us in observing a moratorium on the production of fissile material for those purposes.

While reducing our nuclear stockpile we have introduced concrete changes to our national nuclear posture that have reduced our reliance on nuclear weapons. Early in his first term, President Bush called for a fundamental reorientation of the United States strategic force posture. The result, the United States Nuclear Posture Review, established a new policy framework that puts less emphasis on the role of nuclear forces as a means of deterrence, and greater emphasis on conventional capabilities and a robust industrial base. This important change provides United States Presidents with more information, more options, both offensive and defensive, and more time to make critical decisions.

The primary security challenge now facing the world stems from attempts by violent extremists and States of concern to obtain weapons of mass destruction. Some Governments have demonstrated a willingness to transfer advanced weapons or sensitive weapons technologies to other States or to support terrorist groups. Some are conducting activities that give rise to grave concerns about their compliance with their obligations not to research, develop, produce, stockpile or use chemical or biological weapons.

Still, nuclear forces continue to represent a critical deterrent capability, and extended deterrence is

key to United States alliances, both in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and in Asia. Nevertheless, we recognize that we can maintain these security commitments while making significant reductions in our nuclear arsenal. In 2001, the United States finished implementing all reductions in strategic offensive arms required by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), and the United States and the Russian Federation continue discussions on a legally binding post-START arrangement.

Under the Moscow Treaty of 2002 between the United States and Russia, the United States agreed to reduce the size of its operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons to between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012. In addition to that Treaty, President Bush directed in 2004 that in eight years the size of the overall United States nuclear weapons stockpile, both reserve and operationally deployed, be reduced nearly 50 per cent from the time he entered office. That goal was met five years early, so he directed that the stockpile be reduced by a further 15 per cent by 2012. By 2012 the total stockpile of strategic nuclear warheads will be at the lowest level since the 1950s, and 80 per cent lower than its level in 1990.

Chemical and biological weapons remain a threat from State programmes, terrorist groups and dedicated lone actors. No country is safe from an emerging disease threat or intentional employment of a biological agent. Scientific advances have blurred the line between what is and what is not a weapon and have expanded the availability of chemicals usable as weapons. We must keep a keen eye on developments that could misuse these advances for malevolent purposes. The United States encourages all States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention to work with us to meet the evolving threat.

These new security challenges point to the continued and increasing importance of compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements. Today there is broad consensus that strict compliance with such agreements is critical to international peace and security. The United States has been working with interested United Nations Member States to reflect and strengthen that consensus by introducing at this year's session of the First Committee a draft resolution based on resolution 60/55, adopted in 2005, on the importance of compliance. We hope that international consensus on

this issue will be reflected in widespread support for that draft resolution.

The United States has consistently opposed space arms control proposals, as the existing outer space regime is sufficient to guarantee all nations unfettered access to and operations in space. We are, however, willing to consider initiatives, based on voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures, to solve concrete problems related to the use of space. And in this spirit we began a transatlantic dialogue with the European Union on measures that focus on a pragmatic and incremental approach to space safety.

It is therefore with regret that I must note our disappointment that we were unable to reach agreement this year with Russia and China on a General Assembly draft resolution to examine the feasibility of new voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the foundation of our nuclear non-proliferation efforts and remains the most universal tool available. The NPT, however, confronts tremendous challenges today, the most fundamental being the crisis of non-compliance with its core non-proliferation provisions. To address that problem, the United States has worked diligently with the international community to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to encourage States not in compliance with their non-proliferation obligations to come back into compliance, and to strengthen international non-proliferation.

For example, the A. Q. Khan network — an especially dangerous organization because of its black-market character — has been identified and dismantled. Not only did we take it down, but, working closely with our allies and partners, we used the information gained to help ourselves and others make better decisions about safeguarding nuclear weapons and infrastructure in the future. In addition, we launched the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), an unprecedented multinational partnership to combat the illicit trafficking of weapons of mass destruction. The PSI seeks to address the core issue of preventing proliferators from using the avenues of global commerce to transfer weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials. The PSI was launched five years ago, and today more than 90 countries have endorsed its principles.

As recognized in a recent resolution adopted by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Libya's strategic decision to give up its weapons of mass destruction and to renounce terrorism represents another major breakthrough in strengthening non-proliferation efforts. That decision enabled Libya to resume its position in the international community.

Our efforts with our partner nations in the Six-Party Talks have had their ups and downs, but we believe that we have found a way for North Korea to end its nuclear programme completely and verifiably. The cooperation among the United States, Russia, China, Japan and South Korea on that issue shows how multilateral approaches can be applied to even the most complex international problems.

In the case of Iran, too, we have put together an international coalition of States to address a problem that has implications for all United Nations Member States. Three Security Council sanctions resolutions have made clear to the Iranians that they must abandon their ambitions for technologies that can lead to nuclear weapons and must accept the generous offer of the international community to assist them in developing a strictly peaceful civilian nuclear programme.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is another excellent example of international cooperation to create effective tools to combat proliferation. Full and effective implementation of that resolution would enhance international security and build capabilities applicable to other national priorities, such as augmenting trade and export controls and mitigating threats to public health and security.

The United States will continue to lead in promoting and defending international regimes for non-proliferation and in combating efforts that undermine them. We will also continue to take actions to make the international community safer from the risk of nuclear war. However, as we all know, challenges remain, and we must maintain our resolve as an international community to meet them. Our delegation is encouraged by the work done this year, and we will do our best to continue that momentum.

**Mr. Lwin** (Myanmar): On behalf of the delegation of Myanmar and on my own account, I take great pleasure in extending our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the

chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that under your wise and able guidance we will achieve fruitful results in our work. I would also like to pay tribute, on behalf of my delegation, to the other members of the Bureau. I assure you of our full cooperation as you discharge your responsibilities.

We fully associate ourselves with the statement made at the Committee's second meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction certainly constitute a grave threat facing humankind. That threat, compounded by terrorism, renders the world security environment highly vulnerable. With regard to weapons of mass destruction, we believe that nuclear disarmament should be accorded the highest priority on the international arms control and disarmament agenda.

We are deeply frustrated and disappointed at the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to achieve substantive results. Myanmar has consistently maintained that the two processes of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. However, much to our regret, the 2005 NPT Review Conference revealed that there is a wide and deep gap between nations that possess nuclear weapons and nations that have decided against the nuclear option. In our view, nuclear-weapon States should, and must, honour their unequivocal undertaking, declared at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The will to fulfil that unequivocal undertaking has yet to be demonstrated by fully implementing the 13 practical steps identified at the Conference.

For the past 10 years, Myanmar has introduced in this body comprehensive draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament that reflect the views of the majority of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. This year will be no exception; we shall again introduce in the First Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. We express the sincere hope that it will be supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Myanmar has always stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the NPT. We

welcome the Final Declaration of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in Vienna in September 2007, which called on those States that had not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. Although the CTBT's entry into force is still far from being a reality, we are pleased and encouraged to observe that the number of States that have ratified the Treaty has been growing. The Treaty now enjoys nearly universal support, as it has been signed by 179 countries, more than 80 per cent of which have ratified it.

I would now like to touch upon another issue that could have serious implications for the peace and security of the world at large. I am referring to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which is one of the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament and is another important concern. The common interests of all humankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes should be recognized. Myanmar has consistently supported the draft resolutions on this subject that have been introduced annually by Egypt and Sri Lanka in recent years. There is a pressing need to negotiate and conclude, as soon as possible, a legally binding international instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space, as the existing instruments are inadequate to comprehensively address the issue. Myanmar supports such a move on the part of the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome and support the recent initiatives of China and the Russian Federation in the Conference on Disarmament towards the realization of such a treaty.

Transparency and confidence-building measures concerning outer space must be promoted in the interests of maintaining international peace and security. There is a pressing need to negotiate and conclude, as soon as possible, a legally binding instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space. In that regard, we consider that the Conference on Disarmament has a primary role to play.

While keeping our focus on the question of weapons of mass destruction, we cannot afford to ignore the challenge posed by small arms and light weapons. These weapons continue to kill and maim hundreds of thousands of people each year the world over. We attach great importance to the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms. The two core issues relating to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons — namely, strict control

over private ownership of small arms and the prevention of the supply of small arms to non-State groups — must be adequately addressed. Myanmar, together with other ASEAN members, will work at both the regional and the international levels for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Let me now turn to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiation forum in the field of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament is still unable to reach agreement on a programme of work and begin its real substantive work. An agreement on the programme of work is our highest priority in the Conference on Disarmament. We express the sincere hope that the parties concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and exercise the political will to overcome the impasse.

However, we would like to express our appreciation to the successive presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in 2008, who conducted intensive consultations and attempted various initiatives with a view to reaching consensus on a programme of work, including by convening formal and informal plenary meetings and interactive sessions on agenda issues and other matters relevant to the international security climate.

In conclusion, despite the impasse in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, we must not let our resolve be weakened by that negative trend. Instead, we must work constructively with renewed determination and political will to address the legitimate security concerns of the international community.

**Mr. Habib (Lebanon)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other Bureau members on your election to steer our Committee. I would like to assure you of the full support of my delegation so that we may reach a successful conclusion of our work at this session.

The armed conflicts facing different regions around the world, particularly the Middle East region, have seen clear changes in terms of their nature, their fragmentation and the spread of armed groups involved. This new reality gives the work of our Committee and the work of all the disarmament mechanisms great importance, because they are now called upon not only to put an end to armed conflict but also to analyse the very problem of peacekeeping.

These mechanisms are called upon to strengthen the institutions of States and to remedy weaknesses and shortcomings in order to bring about sustainable humanitarian development and to eradicate poverty.

While various kinds of conventional weapons fuel regional conflicts and the trade in such weapons needs to be regulated in order to prevent illicit trafficking, dealing with issues related to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the proliferation of international terrorism and the possibility that terrorists might acquire such arms, be they nuclear, biological or chemical, are of equal importance, given the risks that they pose to the very existence of humankind.

There can be no doubt that the ultimate aim is to bring about general and complete disarmament within the framework of international law. This goal can only be reached via multilateral mechanisms and agreed solutions within that framework and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations — hence the vital role of our Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, which is the primary negotiating international body in this field.

While the latest triennial round of the disarmament Committee concluded this spring without leading to any consensus on nuclear non-proliferation or on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, that should not keep us from stepping up efforts to bring about a consensus on the agenda for the next cycle. Nor should it prevent us from mobilizing the political will to move forward in the coming phase in that same forum or through the preparations for the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

Dealing with the issue of small arms and light weapons, which fuel internal and regional conflicts, is essential so as to ensure the necessary conditions for security that would make it possible to bring about development and prosperity for all human societies — hence the importance of ensuring effective monitoring of the production and acquisition of these weapons, their stockpiling, their legitimate use and their export and import. Monitoring the use of such weapons in post-conflict situations is equally important, as is the implementation of confidence-building measures with respect to them.

In this respect, it is important to highlight the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms. It is also important to ensure

that there be sufficient human and financial resources and expertise for the implementation of the Programme. Furthermore, these efforts need to be put within a broader framework, that is, they need to govern arms trade, in general, via a multilateral instrument, such as an arms trade treaty for conventional weapons, which should also deal with their sources. I refer here to the trafficking of arms that fuel armed conflicts, not to the right of States to possess the necessary weapons to ensure the defence of their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Although we call for implementation of the multilateral mechanisms governing conventional weapons, which play a significant role in fuelling armed conflicts, we do not underestimate the importance of dealing with the root causes of such conflicts, specifically the problem of foreign occupation. I would therefore like to call for regulating those arms internationally, as well as regulating the trafficking of weapons that have long-lasting or injurious effects, from which my country has suffered immensely, namely, non-exploded munitions such as cluster bombs and anti-personnel mines.

In fact, during the latest Israeli aggression, in July 2006, Israel used between 2.6 and 4 million cluster bombs, based on the assessments by the United Nations demining programme for south Lebanon, which thankfully made great efforts in demining, along with a number of friendly and brotherly countries. Two days ago that programme received the Nansen award in Geneva. The anti-personnel mines laid by Israel in south Lebanon over many years continue to be a daily problem and cause suffering to those living in that region, particularly because Israel refuses to provide maps of where the mines and cluster bombs were deployed.

I would like to assure the Assembly of Lebanon's full and firm support for the Oslo process to develop an international treaty on cluster bombs. Lebanon will provide the venue for a regional workshop next November. Regulating the trade in and use of conventional weapons is just as important as dealing with issues of weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical or biological.

In this context, I am pleased to report that Lebanon will become a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and that it will shortly provide instruments in this regard.



We underscore here the importance of all States becoming parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and implementing all of its provisions to ensure nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and also supporting the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Furthermore, all States need to cooperate to ensure the success of the NPT Review Conference to be held in 2010. Indeed, failure of that Conference, coupled with challenges related to implementation of the Treaty, will threaten the non-proliferation regime regionally and internationally.

While Lebanon specifically supports the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the implementation of Security Council resolutions, we point out that Israel is the only State in the Middle East that does possess such weapons, and it has not become a party to the NPT nor has it provided access to its installations for monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We hope that this session will result in giving new momentum to disarmament mechanisms and their implementation.

**Mr. Del Rosario Ceballos** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of the Dominican Republic, I congratulate you, Sir — Ambassador Marco Antonio Suazo of the sister Republic of Honduras — on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I also take the opportunity to thank your predecessor in the Chair, Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal, for his efforts and leadership. We also thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement at our second meeting.

The Dominican Republic fully associates itself with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group. Without prejudice to the important statements they have delivered, I take this opportunity to deliver the following statement in my capacity as representative of my country, the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic believes that disarmament should remain a priority area within the United Nations and urges all Member States to manifest the political will necessary to bring about a genuine change that can lead us towards the elimination of both the existing and potential threats to international peace and security. Our commitment to

watch over international peace and security should transform our words into action. We must act on the basis of the common good and give priority to individual interests only when that is truly necessary. The current state of the disarmament machinery, for which we are all responsible, reflects the need for a greater parity in our efforts to achieve progress in the field of disarmament. We warn of the dangers that may be ahead if the current situation is not reversed.

The Dominican Republic believes the links between disarmament and development to be evident. Efforts should be made to set aside ever more resources for development and less for armaments, thus contributing to meeting basic human needs.

The Dominican Republic assigns highest importance to dealing with the issue of illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons because of the pernicious effects that it has and can have on the internal security of our nations. I urge the adoption of stronger measures to counter this scourge, which has strong links with other illicit activities, such as organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, that threaten human life and dignity.

Conscious of these strong links and determined to mitigate the effects of the illicit trafficking of arms, the Dominican Republic began and maintains the “Safe Neighborhoods” programme, which is directed at checking criminality in neighbourhoods by aligning the work of the national police with the demands of citizens, thereby promoting citizen participation in the fight against crime. The Dominican Republic, having a Specialized Border Security Force, has demonstrated its determination, as has Haiti, with the support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, in the fight against the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons through our common border.

The international measures we would like to see adopted to confront the danger of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons include the establishment of legally binding instruments on illicit brokering, marking and tracing, and examination of the issue of ammunition, which is intrinsically linked to the issue of illicit arms trafficking. We also support the establishment of a legally binding instrument on the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. We consider important the work by the group of governmental experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally

binding instrument for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. We hope that progress will continue to be made toward the adoption of an arms trade treaty.

The Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects concluded with the adoption of a report. However, we should not rest in our efforts to combat the evil of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. We consider that more international cooperation and assistance is needed to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action and that the follow-up to the Programme of Action should be clearly established.

The Dominican Republic reaffirms its support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its universality and underlines that all articles of that important treaty should be fully implemented. In that regard, we defend the right of every country to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for absolutely peaceful purposes without discrimination. We also reaffirm our firm support of the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Almost 40 years have elapsed since the NPT entered into force. Although we recognize that during that time there has been important progress in its implementation, it cannot be denied that commitments are still pending. As a country that is part of the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone, established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we encourage the further establishment and extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones as fundamental components of the efforts to achieve the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We believe that the conclusion of a legally binding agreement prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices would assist efforts to prevent the proliferation of such weapons. The entry into force and universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would also limit their quantitative and qualitative development. It was that conviction that motivated the Dominican Republic to ratify the CTBT last year.

The Dominican Republic also attaches great importance to the complete elimination of other weapons of mass destruction. Our country is party to

the Biological Weapons Convention, and it is very probable that it will be depositing its instrument of ratification for the Chemical Weapons Convention before the present year ends, as proof of our commitment to the universality of those two conventions.

The Dominican Republic expresses its concern at the use of cluster munitions because of the unacceptable harm they cause to the victims. We are very pleased with the result of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, which we attended in May 2008. We consider that result — a convention that prohibits the use of cluster munitions and has their complete elimination as its objective — to be an important achievement in the framework of international humanitarian law.

We also believe it is important to pay more attention to the harm caused by anti-personnel mines. The Dominican Republic, a country that has never been affected by the scourge of anti-personnel mines, calls for international cooperation and assistance in demining activities and expresses its solidarity with the victims who have suffered the devastating effects of those mines.

A subject of great importance for my country is the protection of the Caribbean Sea. The Caribbean Sea is our sea. The Dominican Republic needs the Caribbean Sea for the proper functioning of its economy, as do other countries of the region. That my country benefits enormously from tourism was demonstrated by the visits of more than 4 million tourists last year, many of whom come to enjoy the warmth of our beaches and, of course, our sea. Since tourism is an important part of our economy, we consider the protection of the Caribbean Sea an issue of national security. In that regard, we attach great importance to the adoption by the General Assembly of the draft resolution entitled “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”, and we invite all Member States to support that initiative in the framework of the Second Committee. Therefore, we once more reiterate our concern for the danger posed by the transport of radioactive material. We trust that the international community will exercise due vigilance to guarantee the security measures related to the transport of radioactive material.

**Mr. Skjønberg** (Norway): We congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election and look forward to working with you.

Over the past year, we have seen certain disarmament developments that give reason for cautious optimism. We have seen tangible results in one area and progress in several others. That gives us much-needed hope for this year's session of the First Committee and for the future of the disarmament agenda.

Norway applauds the landmark decision in the field of humanitarian disarmament that was reached in Dublin on 30 May this year, when 107 States adopted the text of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The new Convention prohibits all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. It also deals with assistance to victims, clearance of contaminated areas and destruction of stockpiles.

The Convention is the outcome of the Oslo process, an open process that was launched in 2006 and has included States, civil society, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. The Convention is also an expression of cross-regional partnerships with affected countries and those with stockpiles. We have achieved a result that significantly strengthens international humanitarian law. The Convention on Cluster Munitions has established a new international norm. It will be signed in Oslo on 3 December 2008, and all United Nations Member States have been invited to the Oslo signing conference.

The new Convention and the Mine Ban Convention clearly demonstrate that multilateralism can work and can make a significant difference on the ground. Those lessons should inspire us further as we address the serious humanitarian impact of the illicit trade in small arms. Norway reiterates its support for early negotiations on a forward-looking arms trade treaty, taking into account principles of international humanitarian law and human rights.

All Member States share the responsibility for moving the arms control agenda forward. I would like to briefly outline Norway's efforts over the past year.

In a white paper submitted to the Norwegian parliament in May, the Government identified three main objectives for its disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. First, we are working to

secure a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, we are seeking to ensure security and stability at the lowest possible level of armament through agreements that are binding under international law. Thirdly, we are working to eliminate conventional weapons that cause unacceptable human suffering.

The white paper reaffirms the Norwegian objective of achieving a world free of weapons of mass destruction. The use of biological and chemical agents as weapons is already banned under international law. Norway is still seeking to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), but it is pleased to note that the overall picture is positive. The Second Review Conference of the CWC reached a successful conclusion. Within the BWC, States parties are moving forward in a pragmatic and constructive way.

On the other hand, the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world remains only a distant vision. It is vital to foster new partnerships in order to achieve our long-term goal of eliminating nuclear arms. We recognize that this will require an incremental approach and that we will only achieve tangible results if we mobilize political support at the highest level and engage all relevant stakeholders. That was the main message from "Achieving the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons", an international conference held in Oslo in February and attended by leading experts from around the globe.

There is growing consensus that the existence of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons does not enhance our security. That can be achieved only by removing and irreversibly destroying those weapons. Nuclear disarmament is thus an integral part of our common non-proliferation efforts.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) so that it becomes legally binding, is a key step. But a comprehensive nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda must include other steps too. We need new and deeper cuts beyond those provided for in existing arms control treaties such as the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.

We need to negotiate and agree on a legally binding ban on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. We must also deal with the problem of existing stocks of fissile material. We need to

explore ways of reducing the importance of nuclear arms in security policy through regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. We need to reduce the operational status of the nuclear weapons that are deployed.

Progress in nuclear disarmament will greatly facilitate our non-proliferation efforts. At the same time, it is evident that we will not be able to eliminate nuclear weapons completely unless we have a watertight non-proliferation regime in place.

It is therefore deeply disturbing that parts of the multilateral machinery are still paralysed. It is not acceptable that nothing has come out of the Conference on Disarmament for more than 10 years. If the Conference continues not to deliver, we should ask ourselves whether that institution in its existing format serves our interests. We should ask the same question about the Disarmament Commission. Standstill will lead to marginalisation and irrelevance. To maintain credibility, we need to move forward, even if progress is slow.

This session of the First Committee should, in Norway's view, have two objectives: first, to build consensus on the need for the multilateral disarmament machinery to produce results; and secondly, to foster a common understanding of how existing and new security threats should be addressed.

We look forward to working with colleagues to make this happen.

**Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to head the 2008 session of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and wish you all every success in your work. I assure you of our full support in ensuring the success of our work together. I also take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General and Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the efforts they have made in the area of disarmament.

I associate myself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the representative of Indonesia.

The State of Qatar emphasizes the importance of multilateralism in sustaining the disarmament machinery and preventing its erosion, in view of its crucial role in mitigating the threats to peace and security throughout the world. To that end, Qatar

consistently strives to strengthen the disarmament machinery and to ensure that it functions. We submit substantive reports in the area of disarmament and international security to the Office for Disarmament Affairs as an input for the preparation of the Secretariat's annual reports.

Furthermore, Qatar hosts workshops and other events that promote training and exchanges of experiences and expertise in the implementation of international instruments on the prohibition of weapons of all kinds, including nuclear, chemical, biological, bacteriological and toxin weapons, as well as mines, in particular in relation to strengthening human rights law and international humanitarian law and to the implementation of relevant international instruments and protocols, including the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols.

The State of Qatar is in the process of enacting the necessary national legislation for meeting its international and national obligations in the area of disarmament and international security, including by training national professionals and raising awareness about implementation and verification.

In its international relations, Qatar has focused on strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and activating the pillars on which the NPT is based, namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

While nuclear disarmament is one of the most important pillars on the global disarmament agenda, the outcome of the work of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, held this year in Geneva, was not successful owing to the lack of political will to commit to the implementation of the most important provisions of the Treaty, namely, reduction of nuclear arsenals and a moratorium on their development.

The review process has not been carried out in the light of the lessons learned during the previous two Review Conferences. The responsibility of States to conduct substantive reviews must be implemented; but some parties have politicized the review exercise by hindering the implementation of internationally agreed obligations. In that context, significant achievements were made in the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. These should have been maintained, but they were reversed as a result of renegeing on internationally agreed commitments.

Those achievements included: the indefinite extension of the Treaty to ensure that the commitment to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation would be permanent; the strengthening of the Treaty review mechanism; and the agreement by parties to the Treaty on a set of principles and objectives on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, including a decision to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

That was the basis for the Arab States' agreement to the indefinite extension of the Treaty and for all Arab States to accede to it. Unfortunately, however, the persistence of some States in preventing any progress towards the implementation of those commitments could jeopardize the success of the 2010 Review Conference. Politicization was also a factor in the Disarmament Commission's failure last April to make recommendations towards achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Israel's accession to the NPT would strengthen the confidence we need if we are to find solutions to the many problems of the Middle East.

We emphasize the inviolability of the inalienable right of States parties to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, under the relevant articles of the Treaty. Nor must non-nuclear States parties be prevented from developing a nuclear capability for peaceful purposes.

We are against bringing in controversial issues that have nothing to do with the work of the First Committee and that are under consideration by other United Nations organs. At the same time, we emphasize the importance of resolving differences on nuclear issues by peaceful means and refraining from the use or threat of use of force, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Another challenge in the area of disarmament is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as the failure to review the issue in a professional manner due to the fact that the countries of origin, which bear responsibility, turn a blind eye to the unmonitored, uncontrolled export of millions of such weapons.

Another issue of great concern and importance to us is the proliferation of landmines and cluster munitions such as those planted by Israel in southern Lebanon, which continue to kill and permanently maim

civilians to this day. That is why we signed the Wellington Declaration on Cluster Munitions last May during the Dublin Conference. We look forward to the opening for signature of the Convention on Cluster Munitions next December at Oslo.

We share the international community's concern about the serious threats posed by conventional weapons and their ongoing production. However, that issue must be addressed fairly and in a manner that does not target certain countries, stripping them of their defence capabilities at a time when other countries are developing strategic and tactical nuclear-weapons capabilities while overstating their defence needs. Such an attitude will only set off an arms race, including a nuclear arms race, which would lead to a waste of resources, thereby adversely affecting development and environmental standards.

**Mr. Mansour** (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Tunisia, I would like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the First Committee. I assure you of our full support. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his relevant contribution to our work.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States.

Once again this year, we are meeting at a very critical moment to consider the progress made in the area of disarmament and international security. In that regard, my delegation would like to underscore the following main points.

Tunisia has always emphasized the link between disarmament and development as one of the main challenges that the international community must overcome in order to eradicate poverty and thereby focus on efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, my country has always believed it to be appropriate to allocate resources earmarked for military purposes to efforts at development and economic growth. We continue to believe that the arms race is carried out at the expense of the most basic needs of civilians. There is little need to recall that the difficulties that continue to impede the multilateral disarmament process must therefore in no way divert us from the belief that multilaterally agreed solutions in accordance with the Charter of the United

Nations continue to be the best way to resolve the many questions relating to disarmament and international security in the long term.

This year, my delegation has the honour and privilege to preside over the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva at this crucial moment characterized by renewed hope for revitalizing multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation processes. We are very grateful that our presidency was launched with the personal involvement of His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and His Excellency Mr. Abdelwaheb Abdallah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia. Its goal is to build upon the momentum generated over the past two years to break out of the impasse in which the Conference finds itself.

The Tunisian presidency is aware of the scope of the stakes involved, and based on the substance of the consultations our delegation has held with all States members of the Conference on Disarmament, the Tunisian presidency has worked tirelessly to bring about the long-sought consensus with respect to the Conference's programme of work. I should like to take this opportunity to underscore that Tunisia is encouraged by the informal discussions that took place during the 2008 session of the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome the symbiotic cooperation between the six Presidents of the Conference that, in March 2008, made it possible to issue document CD/1840, which contained their proposals for a programme of work for the Conference.

We would also like to encourage the Presidents of the 2009 session of the Conference on Disarmament to continue consultations to arrive at a programme of work. We are convinced that the Conference, which is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, is capable of fully playing its role in the context of a consensual approach that can, as in the past, produce major treaties and conventions in the area of disarmament. I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, for his tireless ongoing efforts at Geneva on the issues before us today.

For us, relaunching the disarmament process at the multilateral level is a major challenge that requires that we all work together. In the absence of consensus on the agenda items and concrete proposals from Member States to make progress in the areas of nuclear

disarmament and confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the Disarmament Commission once again finds itself at an impasse. Henceforth, the Commission must consider scenarios that will enable it to emerge from the crisis in order to put forward specific recommendations to the General Assembly on the format and substance of upcoming sessions.

The preparatory process for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was consolidated in 2008. In that regard, we welcome the progress made at the second session of the Preparatory Committee, which was held in Geneva in May 2008. We continue to hope that the Committee's next session, which is scheduled to take place in New York in 2009, will enable us to achieve a common understanding on the main stumbling blocks pertaining to the implementation of the NPT.

In that context, based on an assessment of the state of nuclear disarmament over the past several decades, we can only conclude that there has been a lack of meaningful progress in that area. We are still far from the goal set by article VI of the NPT with regard to nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. In that context, we recall the appeals made for the full implementation of the commitments unequivocally undertaken by nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 Review Conference to carry out the complete elimination of their arsenals. We also hope that that pledge will be honoured in order to promote an accelerated process of negotiations to ensure the implementation of practical steps for nuclear disarmament.

For their part, until that is achieved, non-nuclear-weapon States have the right to effective safeguards against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In the same vein, a key step in giving effect to the provisions of the NPT is to conclude negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The fact that the Treaty has not entered into force more than 11 years after it was adopted is a cause for concern. I should thus like to highlight the importance of the Treaty's entry into force and of achieving its universality.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the

States of the regions concerned and the establishment of zones free of all weapons of mass destruction are key ways of promoting non-proliferation and disarmament at the regional and international levels.

In that context, the Middle East continues to be one of the areas most affected. That is due in particular to the refusal of certain parties to join the NPT and place their nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That is despite numerous appeals by other States of the region and the calls made by the General Assembly in its many resolutions on the issue. In that regard, we call upon the international community, especially the most influential Powers, to take urgent practical steps to establish such a zone.

Aware of the enormous importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and its clear impact on international peace and security, my country has ratified the Convention and carried out the destruction of its stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. We hope that all States parties will participate in that process in order to achieve the goals of the Convention.

We also commend the positive results of the third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place last summer. In that regard, I should like to underscore that, despite significant progress made to implement it, seven years after the adoption of the Programme of Action there are more small arms and light weapons circulating throughout the world than in 2001. That is due in particular to ongoing armed conflicts, organized crime and violations of weapons embargos adopted by the Security Council.

Finally, my country contributes actively to the efforts of Mediterranean countries to address their common challenges in a comprehensive, coordinated and concerted manner in order to make the Mediterranean Basin an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation, thus ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Tunisia has supported all mechanisms and initiatives aimed at consolidating peace, solidarity and development in the Mediterranean region, such as the Barcelona Process, the Five plus Five dialogue and the Mediterranean Forum. Likewise,

my country was one of the first to support the French initiative to establish the Union for the Mediterranean.

Faithful to its African dimension, Tunisia strives to support the progress of the African Union and the establishment of its institutions and has contributed to peacekeeping operations throughout the world since the 1960s. It is particularly present in Africa through its participation in several peacekeeping operations on the continent.

In conclusion, I should like to take this opportunity to emphasize that Tunisia will continue to do its part in promoting the cause of peace and disarmament. We reaffirm our readiness to cooperate fully with you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, and we express our wish for the full success of the work of the Committee.

**Mr. Vunibobo (Fiji):** I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your appointment to this important Committee. I thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Senegal, for his efforts during the previous session. We are ready to support you and the rest of the Bureau in leading the Committee's work during this session. Since I am sitting directly opposite you, I shall try not to make you angry. I also pay tribute to you for your opening comments at our second meeting and commend those of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

I come from a very small country, where we are reasonably peaceful. We seek peace for our region. In the international community, we participate actively in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Small as we are, however, we are concerned about disarmament and international security issues. Our concern is due to our belief that security is our collective responsibility.

For some time, the Pacific has been used as a testing ground for nuclear weapons. The people who live on islands in the region have never been asked whether they have any views on what is being done in their neighbourhood. This intervention is being made also because our citizens — and, indeed, those of other Pacific island countries — have suffered and continue to suffer from the effects of the nuclear explosions conducted in the Pacific, which ceased only in 1996 after five decades of atmospheric and underground testing. We know of no other region that has been subjected to such treatment. We also believe that the time is long overdue for the international community to

invite those who conducted those tests for an accounting as to the health of those who lived on those islands and the effects of the tests on the environment, including land and marine life.

The establishment in 1971 of the Pacific Islands Forum, of which my country is a founding member, was to a certain extent a response to the concerns of our leaders about nuclear testing in the Pacific. The colonial Powers that were conducting those tests resisted all attempts to discuss nuclear testing at the annual meetings of the South Pacific Commission. They viewed the discussions of nuclear testing as a political subject that had no place in the Commission's terms of reference.

We therefore wish to support the recent pledge by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to give increased priority to disarmament and international security issues, as well as to reaffirm our belief in multilateralism as the core principle in negotiating on disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

We also remain committed to working for the cessation of the nuclear arms race and for nuclear disarmament in a way that promotes international stability. We recognize that the maintenance of nuclear-weapon systems at a high level of readiness increases the risk of the use of such weapons, including their unintentional or accidental use. In addition, we wish to stress the vital importance and urgency of the signature and ratification by Member States, without delay and without conditions, of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to achieve its early entry into force.

Furthermore, we note with some concern the increased threat that terrorism poses and the ever-increasing risk that terrorist organizations can acquire radioactive materials, and we urge all Members to support international efforts to prevent the acquisition and use of such materials by terrorists and their organizations.

We urge nuclear-weapon States to pursue practical steps towards systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We support a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere. We believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones have an important role to play in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and extending the areas of the world that are nuclear-weapon-free. We

welcome additional steps being taken to conclude more nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties in other regions of the world. We call once again on all Member States to support the process of nuclear disarmament and to work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The shipment of nuclear materials through our waters is of particular concern to my country and to the region. Our economies, which rely heavily on fisheries and tourism, are subject to potential economic losses in the event of an incident involving such shipments, and we call on shipping States to cease such shipments through the Pacific.

We also wish to reiterate the appeal of the international community to all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the peaceful use of outer space and to prevent an arms race in outer space and refrain from actions contrary to that objective.

We support the efforts being made at the regional and subregional levels in the area of conventional arms control and will try to work closely with the Conference on Disarmament to consider creating a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control. We reaffirm our strong support for the operationalization and further strengthening of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific as well as for the Kathmandu process as a vehicle for facilitating region-wide security and disarmament dialogue.

In addition, we recognize that the illicit sale of small arms and light weapons is a serious problem for the international community, especially for countries that have porous borders, such as my own. Such illegal transnational activities are difficult to monitor and detect, given the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean surrounding our island territories. They have humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and pose a serious threat to peace and reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development in our region.

For many countries, including our own, small arms and light weapons are the real weapons of mass destruction, simply because they kill more people than the proverbial weapons of mass destruction. We would invite the international community to provide technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of Member States to help combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.



The Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, which was held in Dublin in May this year, concluded negotiations on a treaty instrument prohibiting the manufacture, use, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. We participated actively in the Conference and wish to reiterate our support for achieving the humanitarian goal of prohibiting cluster munitions, which cause such unacceptable harm to civilians. We therefore call on all like-minded States to sign and ratify the Treaty in Oslo on 3 December 2008.

There is also an obvious connection between disarmament and development. We must convert our swords into ploughshares and dedicate the resources available from the benefits of disarmament to assist the economic and social development of developing countries.

I would like to conclude my statement by inviting the Committee and the world to resolve to eliminate most, if not all, elements that threaten the peace and tranquillity of our world.

**Mrs. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of El Salvador would like to join others in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to lead the work of the First Committee. We are all the more pleased to do so given that you are a Central American citizen. We therefore express to you our full support in successfully fulfilling your mandate. We would also like to congratulate the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur on their elections. Their personal and professional qualities will certainly be crucial in facilitating the work of the Committee.

We welcome the presence at this debate of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. We would also like to thank Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal and the other members of the Bureau of the previous session for their determined efforts to achieve the goals of disarmament.

Like the overwhelming majority of the countries represented here, El Salvador reaffirms its commitment to the cause of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. That commitment is reflected in the fact that we were among the first States to sign most of the international instruments on the subject. Those include the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We

have also supported the great majority of resolutions to emerge from the First Committee.

My country's commitment to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is not only a defence policy vis-à-vis States that possess quantitatively and qualitative superior armaments; it also reflects our belief in the urgent need to establish mutual and collective trust with regard to the use or threat of use of both conventional and nuclear weapons. As the Committee is aware, in its recent history my country was unfortunately affected by an armed conflict lasting more than 12 years that was fuelled by the political, ideological and military struggle of the cold war. We have experienced the tragedy of war and its effects, and therefore we are sensitive to the suffering of peoples currently enduring armed conflict or who are daily threatened with the use of nuclear weapons. We therefore wish to express our solidarity with them. We support every initiative that would lead to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Various delegations have repeatedly stated that no progress has been made and that the disarmament agenda has been paralysed in recent years. We agree with that opinion. However, we must continue to make the greatest efforts to salvage and promote the Committee's agenda, not only because that is one of the goals we have set to promote international peace and security, but also because it is crucial that we focus our capacities and resources on seeking solutions to other sensitive threats that endanger humankind overall.

It can be added out that the current challenges that have been added to the international agenda — such as overcoming the food crisis, the energy situation, the effects of climate change and, most recently, the financial crisis, especially in the United States — are undoubtedly having repercussions on the entire international community. That should cause us to think and act quickly and responsibly in order to take corrective measures.

In practice, one such measure would mean halting the arms race and devoting the bulk of our human and economic resources to research into and development of productive goods and resources, which all would help promote human security. Now more than ever, the issue of the relationship between disarmament and development constitutes a priority on the Committee's agenda, not only in terms of carrying out the mandates

of the General Assembly on purely informational issues such as military expenditures, but also in terms of analysing trends in military expenditures and their effects on economic, social and environmental aspects.

Moreover, States should focus their debates and positions regarding disarmament on the challenges to which I have referred. That should include the question of how resources currently devoted to military expenditures can be redirected to support international efforts, primarily the strategies defined during post-conflict peacebuilding processes. That would provide us with a new approach, broaden our perspective and revive our agenda, bearing in mind the importance of redirecting resources to areas other than armaments. In other words, this involves promoting the relationship between disarmament and development without losing sight of our common overall aim of promoting disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation to achieve the goals which I have mentioned.

In that connection, and with regard to conventional weapons in particular, El Salvador would like to express its concern about the increase in the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, which are acquired and used by organized crime and which fuel armed violence at the national, regional and international levels. We believe it is of utmost importance to have at our disposal as soon as possible a legally binding international instrument on the import, export and transfer of small arms and light weapons. This instrument should include common standards on marking, registry and cooperation, including illicit brokering, in order to guarantee the tracking of such weapons. For this reason, we urge all States to demonstrate greater commitment in order to obtain this objective.

With regard to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, we reiterate our full support regarding the need to ensure compliance with the decisions agreed upon at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to further strengthen the security guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That would increase the likelihood of a successful outcome to the 2010 Review Conference.

We also encourage those countries that have revoked their adherence to the NPT to revert to their original position, and we encourage those countries that have not yet signed the Treaty to do so as soon as

possible in order to contribute to reducing national, regional and international tensions and to encourage peaceful coexistence.

We strongly appeal to those States that have not yet done so to sign or ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in particular the provisions of annex 2 to its Protocol, and to maintain a moratorium on nuclear tests as a demonstration of goodwill and as a confidence-building measure.

A few days ago, in the margins of the general debate of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, the fourth ministerial meeting was held to promote the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. On that occasion, El Salvador aligned itself with the statement that was presented by a number of countries.

In this vein, we take this opportunity to express our appreciation to countries such as Colombia and Iraq for having recently signed and ratified this instrument. That represents a clear sign of their political will and could have a positive impact on other countries that have not yet adhered to the Treaty to do so. We are confident that we will shortly be able to convene to celebrate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We also consider it crucial that this instrument also include a multilateral monitoring and control mechanism to detect and identify nuclear explosions, including networks of seismic stations and other verification techniques, to ensure faithful compliance based on an impartial, responsible and transparent approach.

Finally, allow me to reiterate El Salvador's commitment to continue supporting actions to promote disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, including those applications that are geared towards establishing international monitoring and control systems. We shall actively participate in all such initiatives that help in the eradication of the threat of nuclear weapons and their components.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to begin my statement, Sir, by conveying to you my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the First Committee. I have known you personally for many years as an objective, neutral and able friend, and I am confident that under your leadership and that of the other members of the Bureau

we will realize our objectives. My delegation also associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group and the New Agenda Coalition. We commend the High Representative for Disarmament, Mr. Sergio Duarte, and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, for their sincere efforts.

The current session has been convened at a time when key international forums are seeing limited outcomes and an absence of consensus in most of their work, be that in the First Committee, whose resolutions still await implementation, in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which has again suffered another year of operational paralysis, or in the Disarmament Commission, which achieved no consensus in its work this year.

This has coincided with latent tensions between East and West. These are rooted in a regrettable escalation of confrontation, with an enhanced role and scope for military alliances, at a time when the world needs an approach of dialogue, cooperation and mutual trust.

In this complex international situation, added to which are the special characteristics of the Middle East region, Egypt has continued to promote the regional and international disarmament agenda through the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group, the Arab Group and the New Agenda Coalition, in order to attain regional security and stability, as well as international stability, with a view to achieving the security of all peoples without exception.

In this context, the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) witnessed in-depth discussions which tackled the international community's priorities and the need to enhance the credibility of the Treaty. While NPT States were not able to adopt a consensus report, the five nuclear-weapon States issued a joint statement which we hope will represent a change in their position towards taking the necessary practical measures to secure the success of the 2010 Review Conference and to consolidate the framework in which the Treaty was indefinitely extended in 1995.

As we approach that Conference, which will commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the conclusion of the NPT, the Treaty is undoubtedly facing heightened challenges that go well beyond the

failure of nuclear-weapon States to meet their nuclear disarmament commitments in accordance with Treaty obligations, with the elements of the indefinite extension agreement of 1995 and with the measures agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Today, those challenges go so far as to directly harm the chances of achieving the universality of the Treaty and even to unprecedentedly question its very feasibility. This is especially true because the Nuclear Suppliers Group has altered its role: it has moved from safeguarding compliance with the stipulations of the Treaty and pressing for its universality to ignoring those stipulations and the need for universality, without considering that such an approach will gravely endanger the Treaty and will create a state of international nuclear chaos.

Concerning the Middle East, we reaffirm that the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 was part of a package deal of which a main component was the resolution on the Middle East. This remains unimplemented to date, allowing Israel to remain outside the NPT and outside the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As the logical consequence of this situation and of the feverish nuclear arms race that could take place in the Middle East, we need to work without further delay on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Otherwise, the indefinite extension would be based on imposing additional commitments on the Arab States while exempting Israel from any commitments at all. This would raise questions in the Arab street about the feasibility and utility of the indefinite extension decision — and indeed about the feasibility and utility of the Treaty itself if it does not result in the security and stability that States of the region desire.

Efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are closely linked to those aimed at eradicating terrorism and organized crime. In the framework of international cooperation, Egypt has enhanced its capacity to implement 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 the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted by the General Assembly in 2005.

Egypt also actively participated in the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York last July, facilitating the consideration of the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Egypt has participated in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to consider the feasibility, scope and parameters of the proposed arms trade treaty. After three sessions in 2008, the work of the Group gave rise to a report, but this only reflects a lack of consensus on all aspects of the mandate of the Group and confirms the importance of following up on any further consideration of this issue within the United Nations with a view to taking the decision necessary for us to consider the treaty on the basis of consensus. We hope these conditions will be carefully observed by States promoting the proposal, in order to ensure that the United Nations remains at the heart of any international move on this issue.

We must work on a gradual basis, avoiding the hasty adoption of a new international regime that would obstruct current international disarmament priorities or would be based on non-objective criteria affecting the right of States to self-defence. Nor must any such system jeopardize regional balance in the sphere of conventional arms, which relates to factors that go beyond the considerations and objectives of the proposal.

In the context of international cooperation, I would like to make positive reference to Egypt's continued efforts to work with its international partners to develop and enhance its capabilities in the fields of the detection and removal of landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Egypt still has on its territory some 17 million landmines and ERWs, which obstruct development and reconstruction efforts and threaten the lives of civilians in affected areas every day. We hope the level of cooperation can be increased to be commensurate with the massive landmine problem in Egypt and the loss of life and environmental damage it entails.

During the current session, Egypt will submit three traditional draft resolutions entitled

"Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" and "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". We hope the current session will see increasing international support for these draft resolutions, which would be consistent with the priorities set out in their texts.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on the list for this morning's debate.

Before calling on representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply, I would remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention.

**Mr. Hong Je Ryong** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly rejects in its entirety the South Korean representative's statement with reference to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is not a matter for South Korea, a client State of the United States, to tolerate or not. They are a legitimate means for our self-defence, by their nature. Our nuclear weapons serve as a powerful war deterrent on the Korean peninsula, under constant threat, including nuclear threat, from the United States.

As for to the South Korean representative's claim that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has taken steps to end the disablement of nuclear facilities: yes, we have done so, because the United States has failed to implement its obligations under the agreement on the basis of the principle of action for action. Under the agreement of 3 October 2007, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea committed itself to presenting a nuclear declaration while the United States committed itself to removing my country from the list of State sponsors of terrorism.

That is the core of the agreement, the non-implementation of which on the part of the United States has caused the present deadlock with regard to the nuclear question on the Korean peninsula. Pursuant to this agreement, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fulfilled its obligation by presenting a nuclear declaration on 26 June. However, our counterpart failed to delist the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a State sponsor of terrorism by the fixed date

merely because the protocol on the verification of the nuclear declaration had not yet been agreed. That is an outright violation of the agreement.

The agreements reached so far among the six parties and between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States contain no article which stipulates the verification of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear declaration as a condition for delisting it as a State sponsor of terrorism. All that was agreed upon in the present phase of the Six-Party Talks was to set up verification and monitoring mechanisms within the framework of the six parties.

As far as verification is concerned, it is a commitment to be fulfilled by the six parties at the final phase of the denuclearization of the whole Korean peninsula, in accordance with the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005. Therefore, the prospect for the resolution of this issue depends on the attitude of the United States. Such being the case, the South Korean representative has no say. With the present deadlock on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, it is better for them to keep silent — or to plead with the United States to faithfully implement its obligation under the agreement.

**Mr. Lee Do-hoon** (Republic of Korea): Given the lateness of the hour, I will be very brief. I do not really want to go deeply into detail or to respond to detailed positions or points made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I just want to reiterate and underline the points I have already made, although I think they were quite self-evident.

First, the Six-Party Talks process is the centrepiece for peaceful resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue. Secondly, the process now stands at a crucial juncture. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is urgently called upon to resume disablement measures. Those two points are all I want to say, and, again, they are self-evident.

**Mr. Hong Je Ryong** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The statement of the South Korean representative has no value meriting further response. However, my delegation only hopes that South Korea will be reasonable and do a good thing for the sake of the smooth and peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, instead of pursuing a confrontational policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

*The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.*