



# General Assembly

Sixty-third session

## First Committee

7<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 13 October 2008, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

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

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

**Mr. Alouidor** (Haiti): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) members, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Haiti. We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee during the sixty-third session. We believe that under your leadership our discussions will have a successful outcome. We also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and assure them of our support as we collectively deal with the issues of disarmament and international security. We would also like to thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte for his opening statement.

CARICOM member States would like to express their appreciation to Ambassador Paul Badji for the manner in which he as Chairman of the First Committee conducted the Committee's work during the sixty-second session. As members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) the CARICOM States would like to associate themselves with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.

CARICOM has noted with concern the deteriorating situation faced by the international

community in the field of disarmament and international security. The Preamble to the United Nations Charter clearly states that the international community should unite in strength to maintain peace and security. Despite little progress having been made in recent years by the disarmament machinery, CARICOM remains faithful in its commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard we reiterate our support for the work of the Disarmament Commission and the Open-ended Working Group, and we further support the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV).

For CARICOM multilateralism remains the only viable option for maintaining international peace and security. The critical and urgent challenge which lies before us is to ensure the efficacy of the multilateral disarmament machinery in enhancing and addressing the difficult questions of disarmament and non-proliferation. These issues need to be addressed hand in hand to ensure balanced progress and the building of mutual confidence. Accordingly, CARICOM calls on nuclear-weapon States to promote greater respect for legal obligations which will result from adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). CARICOM would further like to underline the necessity for assurances against the threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. CARICOM's commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is embodied in the participation of all its members in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone

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in a densely populated area. This effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons succeeded in establishing a framework to free the region from the threat of nuclear proliferation, and has earned us the distinction of being the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world.

CARICOM members continue to call attention to an issue that is of critical importance to the region, the trans-shipment of nuclear waste through the waters of our region. As previously expressed, the risk of an accident, or worse yet, a terrorist attack on one of these shipments poses a grave threat not only to the environmental and economic sustainability of the region, but also to our very existence in the Caribbean. Heads of Government of CARICOM and of the wider Association of Caribbean States (ACS) have consistently called for a total cessation of these shipments in our waters, and we reiterate our strenuous and forceful rejection of the continued use of the Caribbean Sea for the shipment and trans-shipment of nuclear waste material and toxic waste. We continue to call upon the countries that produce nuclear and toxic waste urgently to implement relevant measures that would put an end to the need for trans-shipment of nuclear and toxic waste. CARICOM also urges those countries involved in the production and shipment of nuclear waste to adopt measures aimed at strengthening international cooperation in order to comply with security measures on the transportation of radioactive material, especially those adopted at the forty-seventh General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The international community remains concerned by the threat posed by non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction. With the extension of the mandate in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), CARICOM, together with other member States, will endeavour to intensify efforts to promote the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Pursuant to their obligations under that resolution, many CARICOM States have submitted reports to the Security Council Committee established to monitor implementation. We express the hope that the extension of the mandate will provide member States ample opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned in the areas covered by resolution 1540 (2004), as well as the availability of programmes that might facilitate the implementation of the resolution. In this regard we call for increased efforts aimed at capacity-building, the sharing of best practices and the transfer of technology,

where appropriate, to assist developing countries in implementing their obligations under the resolution.

The proliferation of conventional weapons continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. It continues to be a cause of conflict and organized crime, in particular drug trafficking.

Small arms and light weapons, which are now regarded as the contemporary causes of mass destruction, remain a high priority issue for our region and deserve the special attention of the international community. The increasing spread of these weapons has already caused much suffering as hundreds of thousands of people are killed every year by such weapons. We wish to reiterate previous calls made by CARICOM for the United Nations to explore the further scope, feasibility and parameters for the negotiation of a legally binding arms trade treaty within the purview of the General Assembly which would set common international standards agreeable to all parties. That is necessary in order to ensure that those who trade in such weapons comply with the relevant provisions of international law, particularly international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We encourage Member States to intensify their efforts in this regard.

CARICOM welcomes the Third Biennial Meeting of States Parties, which took place in New York from 14 to 18 July 2008 within the framework of the Programme of Action on Small Arms. We recognize the importance of working to implement its recommendations and to establish a follow-up mechanism to the Programme. CARICOM underlines also the importance of examining the issue of ammunitions, for it is linked to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. CARICOM for its part will pursue regional efforts to combat this phenomenon, and we welcome all forms of cooperation and assistance at regional and international levels.

CARICOM underlines the importance of the relationship between disarmament and development in the agenda of the General Assembly. To achieve the internationally accepted development targets requires the acknowledgement of the existing relationship between disarmament and development, given the enormous sums spent on arms worldwide, which diverts necessary resources from the development agenda. It is vital for the international community to demonstrate the necessary political will by halting the

proliferation of nuclear weapons, putting an end to the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and, more generally, by strictly adhering to international obligations relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. CARICOM members express their continued willingness to keep working on the adoption of joint mechanisms and will constructively participate in the international deliberations as we collectively strive to work towards advancing the disarmament agenda.

**Mr. Acharya (Nepal):** First, Mr. Chairman, allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to the leadership of the Committee. On behalf of the delegation of Nepal I should also like to express sincere appreciation to High Representative Sergio Duarte for his comprehensive presentation. Nepal wishes to align itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Today our world continues to pay hefty bills for arms but offers very little for development. Thus the disarmament dividend is still very elusive. We continue to be disappointed at the continued lack of progress in multilateral negotiations on disarmament. That makes the notion of general and comprehensive disarmament, which we advocate, a distant dream. In the absence of any progress towards that goal, international peace and security hangs on the existence of a large stockpile of nuclear weapons in imminent danger of proliferation, including the danger of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Nepal favours the complete non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and stresses that the provisions for safeguards and verification should be rigorously applied to prevent the proliferation of nuclear materials. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must continue to strengthen its safeguards mechanism to make non-proliferation more effective. We also need to make tangible progress towards the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should endeavour to make progress in the negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Efforts should also be made to obtain the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and universal adherence to that instrument.

Nepal is against any encroachment into outer space for military purposes. The sanctity of outer space should be preserved at all costs, as the common heritage of mankind for peaceful uses. We favour stringent control on the proliferation and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, and favour also 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. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms should be updated effectively to keep tabs on conventional weapons. Similarly, there are strong reasons for the early conclusion of an arms trade treaty. We support the creation of a working group for the preparation of negotiations. We should also strive to make progress towards convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) at the earliest, so as to start a genuine process covering the entire gamut of disarmament.

Nepal believes that regional disarmament initiatives are the building blocks of global disarmament, peace and security, and we support regional treaties and initiatives, including nuclear-weapon-free zones. Nepal is pleased to host the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which started its operation from Kathmandu in August this year. On behalf of the delegation of Nepal I express sincere thanks to all Members, individually and collectively, for supporting the relocation of the Regional Centre from New York to Kathmandu through the resolutions of the General Assembly. I should also like to express my special thanks to the High Representative and his Office for realizing this transition in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the agreements signed between the Government of Nepal and the United Nations Secretariat. The Government of Nepal has provided a modest financial contribution for the operation of the Regional Centre. I urge Member States to contribute generously to the programmes of the Centre, which runs on voluntary contributions. The Secretary-General has outlined in his report the need for core funding for its staffing and operations. The delegation of Nepal will be pleased to introduce a draft resolution, which includes this aspect of the Regional Centre's operation. As usual I look forward to receiving the Committee's positive support towards making the Regional Centre effective in carrying out its mandated activities.

Any further delay in disarmament will increase the opportunity cost for development and for international peace and security. We must strive to achieve concrete results in our goal of comprehensive disarmament. The current impasse should not continue. It is urgent that we revive result-oriented negotiations on disarmament issues. We continue to stress that the United Nations is best poised to make that headway. For that we must reignite the existing negotiating mechanisms. All we need is a renewed focus and a greater political will to do so. For its part, Nepal remains ready to support any purposeful initiative in that direction.

**Mr. Tashchian** (Armenia): First allow me to extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that under your keen stewardship the Committee will have a productive and successful session. I also extend my appreciation to Ambassador Badji for his remarkable work during the sixty-second session.

Armenia's geographical location puts it in a position where it is confronted with the issues related both to conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, Armenia is deeply interested in the unconditional implementation and further strengthening of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation agreements as well as international verification mechanisms and institutions. Armenia believes that the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) plays a central role in maintaining the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are concerned about the developments around the Iranian nuclear programme and its potential regional repercussions.

We closely follow the discussions conducted in the Security Council and hope that the negotiations under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), coupled with diplomatic efforts, will lead to a mutually acceptable solution. We would also like to stress the tremendous importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Armenia believes that entry into force of this agreement, along with the enhancement of the safeguard capacities of the International Atomic Energy Agency and reinforcement of national export control systems, can drastically strengthen the NPT system and lead us closer to the righteous objective of a world safe from the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Armenia attaches great importance to conventional disarmament. In this regard I mention our support of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. Armenia regularly provides appropriate information on its conventional arms transfers and military expenditures. Armenia continues actively to support the efforts of the United Nations and other international organizations to curb and stop the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons. In particular, Armenia is committed to effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We are pleased that the Third Biennial Meeting to review the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms led to the adoption of a substantive report. We believe that the report will genuinely contribute to the improvement and strengthening of the Programme of Action.

Armenia fully supports the efforts of the international community to eliminate anti-personnel mines. In this regard I should like to point out that, since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, Armenia has consistently expressed its willingness to accede to the treaty. However, Armenia's accession to the Convention is contingent upon the readiness of other countries of our region to adhere to this international agreement and comply with its regime. We believe that the simultaneous accession of regional countries will ensure the effectiveness of the Convention and reduce security threat perceptions in the South Caucasus.

Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels is an issue of primary importance for the security of my country. Armenia is located in a region where a number of unresolved conflicts still exist. Furthermore, there is a lack of regional security arrangements in the South Caucasus. It goes without saying that under such circumstances the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and unconditional and complete observance of its provisions play a fundamental role for the maintenance of stability and peace in the South Caucasus. Unfortunately, this pivotal agreement is being challenged in our region. Over the past few years the ceilings of conventional weapons established for the countries of our region have been overtly disregarded, posing a direct threat to the fragile stability of the

South Caucasus. We believe that the international community, primarily the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) member States, should react to this explicit breach of international law and take all necessary steps to restore the validity of the Treaty in our region. It is indisputable that strict observance of the Treaty by all three countries of the South Caucasus is one of the fundamental preconditions for regional security and stability.

In our statements made to two previous sessions of the General Assembly we drew the attention of the Committee to the unprecedented arms race that has been unleashed in the South Caucasus and its possible consequences. Indeed, parallel to the violation of the CFE Treaty in the South Caucasus, we have been witnessing an unprecedented arms race along with the enormous growth of military budgets, resulting in the escalation of tensions and a deterioration in the overall security situation in the region. It was not accidental that the excessive accumulation of armaments, coupled with the rise of militaristic rhetoric in lieu of genuine political dialogue, led to a military confrontation. These events demonstrate that the use of force is absolutely no solution to existing conflicts in the region. It is obvious that quick-fix approaches to conflict resolution are not viable. There is no alternative to conflict resolution through negotiations based on political compromise and the ultimate commitment of parties to the non-use of force.

In conclusion I reiterate Armenia's firm commitment to its international obligations with regard to arms control and disarmament. We are confident that full compliance with United Nations resolutions and regional arrangements on arms control and disarmament is one of the most essential and critical factors that can bring us closer to stability and durable peace in the South Caucasus.

**Mr. Sin Son Ho** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Allow me first, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Serious challenges still confront the long-cherished desire of humankind to build a peaceful and prosperous world. In particular, the regional situation of North-East Asia surrounding the Korean peninsula remains strained, and regrettably grave situations are occurring one after another in this region. Behind the

scenes of dialogue, large-scale joint military exercises envisaging preemptive nuclear strikes at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are staged in an increasingly undisguised manner in parallel with a move to integrate the United States-Japan and the United States-South Korea bilateral military alliances.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a country exposed to constant threats from the super-Power. Our choice to possess a nuclear deterrent is due to a deep-rooted hostile United States policy and nuclear threats that have continued for more than half a century. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its position to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula peacefully through dialogue and negotiations. Until recently the nuclear facilities were being disabled at the final stage, a nuclear declaration was being submitted and even measures scheduled for the dismantlement phase were being implemented in advance. That is a clear expression of our sincere will for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We will continue to endeavour to realize the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula by firmly adhering to the principle of "action for action".

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in its essence is directly linked to the elimination of the hostile United States policy and nuclear threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula therefore requires the United States to terminate its nuclear threat and its hostile policy aimed at overthrowing our system. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has put forward on numerous occasions a proposal to replace the present unstable armistice with a durable peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula, with a view to liquidating the remnants of the cold war, the last of its kind. Replacing the armistice with a peace mechanism is essential for peace, for the reunification of the Korean peninsula and for the peace and security of North-East Asia and beyond.

In order to ensure world peace and security in a sustainable way, all nuclear weapons, among others, should be eliminated on the globe.

As long as attempts to monopolize nuclear weapons and threaten other countries with them continue, no progress can be expected from deliberations on overall disarmament issues, or, needless to say, nuclear disarmament. Nuclear power

politics based on double standards is a major factor rendering the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other disarmament treaties ineffective and inciting a nuclear arms race worldwide. These days a number of countries are strengthening their own military capabilities for self-defence, because existing arms control treaties, such as the NPT, provide no shield for the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. It is entirely thanks to the independent Songun politics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that we are now able to prevent the danger of war and maintain peace on the Korean peninsula and in the region. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to make every possible effort to ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

**Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea): As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee and assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation under your able leadership throughout the course of this session of the First Committee. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Papua New Guinea remains concerned about the proliferation among States of nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction. We continue to maintain that there is no real justification for the retention and further development of those instruments of war. Papua New Guinea therefore encourages open dialogue and supports multilateral negotiations within the framework of international law, relevant multilateral conventions and the United Nations Charter to address these and other issues of international peace and security.

Of more immediate concern to Papua New Guinea is the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in our society. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has become a critical national security and development concern in Papua New Guinea. The presence of illicit small arms and light weapons and their use by criminals and armed groups is of great concern to Papua New Guinea. These illicit weapons to a large extent have been instruments of violence, death and destruction. Today the use of illicit small arms and light weapons has spread across all

sections of our country and has left thousands of traumatized victims.

It is generally acknowledged that illicit small arms and light weapons have the grave potential to bring the country to its knees. This has had a serious and significant impact in Papua New Guinea, with serious implications for the economic, social and political sectors, and serious consequences for the overall security of Papua New Guinea. Criminal activities, tribal fights and other transnational crime, including terrorism, money-laundering, illicit drug trafficking, human smuggling and trafficking, are also fuelled by the use of small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons are a major impediment to our national development.

Papua New Guinea therefore welcomes the adoption of the report 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 in July this year in support of a global framework for addressing and curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In the follow-up to the Third Biennial Meeting of States Papua New Guinea also participated in the recent Review Summit on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development in Geneva on 12 September 2008 in support of global efforts to reduce armed violence and promote development.

Papua New Guinea also supports the establishment of a legally binding arms trade treaty to apply common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms and notes that the Group of Governmental Experts mandated to examine the feasibility, scope and parameters of an arms trade treaty completed its work in August 2008 and conveyed its report to the Secretary-General, a report that will be introduced during this session of the First Committee. We also note the recent launch on 8 October of Oxfam International's report entitled "Shooting Down the MDGs", which illustrates how irresponsible arms transfers can negatively impact on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. We certainly commend this report to all fellow Member States.

The fight against illicit small arms and light weapons, including the irresponsible transfer of conventional weapons, cannot be fought by

government law enforcement agencies, such as police, or by individual countries alone, but requires the concerted efforts of all concerned citizens, institutions and nations working in partnership.

My delegation therefore looks forward to a productive session of the Committee in promoting our common understandings and in agreeing to concrete and practical measures that will strengthen global standards on these and other important issues of international peace and security.

**Mr. Ettalhi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset I should like to join those who have congratulated you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation supports the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

We underscore the importance of the goal that all Member States of the United Nations meet their disarmament commitments in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the provisions of international law. Libya is deeply convinced that progress towards the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in all its aspects is essential to strengthening international peace and security and that progress in the area of nuclear disarmament could have positive impact on non-proliferation. Achieving nuclear disarmament should be a disarmament priority and goal.

In addition, nuclear-weapon States need to comply with their obligations and fully eliminate their nuclear stockpiles. It is regrettable that progress in this area is very slow; indeed, there has, in some cases been backtracking, which is a source of concern. Nuclear States are, therefore called upon to take concrete positive measures in the area of nuclear disarmament. To ensure the credibility of efforts in non-proliferation, Libya calls for full, non-selective implementation of the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Furthermore, we should not mix the different nuclear disarmament programmes with the right of States to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Libya supports recourse to negotiations and dialogue as a means to resolving all problems of nuclear proliferation.

Within the existing framework of Conventions and agreements of the United Nations and other relevant international forums in the area of disarmament progress has proved to be more difficult in recent years. For example, there was a setback at the 2005 Millennium Review Summit with respect to bringing about a consensus on disarmament. There was a setback with the failure to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. There has been also a failure with respect to the Conference on Disarmament and its ability to address substantive disarmament issues.

My delegation underscores the pressing importance of reaching an agreement under a specific timetable for a programme to eliminate all nuclear weapons, the banning of their development, production, possession, and use or threat of use, and the destruction of existing stockpiles. It is also necessary to conclude as soon as possible an international, legally binding instrument, with no conditions, on the security safeguards that nuclear-weapon States should give to non-nuclear-weapon States. My delegation believes it is of utmost importance that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enter into force as soon as possible, because if that Treaty banning nuclear tests takes effect it will be a step forward in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Libya has demonstrated its goodwill and its unconditional commitment to the goals of the international non-proliferation regime and continues to meet its obligations with respect to weapons of mass destruction. According to its 2003 voluntary initiative Libya announced that all programmes and equipment that could lead to the production of such weapons would be eliminated, and we said that nuclear-States have the responsibility to provide necessary safeguards to the security of non-nuclear States.

Unfortunately, the Middle East region, where there is a genuine threat to international peace and security, continues to be the only region that has not seen effective international efforts undertaken to bring about a nuclear-weapons-free zone, or an official negotiating mechanism to deal with the dangers of nuclear proliferation. That is due to the intransigence of Israel. The Israelis are the only ones possessing an advanced nuclear capability and who continue to refuse to become a party to the NPT or to place their nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Libya believes that it is necessary to promote cooperation in security in the Mediterranean region, so as to make that region one of peace and one free of nuclear weapons and foreign fleets and bases. The region should become a bridge for promoting economic, cultural and scientific cooperation among its peoples.

With respect to landmines and unexploded ordnance it is regrettable that there are no international instruments that have been able to deal with this issue or objectively take into account the concerns of affected countries. Anti-personnel mines have been dealt with in a truncated manner under the Ottawa Convention, which provides for a complete ban affecting weak States and has thereby denied them their least costly defence weapons. This way of proceeding means that victim countries are, in fact, the States that have been subjected to invasion, aggression and occupation and cannot protect their internationally recognized borders against aggression and occupation. The Ottawa Convention should also have the provisions on ensuring demining of unexploded ordnance in territories; on treating victims of mines and ordnances and rehabilitating them; on environmental rehabilitation where there have been mines and unexploded ordnance and on allowing weak States to possess landmines to protect their borders.

Small arms and light weapons are the source of conflict, crime and violence, particularly in the African continent. International cooperation on fighting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons should abide by the principles of the United Nations Charter and the United Nations 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a binding policy framework. We believe that it is necessary for States to have the political will and transparency to be able to implement the United Nations Programme of Action fully. We hope that the commitments on the part of States to address this issue will be met in a balanced and credible way and that they will provide assistance and technical and material support to States that need it, so that they will be able to implement the United Nations Programme of Action effectively.

Lastly, there is no other path than that of multilateral collective action, without which we would not be able to overcome the failures or meet the growing challenges in all areas of disarmament.

**Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso I wish to express to you, Sir, our heartfelt congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are convinced that your experience and your personal qualities will contribute to the success of our deliberations. Rest assured of our full support.

At the outset I wish to underscore that we endorse the statements made here by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

My country is part of a region where the stockpiling and proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a key concern, both for the people and the public authorities. That is why we consider this to be the top priority. The political, economic and social consequences of this anarchic movement of small arms are well known. It has led to thousands of victims, particularly civilian victims, refugees, displaced persons and child soldiers. It has also led to continual acts of major banditry and crime in urban areas and border regions. What is more, we note with the greatest concern that this scourge resulting from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has in recent years contributed to the spread of dangerous terrorist networks that are thriving now throughout the Saharo-Saharan region. Unfortunately, conflicts in certain countries of the region have contributed to a worsening of the situation, as have its porous borders. That is why in 1998 the heads of State and Government of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the implementation of which is carried out at the State level by national commissions against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Converted in 2006 into a Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, this instrument is now the binding legal framework on the basis of which the countries of the subregion carry on the fight against this scourge.

Nevertheless, this fight calls for considerable resources, which our countries are not able to provide to deal with this burden. That is why, while expressing our gratitude and that of all ECOWAS member States to all those partners who have supported us in this effort, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to launch an appeal to the entire



international community to continue to support our subregion in its fight against the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In this regard we commend the revitalization of and initial steps taken to stabilize the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, based in Lomé, Togo, which continues to be a valuable structure for member States in their firm determination to bring about the disarmament of the region.

The lack of progress in recent years in the disarmament process, the ongoing tensions in the nuclear area and the risks of the militarization of space are disturbing signs for all humankind. We should together step up our efforts to ensure general and complete disarmament under effective international controls, which is the only way to ensure peace and security for all. With this in mind the ratification by all States without distinction of international instruments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons and anti-personnel mines, continue to be major challenges that we need to meet. In this area our common organization, the United Nations, offers the ideal framework for being able to advance the implementation of this goal. There is still some hope since countries such as my own, by ratifying the Pelindaba Treaty, have freely chosen to belong to a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We should encourage other countries to take this same path in order to contribute to strengthening nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time we reaffirm our position on the inalienable right of each State to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

As a party to the primary disarmament treaties and conventions Burkina Faso will actively participate in any initiative within the framework of disarmament, the goal being to build a better world for future generations.

**Mr. Castellón Duarte** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take pleasure in being able to congratulate a brother from Honduras, the homeland of General Francisco Morazán, the great Central American and the last President of Central America, as you, Sir, take office to preside over this important Committee. We are sure that your skills and knowledge will guarantee the success of the work of the Committee. Our greetings also go to the other members of the Bureau.

You may rely on my delegation's fully convinced support throughout this session.

My delegation also associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group.

Disarmament is one of the main aims of the United Nations, and for this reason the Charter refers to disarmament or arms regulation in three articles, Article 11.1 and Articles 26 and 47. In addition to the danger of the use of weapons for the very survival of humankind, particularly nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, the arms race uses resources that could be reassigned to social and economic development, particularly in the developing countries. Article 26 of the Charter addresses the principal organ of the Organization primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security and speaks specifically of "the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

In 1987 the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development adopted by consensus a Final Document aimed at promoting an interrelated approach to disarmament and development, promoting multilateralism in this context and strengthening the key role of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and development.

Every year military expenditures grow, reaching \$1,204 billion by 2007, while a large part of the world's population lives in critical conditions — 815 million hungry, 120 million people in extreme poverty, 850 million adults illiterate, more than 40 million sick or infected by HIV/AIDS, more than 2 million dead from tuberculosis, and more than 1 million from malaria. With just a part of the colossal sums of money invested today in the production of new weapons and in refining those already existing, it would be possible to eradicate most treatable diseases, attain the objectives of poverty reduction, support programmes to eradicate hunger and illiteracy and also to support official efforts to write off totally the external debt that now stifles the development processes of the countries of the South. Given these resources many developed countries would be able to fulfil the target of devoting at least 0.7 per cent of

gross domestic product to development aid, and more than that.

Nicaragua is actively committed to the cause of general and complete disarmament and takes the view that multilateral action on disarmament matters is the only sustainable solution and that all States must fulfil their obligations concerning arms control and disarmament to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which is essential to strengthen peace and security. As regards nuclear weapons, last year President Daniel Ortega Saavedra of Nicaragua spoke to the General Assembly and stated that the best course for humankind was to rid the Earth completely of nuclear weaponry. But at the same time he referred to one of the pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the right for all nations of the world to have the option and the right, a right that cannot be denied, to opt for the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The danger of the existence of nuclear weapons is bound up with the possibility of their unauthorized use, the risk of accidents, their production by unauthorized agents, their vulnerability to terrorist attack and the use with appalling consequences of such weapons as a response in a war with conventional weapons. Tens of thousands of these weapons continue to exist and the number of nuclear States has increased. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the sole absolute guarantee against the use or threat of their use. We are concerned at the lack of progress by nuclear-weapon States to put into practice their unequivocal compromise to comply with the principles, objectives and purposes of the NPT, reaffirming through the decisions and resolution adopted in 1995 by the Review Conference, in particular the resolution on the Middle East and the 13 practical measures adopted in 2000 at the Review Conference. Progress in the preparations for the 2010 NPT Review Conference is essential in order to reduce worldwide tension and continue with our commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. It is important, therefore, for delegations to show flexibility and the necessary political resolve to achieve this.

We appeal to all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), especially those States mentioned in Annex 2, and to maintain a moratorium over nuclear testing as a token of good will and as a means to

strengthen and build trust. Nicaragua is a signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and thus forms part of the first highly populated nuclear-weapon-free zone. So it is in favour of having such zones extended to other regions of the world where they do not exist. My Government is also firmly convinced that the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* issued on 8 July 1996 continues to be of far-reaching importance in the area of nuclear disarmament, since it establishes clearly that States have the legal obligation to undertake negotiations in good faith aimed at nuclear disarmament in all its aspects and to fulfil such disarmament measures as soon as possible.

Nicaragua shares the concerns of the international community about the grave damage caused by cluster munitions on civilian populations, both during and after armed conflicts. The mere suspicion of their existence represents an important obstacle to economic and social development in the countries affected, particularly developing countries.

For that reason, we took part in the Oslo process on anti-personnel mines and the Dublin Conference, which adopted a Convention on those munitions. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is bound up with drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, mercenary activities and other criminal activities that threaten the peace and stability of nations, which prompts our countries to adopt strong measures to combat this scourge. The Central American project to control small arms with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Central American Integration System (SICA) is harmonizing national legislation in the countries of the region. In keeping with international agreements the project is strengthening the capacities of Governments and non-governmental organizations, supporting the evaluation of arms collection programmes as they are implemented, promoting the culture of peace and regulating and controlling the use of legal weapons in the possession of the civilian population in order to contribute to reducing the levels of crime and violence in Central America.

Perhaps the most ambitious security initiative of the 1990s was the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America. The results so far of this project are more than satisfactory. The key objective of eliminating the illicit trade in small arms in Central

America has been achieved to some extent given the combination of political will among all the Governments concerned and the support of the international community and the civil societies of our countries.

Another important event in the subregion was the development of the Code of Conduct of Central American States on the Transfer of Arms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Matériel in 2005. This Code is a political declaration that prevents transfers to or from Central American countries according to a number of criteria of relevance to the international community and to the specific Central American situation.

Nicaragua has begun a process of modernization of its national legislation on arms control and registration through Act No. 510, the Special Law on the Control and Regulation of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Matériel and its regulations. The national multidisciplinary commission on the control of small arms and light weapons was established formally on 26 February 2008 under Article 150 of the Weapons Act, creating the technical secretariat and its support group. A plan to destroy 12,994 illegal weapons seized by the national police was carried out in 12 sessions concluding on 2 July 2008.

In conclusion, I urge all States to show goodwill in disarmament negotiations in order to achieve the goal of a world at peace and free of weapons of mass destruction.

**Ms. Haile** (Eritrea): At the outset allow me to join other representatives who have spoken before me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. I also wish to seize this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I am certain that with your vast experience and proven skills you will be able to guide us to a successful conclusion of our deliberations. My sincere appreciation goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal, who led us to a successful conclusion of the sixty-second session.

My delegation fully associates itself with the sentiments delivered by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by

the delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Achieving peace and security now in any region requires, among other things, the establishment of just and parallel international and regional mechanisms in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Issues related to international security, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have been high on the international agenda. Although the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) had the goal of nuclear disarmament as the main priority for international efforts in the field of disarmament and arms control, the world still witnesses drawbacks to achieving nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which is the most critical for a global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

It was believed that the end of the cold war and its replacement by a new international world order would create a new security environment. Indeed, some progress was made in the right direction. However, nuclear weapons are still the most dangerous kinds of weapons of mass destruction and this raises serious concern as the international community continues to witness a difficult historical era in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Peace and security are not threatened by nuclear weapons only. Other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological and toxin weapons also pose a great threat to international security, especially after the emergence of new and advanced technologies that are available in an ever-increasing way and readily facilitate the transport and proliferation of these weapons.

There is a growing consensus that the international community can meet the challenges of the times, including traditional and new methods of security and stability through multilateralism. Multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in accordance with the United Nations Charter provide the solid basis for addressing disarmament and international security issues. Embargo pressures only offer a fundamental solution for proliferation concerns. It is therefore imperative that the international community needs to come together to work hard to promote a world free of fear from nuclear armaments.

The relationship among nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be appropriately addressed and nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be pushed forward in a balanced way. The inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be fully guaranteed and respected without compromising the goals and objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The free unimpeded and non-discriminatory transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes must be fully ensured.

In the field of conventional weapons my delegation underlines the grave sufferings of victims of conflagrations and wars, and fully supports the prohibition of all weapons which indiscriminately maim and kill. Proliferation and easy access to small arms and light weapons exasperate conflicts, facilitate violent crime and terrorism, impede post-conflict reconstruction and undermine long-term sustainable development in many regions of the world, particularly in our region. It is for this reason that Eritrea attaches the utmost importance and seeks no better instrument to rely on than the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects since its adoption in 2001 as a politically binding instrument.

My country firmly believes that full observance of all principles and norms of international law, including full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, is indispensable for the prevalence of international peace, security and stability. Eritrea without being distracted by the ongoing deliberate campaign of smears and misinformation in some quarters will continue to work in partnership with other countries and organizations for regional peace and security.

My country reaffirms its strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and pledges its full cooperation in combating this phenomenon. It is regrettable, however, to witness that the war on terror is being derailed from its original objectives and intentions to serve as an excuse in our subregion for military occupation, torture and extrajudicial killings.

Disarmament benefits mankind not only because it eliminates threats to peace and security but also because it may help to divert scarce material and

financial resources to development efforts. The Millennium Development Goals could be achieved by only a small fraction of the amount spent on military expenditure by nations big and small.

Before I conclude my delegation wishes to express its hope and confidence that the Committee will be able to work purposefully under your able leadership, Sir, and I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation and support.

**Mr. Al-Amri (Oman)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation is sincerely pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. We are certain that with your wisdom and skills this session will produce tangible results. We assure you of our full cooperation to ensure success. We also commend the other members of the Bureau. My delegation sincerely wishes to thank the Chairman and Bureau members of the sixty-second session for the way in which they carried out their mandate. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement and for the role he plays in strengthening disarmament mechanisms.

My delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The stagnation we witness on disarmament issues and the lack of optimism among Member States in terms of moving forward in this area are sources of great misgiving and uncertainty with regard to the existing multilateral mechanisms. We call upon Member States to have the courageous political will to move nuclear disarmament forward. This is an essential goal for eliminating the nuclear threat, which imperils international peace and security.

Here we wish to underscore the need for political will on the part of States, without any double standards, particularly given the failures in recent years to reach consensus on many nuclear disarmament issues, including in the Disarmament Commission, the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the non-entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the failure to reach agreement on the agenda for the Conference on Disarmament.

Nonetheless, there still is the important issue that certain States continue to remain outside the NPT. This year, 2008, is the fortieth anniversary of the opening of that Treaty for signature. Hence my country once again calls upon those States to show the necessary political will to accede to that Treaty without delay. At the same time, my Government underscores the legitimate right of all States, without exception, to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty and in compliance with international norms and rules and with the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In this context, the Sultanate of Oman recently became a member of the IAEA during its just concluded General Conference. We wanted to strengthen the international and regional role that the Agency plays in order to safeguard the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to consolidate international peace and security. The Sultanate reiterates its call for making the Middle East region a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Like all other Arab countries, we are certain that achieving this goal would help to create a positive climate for cooperation among the States of the region. It would also help to put an end to the arms race in the region and bring about a climate of trust and peace that would in turn have an impact on the entire world in terms of international peace and security.

Therefore, the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region is an extremely important issue and deserves the attention and support of the international community. As we support the proposal to bring this about, we call upon Israel to accede to the NPT and put all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA. The package that was concluded in 1995 included the adoption of a Middle-East-related resolution concerning the indefinite extension of the NPT, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the accession of Israel to the NPT, but, unfortunately we have seen no progress in those areas to date.

My Government would like to see consultations continue between Iran and other States with respect to the Iran nuclear issue. We hope that such efforts will make it possible to reach an agreement that would

guarantee Iran's right to use nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes, and put an end to the fears that some States have with respect to Iran's nuclear programme. My country also welcomes recent developments leading towards resolving the nuclear issue in North Korea and we hope that these efforts will lead to a peaceful resolution of all pending issues.

My country's delegation welcomes the success of the work 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 was held in July with a view to taking stock of the implementation of the Programme of Action to fight this phenomenon. We hope that this success will lead to international cooperation and to specific results that could put an end to a phenomenon that poses such a threat to international peace and security.

In conclusion, we call upon all Member States to meet their obligations under the relevant disarmament treaties and conventions, particularly nuclear disarmament and disarmament with regard to weapons of mass destruction. We hope that the deliberations and resolutions of the Committee under your guidance, Sir, will help to meet the expectations of people worldwide with respect to peace, security and stability.

**Mr. Bodini** (San Marino): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee and congratulate also the other members of the Bureau. I wish you success in steering the work of the Committee and assure you of the full support of my country. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chairman of the sixty-second session, Ambassador Badji.

Today, the financial crisis is a crucial issue that will affect every aspect of our lives. Developed and developing countries will go through great transformations and changes that may pose new and serious threats to the entire world, creating a state of uncertainty and destabilization that could easily be exploited by terrorist groups with an interest in taking possession of weapons of mass destruction.

We, the Member States, should therefore be more vigilant than ever. We should reinforce our commitment to free the world from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We should continue to work towards the universality of the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and ask States that are not yet members to join that Treaty. We also share the desire of many States to enhance the capability of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), so that it can fulfil its crucial mandate.

Promotion of peace is a key element in the history of San Marino, an element always present and deep-rooted in our history and culture. We are glad today to reconfirm our commitment to support and assist in a new initiative aimed at the total disarmament of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. San Marino supported the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. That Convention is of great importance and we are sure that it will contribute to the reduction of the unwanted suffering of thousands of innocent victims. This latest success demonstrates once more that multilateral diplomacy can be effective. However, we believe that the whole disarmament process is in need of a major overhaul. We must pursue this goal within the General Assembly, the most important forum, where we, the Member States, small and large, can make progress in the disarmament agenda. Let us work together in a constructive and transformative way. Let us build consensus on this fundamental disarmament issue. Let us produce lasting results for our people and our countries.

**Ms. Majali** (Jordan): First, I should like to start by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as chairperson and to assure you of my delegation's full support. I should also like to extend my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor for having successfully conducted our work during the sixty-second session. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The First Committee provides us with an important forum for deliberating on how best to address challenges and concerns in the area of international peace and security with regard to disarmament, non-proliferation and the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms. It also provides an opportunity to take stock of the progress made in implementation of our agreements in this regard. My delegation therefore believes that we as member States should ensure that the Committee fulfils its role and we, for our part, will therefore do all we can to ensure this.

In face of the continued challenges to peace and security, progress in our work in the other forums of disarmament and its machinery is just as important. This, however, requires political will and flexibility on the part of all Member States participating in these different processes, if we are to surmount the deadlock facing our work in the field of disarmament and push its agenda forward. In this regard the work undertaken by the Conference on Disarmament is of pivotal importance. It is vital that the Conference on Disarmament agrees on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, so that it may commence its serious substantive work as soon as possible. The United Nations Disarmament Commission also continues to be of extreme importance. The fact that it was unable to reach an agreement on recommendations on its two agenda items during its last 3-year cycle should not constrain us in our preparation for a new cycle or from an agreement on a 2009 Commission agenda.

The convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) also remains important for progress in our work. We therefore hope that consensus will be reached on its objectives and agenda and that a preparatory committee for the fourth special session will be established.

With respect to nuclear disarmament, Jordan reiterates that for the international regime on non-proliferation to deliver on its objectives the universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are required. Therefore, Jordan urges States that have not ratified or acceded to these treaties to do so. Moreover, pending the total elimination of such weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

Jordan welcomes the agreements and results of the first and second meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT and hopes that the third Preparatory Committee meeting will continue to build on the work of the previous two. Jordan reminds members that ensuring the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference is of the utmost importance. For this it is necessary that we build on the outcomes of the

previous Review Conferences, particularly those of 1995 and 2000, and honour our obligations under the Treaty.

Jordan stresses the importance of the universality of the NPT, as well as the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones for maintaining the international non-proliferation regime and consolidating international peace and security. This can be no truer or more needed than in the Middle East, as has been acknowledged by the international community through many General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and the NPT Review Conference outcomes on the issue. To date, these resolutions and outcomes remain, however, to be implemented. Jordan therefore reiterates its position, namely, that Israel accedes to the NPT without delay and that it places its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

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

Jordan welcomes the outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the progress made to date in its implementation. The importance of the CWC as an instrument for disarmament and cooperation cannot be underestimated. Jordan reiterates the need to comply with obligations under the Convention, including by meeting destruction deadlines. Like the CWC, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) is also important for peace and security and therefore needs to be fully and comprehensively implemented. Jordan stresses the importance of strengthening the Convention and

welcomes the work done in the intersessional process, as agreed in the 2006 BWC Review Conference. Jordan also calls on States that have not signed, ratified or acceded to the CWC and the BWC to do so.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is the framework for our collective response to the problem posed by the illicit trade in these weapons. Jordan reiterates its commitment to the Programme of Action and welcomes the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting. In this regard Jordan stresses the importance of providing technical, technological and financial assistance to States requesting it in order to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action.

As a State party to the Mine Ban Convention Jordan has taken effective steps to comply with the Convention's provisions. Having completely destroyed all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, Jordan hopes that it will be able to satisfy its treaty obligations without having to ask for an extension. Jordan attaches great importance to the attainment of the universality of the Mine Ban Convention and is active in trying to bring about its universality specifically at the regional level. Last November Jordan had the honour of hosting the eighth meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention. This November, the coming ninth meeting of the States parties to the Convention will be held in Geneva. Jordan looks forward to a successful outcome of that meeting.

At this session Jordan, as president of the coming Review Conference, will present the annual draft resolution on the Mine Ban Convention on behalf of Australia and Switzerland and the presidents of the seventh and ninth meetings of States Parties respectively. It is the hope of Jordan that the draft resolution, as with similar draft resolutions in previous years, will receive the support of member States.

Before ending, my delegation wishes to thank the High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, along with his team in the Office for Disarmament Affairs, for their efforts and work during the past year. Finally, my delegation once again reiterates its full support for your efforts, Mr. Chairman, and hopes for the successful conclusion of our work at this sixty-third session.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your

election to the chairmanship of this important Committee and wish you success in guiding our deliberations. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on 6 October on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

A range of serious and complex challenges, including the continued existence of thousands of nuclear weapons coupled with a disregard of nuclear disarmament obligations, the tendency to gain global dominance through military hardware, expansionism founded on the pre-emptive doctrine, the misuse of international bodies, and terrorism have led to the erosion of international peace, security and stability. Such circumstances, fuelled by the re-emergent arms race, have resulted in a deepening of mistrust, a sense of insecurity among States and a weakening of the credibility and effectiveness of multilateral mechanisms. A real and essential change is needed in order to close this chapter of our history and to bring in a new phase in the international arena based on the principle of undiminished security for all and the right to development, as well as on an understanding the new dynamics and realities of today's world and on cooperation and genuine multilateralism in order to secure collective security. All peace-loving nations are hopeful that future developments will serve as the driver for such a breakthrough.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. In this context we believe that efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should run parallel with simultaneous efforts aimed at addressing non-proliferation in all its aspects. The strengthening of efforts in these two areas together would well serve to secure a world free from weapons of mass destruction.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the latest victim of the use of weapons of mass destruction in recent history, is highly motivated to pursue the realization of the lofty goal of a world free from such inhumane weapons. Iran has manifested its determination towards this end by adhering to three major legal instruments, namely, the NPT, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production,

Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and by promoting the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The lack of progress towards the realization of nuclear disarmament is frustrating. The development of new nuclear weapons and the irrational doctrines seeking to justify the use of these weapons as a means of terrorizing nations have added to this frustration.

Those who hypocritically preach that others should comply are themselves guilty of serious non-compliance in the context of articles I, II, IV and VI of the NPT and the agreements reached at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. That has given rise to the pervasive concern that some nuclear-weapon States have no genuine will to accomplish the disarmament part of the NPT bargain. This trend has led to the creation of a crisis of confidence, which, if it remains unaddressed, may have far-reaching consequences. Cases of non-compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations include: developing new nuclear-weapon systems such as mini-nuclear weapons; constructing new facilities for producing nuclear weapons; modernizing existing nuclear-weapon systems; resuming efforts to develop and deploy tactical nuclear weapons despite the commitment to effectively reduce them; and lowering the threshold for the actual use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

The United States, a country that boasts of having leadership in the fight against the threat of weapons of mass destruction, continues to stress the essential role of nuclear weapons as an effective tool to achieve security and foreign policy objectives and threatens to target non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Concluding agreements with non-parties to the NPT on nuclear cooperation, including but not limited to the 2000 agreement with the Zionist regime, has put in jeopardy the entire non-proliferation regime and appears as a disservice to the universality of the NPT. Moreover, the United States is also engaged in destabilizing the international security environment by building a missile shield in Eastern Europe based on declaratory assessments of hypothetical and artificial threats and on an ambition to attain the impossible goal of absolute security. The main target country of this shield, having nuclear-weapon status, has repeatedly warned, including in this Committee, that the deployment of the United States



global missile defence bases in Eastern Europe will have a negative effect on the disarmament process.

The commitment of certain nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament must go beyond rhetoric. Instead of playing a numbers game to cover their non-compliance and ambitions, they need to abandon their anti-nuclear disarmament policies and actions and truly honour their obligations.

Current prejudicial attempts to restrict the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology present all developing non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT with a serious challenge. Exacerbating the already discriminatory conditions of the NPT would only undermine one of the basic foundations of the Treaty. In the past few years such attempts, coupled with pressure and threats, have targeted the peaceful nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran is a party to the NPT and observes its legal obligations, but is determined to exercise its inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, including the fuel cycle. This policy is based on long-term planning to meet the growing energy needs of the country. By presenting various offers including its proposed package for constructive negotiations to the 5+1 Group in May 2008, Iran had already demonstrated its firm determination to participate in negotiations without preconditions in order to find a solution to issues arising from the unjust and prejudicial approach of certain Powers. The 5+1 Group has yet to provide its response to Iran's package. Instead of applying pressure, a solution that is based on reality, common concerns and obligations should be pursued as a viable option.

For nearly three decades it has been consistently emphasized by General Assembly and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolutions that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would greatly enhance international peace and security. Yet the Zionist regime, which has rejected and violated every single resolution of the Security Council and General Assembly and flouted all international regimes on weapons of mass destruction, continues to be the only impediment to realizing such a zone in the Middle East owing to its non-adherence to the NPT, its nuclear arsenals and continued clandestine operation of non-safeguarded nuclear facilities.

The international community, especially countries in the region, must unite to curb the threats posed by

the weapons of mass destruction of the Israeli regime and must pursue the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East at the earliest possible time.

On the issue of the third session of the Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles, we are pleased that the Panel had a very constructive and serious discussion and succeeded in preparing a second consensual report on the complex issue of missiles in all its aspects. I congratulate the Chairman and members of the Panel for their tireless efforts and commitment to carrying out a substantive review of the different aspects of missiles. The Chairman of the Panel, Mr. Santiago Mourão of Brazil, played an important role in achieving consensus within the Panel, and I seize this opportunity to express my special thanks for his dedication and excellent leadership. Given this development, my delegation along with other sponsors will present a draft resolution this year.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a victim of weapons of mass destruction, joins with other peace-loving nations and spares no effort towards realizing a world free from these inhuman and horrible weapons.

**Mr. Marrakchi** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first occasion on which my delegation is taking the floor, may I convey my delegation's congratulations to you, Ambassador Marco Suazo Fernández of Honduras, on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. You represent a country with which Morocco has extremely positive and friendly relations. We wish you every success in your work and assure you and the members of your Bureau of our full support. We also wish to pay a warm tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal, who conducted the work of the Committee at the sixty-second session with his customary tact and wisdom. I wish also to thank the members of the Secretariat for their contribution and valuable support.

While we endorse the general statements made earlier by Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, my delegation wishes to stress a number of issues that are of particular importance to the Kingdom of Morocco.

As we embark on the work of this sixty-third session with the same resolutions and expectations of

achieving success that we had at earlier sessions, we must note with regret that the disarmament mechanisms to date still suffer from persistent deadlock and stagnation in this regard. It is particularly regrettable to note the closure of the triennial cycle of the Disarmament Commission on a note of failure despite a possible compromise that, in everybody's view, might have been reachable. It is also regrettable to note that the Disarmament Conference was again unable this year to adopt an agenda. In addition, significant obstacles still stand in the way of the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). My delegation certainly hopes that in contrast with those frustrating experiences the work of the sixty-third session will be effective, and in this regard we call on everyone to shoulder their responsibilities in order to tackle the challenges that face us on the agenda of the Committee.

Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction lead the agenda of the Committee and of disarmament machinery in general. Under this heading my delegation wishes to reaffirm the central importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the existing legal arsenal. Notwithstanding its shortcomings, this Treaty is capable of tackling the nuclear risk and establishing a system of effective guarantees, provided its three pillars are observed strictly and equally, namely, the obligation on nuclear Powers to work for general and complete disarmament, the need for non-nuclear States to fully respect their commitments in the area of non-proliferation, and the recognized right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. As a State party to the NPT Morocco once again reiterates its adherence to these three pillars, reaffirms its endorsement of the vital objective of an irreversible nuclear disarmament that is transparent and verifiable, and reaffirms its commitment to work to make the NPT universal. This tripartite commitment lay at the heart of Morocco's term of office in the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Moreover, Morocco welcomes the satisfactory holding of the second session of the Preparatory Committee, which took place in Geneva from 28 April to 9 May 2008. The Moroccan delegation wishes, in this respect, to pay tribute to the sincere efforts of the Ukrainian president, Mr. Yelchenko, which led to the success of the current review cycle. Morocco hopes that the results of these

first two sessions of the Preparatory Committee will be useful for the success of the third. Morocco is still mobilized in this direction with the ultimate aim of achieving success in the crucial 2010 NPT Review Conference.

There are indeed important expectations vested in that Review Conference, bearing in mind not only the challenges facing the NPT but also the serious risks and threats that have appeared in recent years and which call for a collective and appropriate response from the international community. In fact, to the risk of the wilful or accidental use of some 27,000 nuclear weapons identified throughout the world, we must add today a new and complex threat linked to terrorism, particularly nuclear terrorism. Morocco for its part for a number of years now has been developing a global and inclusive anti-terrorist strategy that attaches the necessary importance to combating nuclear terrorism, as well as to the vital need to prevent terrorist groups from acquiring nuclear, biological or chemical weapons or associated materials, their vectors and radiological material.

In this context, Morocco attaches great importance to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent Security Council resolutions, on which it reports regularly to the United Nations. It is also in the same spirit that Morocco is committed to the objectives of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, for which it hosted the inaugural meeting in Rabat on 10 October 2006. More recently, Morocco in May 2008 joined the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Morocco's participation in that multilateral initiative, which now has more than 100 members, is part of its continuing measures of vigilance and monitoring observed both in the context of national security arrangements and in the framework of regional and international cooperation. Moreover, Morocco, which attaches great importance to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), notes with satisfaction that a new momentum towards the coming into force of that Treaty has emerged more clearly, as we look towards the holding of the 2010 Review Conference. That is particularly clear from the statements made at the ministerial meeting on the CTBT held on 24 September in New York in the margins of the general debate at the General Assembly. Morocco, which has taken an active part in this useful process, welcomes its success and thanks the organizers for their pertinent initiative.

The question of the proliferation of missiles capable of being used to deliver weapons of mass destruction is another subject of concern. Morocco chaired the group of States signatories to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and reaffirms its conviction that that instrument is still the right framework within which to tackle the subject of missile proliferation. In this regard Morocco will spare no effort to explain and promote the objectives of the Hague Code.

For my delegation the thorny question of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, heads the international challenges to regional and international security and stability. These weapons are genuine weapons of mass destruction by another name. The lack of regulation and control of the use and transfer of these weapons adds to their uncontrolled proliferation in hotbeds of tension, particularly in Africa, leading to unbearable consequences for the stability and security of States and their economic and social development.

After the regrettable failure in 2006 of the Second Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, my delegation welcomes the satisfactory conclusion of the work of the Third Biennial Meeting in July in New York, and we believe that the measures contained in the conclusions of that Meeting will help to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. At the same time my delegation, which has taken an active part in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the management of surplus munitions stocks, welcomes the substantive report submitted by that Group of Governmental Experts.

My delegation wishes to underscore the fact that Morocco firmly believes in the indivisible nature of security and believes that, until the international community has tackled the challenge of small arms and light weapons with courage and a genuine sense of urgency, the risk of the proliferation of these weapons will heavily constrain efforts for development in the damaged areas.

My delegation wishes, furthermore, to pay tribute to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, a ministerial Review Summit which took place on 12 September. The Declaration once again reaffirmed the fact that it is grounded in the

Millennium Declaration and the Final Document of the World Summit of 2005 concerning the promotion of the development of peace, security and human rights and the resolve to define the goals, targets and indicators of armed violence and development, supplementing the Millennium Development Goals. My delegation's active participation in this praiseworthy initiative is part of its conviction that individual and collective efforts by members of the international community cannot fully achieve their objectives unless they go beyond the narrow framework of security and become part of a global approach seriously addressing the real implications of armed violence, in particular on socio-economic and human development.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which has always striven to respect the principles of international law in the area of disarmament, believes that the universal ideal of disarmament involves strengthening the legal mechanisms of the United Nations in this area. The Kingdom of Morocco for its part remains firmly committed to dialogue, negotiation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. It remains convinced that the building of a united Maghreb with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member States in keeping with article 15 of the Marrakech Treaty of 1989 would undoubtedly contribute to regional and international security, particularly in the European and Mediterranean area.

The international community has a responsibility to find the right responses to the new challenges, perils and dangers threatening international security. International cooperation, mobilization of good will, the building of multilateralism and the effective implementation of all the provisions of international treaties are fundamental elements in order to build a better world of peace and security for all.

**Mr. Ehouzou (Benin)** (*spoke in French*): My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, most warmly on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. You may be assured of our cooperation. Our greetings also go to the other officers of the Bureau. The important statement made by the High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs has shed fresh light on the items on the agenda of the Committee. Benin endorses the statements made by the delegation of Indonesia on

behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Over the past few years humankind has had many grounds for becoming aware of the genuine challenges to its survival that have manifested themselves in various ways. They require an increase in multilateral cooperation and a mobilization of resources throughout the world to provide the necessary investments to ensure that humanity survives. It is therefore incomprehensible that staggering sums are still being diverted to military expenditure. These have increased 45 per cent worldwide over the past 10 years. According to an authoritative study in the area, the factors explaining the increase in world military expenditures are, among others, the foreign policy objectives of countries, real or supposed threats, armed conflicts, and so on.

These factors are not in any way fated; they result from human action. We need therefore to find ways and means of governing the behaviour of States and actors in international relations, so as to create conditions to reverse the trend towards heightened military expenditure. The United Nations should pay greater attention to the impact of military expenditure on the world economy and the capacity of humankind to tackle the challenges associated with development. The crisis currently prevailing in the international financial system should induce Governments to show greater moderation in drawing up their military budgets.

In his report on the relationship between disarmament and development the Secretary-General indicates that he has not been mandated to monitor and analyse the trends in military expenditures nor their impact on the world economy and international security (A/63/134, II.A.4). This question, which reflects genuine concern, is of critical importance and should be the subject of careful examination. My delegation proposes that the First Committee keep this issue on its agenda for subsequent work.

The thematic debates should dwell on the issue of determining whether the consideration of this question can be tackled in the framework of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/13 or whether there is a need to find other more specific instruments to do this. Essentially, member States need to be more responsive to the appeal in Article 26 of the Charter "to promote the establishment and maintenance of international

peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

General and complete disarmament is a major goal of the United Nations. In recent years we have seen disquieting developments that may cause us to doubt the extent to which Member States are committed to this aim. The situation is particularly critical in the nuclear area, where humankind faces considerably divergent views. These differences increasingly undermine the consensus established in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). States must take a more constructive attitude in order to give that Treaty all the authority that it should bear vis-à-vis their security policies. Thus the deal that is struck should continue to govern the behaviour of States parties and provide in the long term for the universality of the Treaty.

Member States should adopt the necessary confidence-building measures to neutralize and gradually eliminate nuclear weapons from their doctrines of national defence, so as to create the right conditions for nuclear disarmament. The two major nuclear Powers have particular responsibilities in this regard. The emergence of genuine prospects on the horizon of nuclear disarmament would strip nuclear weapons of all their meaning as a factor in security and would erase their attraction by taking away any justification for real or virtual horizontal and vertical proliferation projects, two phenomena that are equally detrimental to the cause of disarmament. Having chaired over the past three years the Working Group I of the Disarmament Commission on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, my delegation is prompted to think that we are still far from the prospect that we very much wish to see.

The fears relating to the question of the proliferation of nuclear weapons should be settled solely by peaceful means within the context of the multilateral mechanism that operates in concert with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as is the case currently. Then we need to promote the multilateralization of the sourcing of fissile material in the context of a legally binding and verifiable treaty and the development and transfer of new technologies that will make it possible systematically to divorce the technological capacity to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes from the technological capacity to use it for military purposes.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of particular importance along with the continued moratorium on nuclear testing. In current circumstances one cannot seriously address the question of nuclear weaponry without taking into account its correlation with the situation concerning conventional weapons, which is just as troubling. The international community should tackle more resolutely the critical questions that arise in this context. The unbridled stockpiling of conventional weapons should be banned. There is a need to ensure that arms transfers are carried out in a more moral fashion. In this regard the development of an arms trade treaty is vitally necessary. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials enshrines key principles that should be taken into account in the work to develop a universal treaty that would be legally binding on the arms trade.

My delegation welcomes the possibility currently offered to the General Assembly to entrust the consideration of this question to an open-ended working group that would have a specific timetable. That group would need to seek the most effective and legally binding formulas, so as once and for all to block transfers of weaponry to non-State actors, transfers that are a serious violation of international law with grave consequences. Thus the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has helped to bring about an erosion of State monopolies over the exercise of armed violence. This has caused unspeakable suffering in the affected regions and leads to insecurity, instability and poverty. Benin fully supports the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

We need to enhance the mobilization of the international community in the context of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The conclusions of the work of the Third Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms held in July 2008 need to be applied consistently and coherently if we are to crush the phenomenon of the proliferation of light weapons.

International peace and security are still gravely jeopardized by terrorism, which we condemn in all respects in all its forms and manifestations. The risk

that terrorists may have recourse to weapons of mass destruction is not a negligible one. Sustained effort is necessary to ensure that Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is consistently applied. We need to think further about the desirability of a treaty in this area. International peace and security would definitely be markedly strengthened if all Governments, peoples and citizens of the world were to respect the value of human life and would strive in the spirit of peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness to promote the welfare of humankind by cooperation, working together and promoting a culture of peace and dialogue among religions in the service of mutual understanding.

In this regard my delegation welcomes the action of the regional disarmament centres, in particular the revitalization of the African Regional Centre in Lomé. That Centre is beginning once again to take its place in the continent's endeavours to strengthen regional peace and security in conjunction with the African Union and the competent agencies at the subregional level. Benin pays tribute to the partners that have financed the activities of the Centre, which is very beneficial to the countries targeted.

These then are some thoughts that my delegation felt necessary to share with the Committee at this stage in our deliberations pending a more in-depth exchange of views on these issues in the forthcoming thematic debates.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): Before calling on the representative of the Republic of Korea, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply, I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second.

**Mr. Youn Jong Kwon** (Republic of Korea): I should like to exercise the right of reply to the general statement made by the Ambassador from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My delegation welcomes the commitment expressed by the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully through dialogue and negotiation, such as the Six-Party Talks, to achieve the goal of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. However, my delegation wishes to respectfully point out that "the large-scale joint military exercises" mentioned by the Ambassador of

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not a factual description. It is an annual military exercise of a purely defensive nature and as part of the confidence-building measures in the Korean peninsula the Republic of Korea has been giving prior notification of all major military exercises to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since 1982, including the one mentioned by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to remind members that 16 October is the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions. That deadline was proposed at the beginning of our work. The process that we must engage in over the next few weeks is a most sensitive one and I hope that we can do our utmost to meet the deadline that has already been established.

*The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.*