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First Committee

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Official Records

^{GA}Chairman: Mr. José Luis Cancela (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 86 to 103 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We have a long list of speakers for this morning's meeting and I would like to remind delegations again to limit their statements to 10 minutes or less for those speaking in their national capacities and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. Delegations may distribute written versions of longer statements which will be posted on the Quickfirst website. Allow me also to remind delegations that when the time allocated for their statements is up, the red light on the stoplight will go on. I ask speakers kindly to pay attention to this signal. After a grace period, I will call on you to conclude your statement if you exceed your time. Please watch for this light so that work can continue in an orderly fashion and within the agreed schedule. I thank you beforehand for your full cooperation.

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee and also congratulating the other members of the Bureau on their election. I am sure that under your able leadership we will be skilfully guided through the deliberations ahead of us. I should also like to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations

Office for Disarmament Affairs, for their strenuous efforts in support of the work of the Committee. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you carry out your valuable work.

We are gathered here amid the growing expectations for progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I am pleased to note that, for the first time in almost a decade, a majority of delegations to this Committee expressed positive views on the current situation. The last session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May agreed on the substantive agenda and time frame, laying the foundation for a successful Review Conference next year.

The Conference on Disarmament finally agreed on its programme of work, gearing up for the decade-awaited negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The prospects for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are brighter than ever. Negotiations to put in place the post-Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) regime are under way between the United States and the Russian Federation, with their firm commitment to further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. It is also encouraging to note that some initiatives, such as the five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament presented by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as the vision for a world free of nuclear weapons put forward by President Obama, have revitalized the discussions on nuclear disarmament on a global scale. I am confident that the issues of nuclear disarmament and

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non-proliferation are becoming the focus of the global agenda of our time.

Two weeks ago, the Security Council held a special session dedicated to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191) and adopted a landmark document, resolution 1887 (2009). My delegation believes that the resolution is a clear manifestation of the overarching tasks we have to deal with in the coming years and fully endorses the goals stated therein. The Republic of Korea believes that the central role of the NPT should be further reinforced. In the face of various setbacks and challenges, the NPT has not only served as a cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime but has also successfully curbed the spread of nuclear weapons.

Along with ongoing efforts to achieve the universality of the NPT, my delegation believes that the monitoring and verification mechanisms of the Treaty need to be even further strengthened through universalization of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Additional Protocol. This has assumed even greater importance given the current renaissance of nuclear energy. If the nuclear renaissance is an irreversible trend amid the challenges of the energy crisis and climate change, the international community needs to come up with ways and means to tackle the risks entailed in such a trend and further strengthen international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In particular, in view of the stress that has been given to the threat of nuclear terrorism as the most imminent and extreme threat to global security, my delegation acknowledges various efforts to enhance nuclear safety and security, including the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership and Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Furthermore, we welcome the initiative of the President of the United States to convene a nuclear security summit next April. We believe that the summit will be an occasion to mobilize the will of global leaders and to pool our collective wisdom to tackle the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear materials.

The nuclear issues of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran pose pressing challenges to international non-proliferation efforts. We welcome the tireless efforts undertaken by the relevant parties and support a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the pending issues. The peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains vital to securing peace and security in North-

East Asia as well as sustaining the integrity of the global non-proliferation regime. The Republic of Korea maintains the firm position that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear development cannot be tolerated. In this regard, the Republic of Korea appreciates the international community's unified and strong response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's second nuclear test of 25 May through the adoption and subsequent implementation of Security Council resolution 1874 (2009).

The Republic of Korea and the countries concerned share the common goal of achieving the denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. To this end, the five parties concerned stand firm in the position that the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be resolved through the Six-Party Talks in a peaceful manner. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come back promptly to the Six-Party Talks with a sincere attitude towards denuclearization. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in accordance with the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 signed by the six parties, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In his speech to the General Assembly (see A/64/PV.3), President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea reiterated his proposal of a grand bargain, saying that North Korea's dismantlement of core components of its nuclear weapons programme will be met with security assurance and international assistance. This proposal demonstrates our commitment to a fundamental resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. The Republic of Korea will continue to discuss the details of the grand bargain with the countries concerned.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the recent meeting between the Permanent Five plus one (P5+1) countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran held in Geneva as a meaningful step forward. We call upon Iran to further engage in a dialogue within the P5+1 framework. We hope that the issue with regard to the newly declared nuclear facility near the city of Qom will be resolved as the Iranian Government cooperates fully with the IAEA in accordance with international non-proliferation norms.

The Republic of Korea is of the view that the issue of conventional weapons warrants the constant attention of the international community. It is disappointing that this year's Group of Governmental

Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms could not reach agreement on whether to include small arms and light weapons as the eighth category of the Register.

With regard to cluster munitions, the Republic of Korea fully recognizes the need to reduce humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions and supports international efforts to address the problems associated with their use. My delegation finds it regrettable that, despite two years of intensive negotiations, the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) was not able to reach a consensus on the draft of a new protocol on cluster munitions. My delegation believes that a new protocol, if adopted and faithfully implemented, would have a significant impact on the ground. The Republic of Korea will continue to participate actively and constructively in future discussions if the continuation of further discussions within the CCW framework is agreed upon at the meeting of States Parties to the CCW in November.

Twenty years since the end of the cold war, a new consensus now seems to be forming in the international community towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. With many promising signs in every corner of the globe, the community needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that they bear tangible fruit.

With the 2010 NPT Review Conference approaching, the next few months will be truly important for all member States and for the United Nations disarmament machinery. My delegation firmly believes that the 2010 Review Conference should send a clear message to the world that the NPT is a robust cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. I believe that all of us in this room have primary and shared responsibility to make the Conference a success. To that end, I would like to stress that we should embrace an approach of mutual respect and demonstrate flexibility and a spirit of cooperation with a view to making greater progress in global disarmament and non-proliferation.

Before closing, my delegation would like to draw attention to the annual Republic of Korea and United Nations Joint Conference on Disarmament and

Non-Proliferation which the Republic of Korea has been co-hosting with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs since 2002. This year's meeting will be held on Jeju Island in Korea from 16 to 18 November under the title: "2010 NPT: Prospects for a New Era of Progress on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation". We sincerely hope that the debate in that conference will represent a constructive contribution to our common goals.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. We are happy to see a distinguished member of Latin America and the Caribbean as Chair of this Committee and I wish to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Brazil towards the success of our work.

(*spoke in English*)

We also take this opportunity to recognize with appreciation the work carried out by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, and by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Brazil fully associates itself with the views expressed earlier on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

This session of the First Committee takes place amidst renewed expectations of the international community regarding nuclear disarmament. As the very existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security, we welcome the auspicious signs of the past months and hope concrete progress is made towards nuclear disarmament. Brazil welcomes the relaunching of the strategic talks between the United States and Russia. It is a significant step that may pave the way for further reductions in their arsenals. The Security Council Summit held on 24 September (see S/PV.6191) was a positive contribution as it renewed the political commitment to address nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The nuclear-weapon States have the responsibility to follow-up accordingly and to forge the necessary compromises that will allow a world free from nuclear weapons to come about.

The adoption of a programme of work by the Conference on Disarmament after 12 years of stalemate was another important development. Next year's session must build upon the progress achieved in 2009. It is essential to pursue new steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Bilateral initiatives should not replace an irreversible and verifiable

multilateral agreement on complete disarmament. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would be a major factor in strengthening the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Another measure of significant impact would be the commencement of substantive negotiations on a fissile materials treaty. The 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed on 13 practical steps to achieve disarmament, including the unequivocal obligation by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The next NPT Review Conference scheduled to take place next year should build upon these achievements.

There is a clear and inextricable link between disarmament and non-proliferation. They are mutually reinforcing processes in which the best guarantee against nuclear proliferation is nuclear disarmament. The provisions of the NPT and the outcomes of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences must be entirely implemented. Brazil is fully committed to the non-proliferation efforts of the international community. We are constitutionally bound to use nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes. All countries must abide by their obligations stemming from the Treaty. The balance between the three pillars of the NPT must be maintained. Efforts to impose additional responsibilities on non-nuclear-weapon States, coupled with the selective implementation of existing disarmament commitments, will affect the credibility of the regime and therefore undermine its effectiveness.

Brazil believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As a member of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, we are convinced of the need to expand to other areas of the globe the security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. To be effective, these assurances must be irreversible and legally binding. Once more this year we, together with New Zealand, will submit a draft resolution that seeks to establish the southern hemisphere as a region free of nuclear weapons. We hope that the initiative will once again receive wide support in the First Committee.

Our efforts must be directed not only towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction but also towards addressing the problems related to conventional weapons. In the case of small arms and light weapons, which have been considered virtual

weapons of mass destruction, the need to take effective action is evident. We are firmly committed to the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. But more needs to be done. It is important to recall that General Assembly resolution 63/72 established a sequence of activities in preparation for the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States in 2010 and for the Review Conference in 2012. In this context, we attach particular importance to enhancing cooperation in order effectively to combat the illicit traffic. Furthermore, Brazil reiterates its support for a legally binding international instrument that allows States to identify and track small arms and light weapons.

The issue of arms transfers is also of the utmost importance. Brazil believes that careful attention should be given to the negotiation of an arms trade treaty and supports the work of the Open-ended Working Group established by General Assembly resolution 63/240. A multilateral treaty on the transfer of conventional arms should be effective, balanced, non-discriminatory and legally binding. It would regulate the legal trade by establishing common international standards which would also help to prevent those weapons from being diverted to the illicit market. The treaty should define clear criteria to be taken into account when authorizing exports. These criteria must be based on shared responsibilities among export, import and transit countries, besides explicitly prohibiting the transfer of arms without the authorization of competent government bodies in the transit and import countries. Furthermore, the right of States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain such weapons and ammunition must not be affected.

Positive momentum is building up. We must be ready to seize the opportunities that arise. In this context, it is particularly important to renew our commitment to work constructively towards our common goals and to seek innovative solutions to the challenges before us.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Allow me to express our congratulations to you, Ambassador Cancela, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. It is fortunate for us that we can rely on your leadership in our discussions at this year's session at a time of renewed interest in disarmament. I assure you of the full support of my delegation as you carry out your significant task.

The world is witnessing a historic shifting tide in the area of disarmament. A sense of hope abounds. While signs of that changing tide have been appearing over the past couple of years, this year has seen a greater acceleration. The two largest nuclear weapon holders in the world have started negotiations on a legally binding agreement on reducing and limiting strategic offensive arms to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which is due to expire in less than two months from today.

Just two weeks ago, at the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191), a robust and substantial resolution was adopted unanimously, which, inter alia, resolved to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons. These are only a few examples and we hope many more are to come. At that Security Council Summit on 24 September, our new Prime Minister, Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, proclaimed that Japan, as the only country that had suffered from atomic bombings, had a moral responsibility to act. Japan is thus willing to take the lead in the pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

We welcome United States President Obama's speech in Prague in which he articulated a vision of a world without nuclear weapons. This inspired people around the world. In this connection, I should like to say to those who possess or try to acquire nuclear weapons, that the mere possession of such weapons should not grant them any political advantage in international politics. I believe that a shared view by the international community — that is, not to grant any political advantage for possessing nuclear weapons — would contribute to achieving further nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

All States throughout the world have a shared responsibility. All States holding nuclear weapons must take concrete measures to significantly reduce their nuclear arsenals with a view to achieving their total elimination. Non-nuclear-weapon States, for their part, must faithfully comply with their non-proliferation obligations, thereby creating the necessary conditions for the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. This shared responsibility, nevertheless, is yet to be fulfilled by the international community despite the ever accelerating favourable trend that I mentioned earlier. A large number of nuclear arsenals still exist. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is facing severe

challenges. Furthermore, there is an increasing risk of terrorists acquiring nuclear material and technology. We have no time to waste. It is high time for us to take action.

We cannot afford to let another Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) fail next year. The States parties must establish effective and practical steps for all three pillars of the NPT and must strengthen the NPT regime. Let me lay out some important points for these ends.

First, not only should some particular nuclear-weapon States take concrete steps to reduce their nuclear arsenals, but all States possessing nuclear weapons should do so. While the Russian Federation and the United States are engaged in their cutback talks, other States holding nuclear weapons do not have to wait for progress to be made in those talks, as pointed out by the Russian President on 23 September at the General Assembly.

In this regard, we welcome all nuclear disarmament efforts implemented by nuclear-weapon States, notably the recent announcement by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of the potential future reduction of its nuclear-weapon submarines from four to three. That is a good example of a reduction with concrete figures by a nuclear-weapon State other than Russia and the United States. In this context, the States holding nuclear weapons should disclose information on the process of reducing nuclear arsenals, thereby ensuring transparency. Further, we also emphasize the importance of applying irreversibility and verifiability in the process of working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Secondly, the two important disarmament treaties that complement the NPT regime should be put in place without further delay. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) needs to enter into force as soon as possible. Japan strongly urges all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty at the earliest opportunity. Existing moratoriums should be maintained until its entry into force. At the successful Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty, held on 24 and 25 September with unprecedentedly high-level attendance, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Katsuya Okada, introduced Japan's initiatives to promote the entry into force of the CTBT, which include the dispatch of high-level special envoys

to Annex 2 States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, as well as contributions to the establishment of a strong verification regime.

The negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) need to commence immediately in the 2010 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Pending the conclusion of those negotiations, Japan calls upon all nuclear-weapon States and States not parties to the NPT to declare and maintain moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. This year, the Conference experienced a rather peculiar situation. In a historic turn of events, a programme of work was adopted after a decade of stalemate. Yet the Conference was unable to implement the very programme that it had itself adopted by consensus. That was a puzzling situation that no one outside the Conference could understand. The Conference on Disarmament should live up to the expectations of the world and immediately start substantive work on FMCT negotiations and other important issues in its 2010 session.

Thirdly, nuclear non-proliferation obligations should be faithfully observed. In order to decrease the risk of proliferation and terrorists getting their hands on nuclear material, States utilizing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should adhere to the highest level of standards in each area of nuclear safeguards, security and safety.

Fourthly, the serious violation of non-proliferation obligations with impunity must not persist and must be stopped resolutely. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches are a serious threat to the peace and security not only of the North-East Asian region, but also of the international community as a whole. They cannot be condoned under any circumstances. It is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea comply fully with relevant Security Council resolutions and also that all member States fully implement them without delay.

It is regrettable that Iran has continued and expanded its uranium enrichment-related activities, including the construction of a new uranium enrichment facility in defiance of calls by the international community. I support the efforts of the European Union's three plus three (E3+3) — France, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, the Russian Federation and the United States — for the peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue. In

this context, I welcome the outcome of the meeting between the E3+3 and the Islamic Republic of Iran. I strongly hope that, through those meetings, we will see practical progress being made.

Fifthly, the role of civil society should be enhanced. Disarmament and non-proliferation education is extremely important in this regard. In particular, the public should be well aware of the horrific effects of nuclear weapons. Japan is committed to making its utmost efforts to pass on the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to people throughout the world and to future generations. What is more, education also implies two-way communication between civil society and government. Political leaders and government officials should be open to constructive input from civil society. We hope, in that connection, that the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, co-chaired by Ms. Kawaguchi of Japan and Mr. Evans of Australia, which will issue its report early next year, can greatly contribute to our work in this field.

Japan will once again submit a draft resolution entitled "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", which reflects the aforementioned elements. That draft resolution, among several other nuclear disarmament resolutions, garners the highest number of supporting votes at the General Assembly every year, including those from some nuclear-weapon States — reaching 173, the highest ever, last year. We hope that our draft resolution this year will again be adopted with overwhelming support, which should help the NPT Review Conference next May to successfully strengthen the NPT regime.

I should now like to turn to the issue of conventional weapons. Japan has been tackling this issue with a comprehensive approach that embraces disarmament, humanitarian concerns and development. In July this year, Japan ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We considered it important also that an effective and meaningful international legal instrument be created within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, in which the major producers and possessors of cluster munitions participate. Furthermore, given the serious threat posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, member States are urged fully to implement the United Nations Programme of Action. In this regard Japan would like to ask all member States to give strong support to the small arms and light

weapons draft resolution that Japan, together with South Africa and Colombia, will submit.

The Second Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention will be held in Cartagena, Colombia, this November. The Conference will highlight, among other things, the issue of victim assistance. Japan has long been playing an active role in international cooperation in assisting mine victims and is ready to further strengthen such assistance and contribute to the success of the Review Conference.

Japan has consistently backed the arms trade treaty initiative which would ensure the responsible import, export and transfer of arms. We are pleased that a report connected to the future work of the arms trade treaty was adopted by consensus at this year's Open-ended Working Group. Japan invites all member States to lend their support to the draft resolution on the arms trade treaty, which will contain a decision on the holding of a United Nations conference in 2012.

This year we have successfully improved the atmosphere. Now the international community is being put to the severe test of whether it can collectively turn this positive atmosphere into real and concrete action. The first such test is this First Committee. Next year is also critical, at the Conference on Disarmament and at the NPT Review Conference. Japan will make every endeavour to take the lead and play a bridging role between States that hold nuclear weapons and non-nuclear-weapon States in order to achieve a safe and peaceful world through disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly.

As the new century is ushered in, the global process of multipolarization is picking up its pace in conjunction with further acceleration of economic globalization, with peace and development as the main trend of the times. The further deepening of interdependence among countries has expanded the common interests of countries and enhanced their exchanges and cooperation. At the same time, the world remains far from tranquil. Regional conflicts and hotspot issues continue to emerge, terrorism is rampant and nuclear proliferation remains a pressing issue.

Faced with a complicated and volatile international security situation, all countries should embrace a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination; fully respect and accommodate the legitimate security concerns of other countries; endeavour to build State-to-State relations of mutual understanding and mutual trust; resolve differences and dispel misgivings; conduct dialogue and cooperation on an equal footing; and resolve international disputes through peaceful means. In the meantime, the international community should adhere to multilateralism and consolidate the collective security system, with the United Nations at its core. Only by so doing can the international community effectively maintain international peace and stability and attain the goal of security for all with a win-win result.

Chinese President Hu Jintao, at the recent Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191), put forward five important propositions, together with four aspirations, for a safer world for all. It is our hope that the international community can make full use of the unprecedented opportunities that have newly emerged on the international arms control and non-proliferation front and advance that process, so as to contribute to the goal of a safer world for all.

The achievement of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and thus a world free of nuclear weapons, is a shared aspiration of all peace-loving peoples, and a goal that China has long been advocating and pursuing with unremitting efforts. To achieve this goal, the international community should channel its efforts in the following ways.

First, nuclear-weapon States should fulfil nuclear disarmament obligations in good faith and publicly undertake not to seek permanent possession of nuclear weapons. In the meantime, efforts should be undertaken to maintain global strategic balance and stability while abandoning the practice of seeking absolute strategic advantage. As countries with the largest nuclear arsenals in the world, the United States and Russia should continue to take the lead in making drastic reductions in their nuclear weapons. We welcome the ongoing nuclear disarmament negotiations between the two countries and hope they will reach an agreement as scheduled.

Secondly, nuclear-weapon States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security

and abandon nuclear deterrence policies based on the first use of nuclear weapons. In the new circumstances, the international community should negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States as soon as possible. Nuclear-weapon States should negotiate and conclude a treaty on the no first use of nuclear weapons against one another.

Thirdly, the international community should work to promote the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). The efforts of countries of relevant regions to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of consultations among themselves and voluntary agreements must be respected and supported.

Fourthly, the international community should develop at an appropriate time a viable, long-term plan composed of phased actions, including the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, so as to attain the ultimate goal of general and complete nuclear disarmament under effective international supervision.

Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing and supplement each other. To achieve complete prohibition and the thorough destruction of nuclear weapons for a nuclear-weapon-free world, international efforts in nuclear non-proliferation must be vigorously intensified in eliminating the risk of nuclear-weapon proliferation.

First, the international nuclear non-proliferation regime should be consolidated and strengthened. The universality, authority and effectiveness of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be further enhanced.

Secondly, it is imperative that non-proliferation issues be resolved peacefully through political and diplomatic means and within the framework of existing international law. The root causes of nuclear weapons should be done away with.

Thirdly, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) should be fully implemented and its non-proliferation export control and international cooperation provisions intensified.

Fourthly, great importance should be attached to nuclear security. It is essential that concrete and

effective measures be in place so as to ensure the security of nuclear facilities.

To achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, vigorous efforts are called for to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and international cooperation. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is an inalienable and legitimate right of non-nuclear-weapon States. This right must be truly respected and should not be compromised or restricted under the pretext of non-proliferation.

The International Atomic Energy Agency should increase input and assistance to developing countries in the fields of nuclear power, nuclear safety and security, and nuclear technology application. The international community should, through multilateral consultations, work to explore appropriate ways to reduce proliferation risks while promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including the possibility of establishing a multilateral nuclear fuel supply mechanism.

The NPT Review Conference scheduled for May 2010 is of great significance. All parties should seize this opportunity and work to advance the three major objectives of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

China has consistently stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China is firmly committed to a nuclear strategy of self-defence. We have faithfully abided by our commitment that we will not be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and that we will unconditionally not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China is the only nuclear-weapon State that has undertaken such a commitment.

China has persistently exercised the utmost restraint on the development of nuclear weapons, and has kept its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. China has no intention of participating in any form of nuclear arms race and has never deployed nuclear weapons on foreign soil.

China has all along supported international nuclear disarmament efforts. The Chinese Government is committed to promoting the early ratification of the CTBT. China welcomes the adoption by the Conference on Disarmament of its programme of work this year

and supports the early commencement of negotiations on the FMCT.

The prevention of weaponization of and an arms race in outer space is an issue of high strategic significance. It also represents a common mission and responsibility of the international community. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will soon start its substantive discussions on the draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which was jointly presented by China and Russia in February 2008.

China has made unremitting efforts to seek peaceful resolution, through dialogue and negotiation, of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and of the Iranian nuclear issue. China maintains that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, together with peace and stability on the peninsula and in North-East Asia, serve the common interests of all parties concerned. It is the common understanding of the international community that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should be achieved through dialogue and consultation and that this is the only feasible way to solve that issue.

China welcomes the progress made in the recent Geneva talks on the Iranian nuclear issue and appreciates the flexibility shown by all the involved parties. We hope all parties will seize the current optimum opportunity and maintain the momentum of dialogue, in an intensified diplomatic effort to seek a comprehensive, long-term and appropriate solution. China for its part will continue to work with other relevant parties actively to promote the resolution of the above nuclear issues.

A few days ago, the Chinese people celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. This new historic moment not only reminds us of the achievements that we have inherited but is also ushering us into the future. At this juncture, we are soberly aware that China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world just as the world cannot enjoy prosperity and stability without China's participation.

China, as a staunch force for safeguarding world peace, will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development. China will work with other countries in an unremitting effort to advance the cause of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation so as

to further contribute to achieving a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba is very happy to see that our work is being directed by the representative of a fellow Latin American country. We congratulate you, Sir, and the rest of the officers of the Committee. We also express our appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, and all the members of his Office for their laudable work. We also wish to express our full support for the statement made yesterday by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is unjustifiable and unacceptable that in today's world, more and more is spent on weapons of war and less and less on the means to promote life and development. While millions of people in the world suffer the effects of the worst economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression, world military spending, far from decreasing, has increased in a dizzying fashion. Last year, spending increased by 4 per cent reaching \$1.464 trillion. In real terms, that amount is greater than the highest figures reached during the cold war and 15 times greater than international development aid. One country alone spends almost half of the amount spent on military equipment in the entire world.

Paradoxically, the business of war seems to be one of the most profitable businesses in times of crisis. The top 100 producers of weapons have increased their sales by 70 per cent. While resources are wasted in this fashion, it is clear that not even the modest Millennium Development Goals will be met. They will not be met because more than 100 countries of the South do not have and will not have the \$150 billion that is needed to reach the goals.

With just 10 per cent of the funds currently spent on the war industry, those Millennium Development Goals could indeed be reached. It is time to leave empty rhetoric aside. We must start without further delay. The knowledge and resources devoted to the war industry today must be used in education, health, culture and for the economic and social well-being of our peoples. For this reason, Cuba reiterates its proposal to devote at least half of current military spending to respond to the needs for economic and social development, through a fund managed by the United Nations.

Despite the proclaimed end of the cold war, there are still more than 23,500 nuclear warheads in the world today, 8,392 of them ready to be used immediately and are more powerful than those that sowed terror and death on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear weapons modernization programmes have not stopped. The very existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines prescribing their possession and use are a grave danger for international peace and security. Nuclear disarmament remains an unresolved and urgent task. It is and must continue to be the highest priority in the area of disarmament.

Three sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have already taken place. This Conference must achieve concrete results. Cuba repeats its rejection of the selective application of the NPT. Issues related to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot be disregarded, while horizontal non-proliferation is favoured. The inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy must be fully respected. Cuba supports the holding in 2010 of the second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which will contribute to world efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

While the world listens with hope to the repeated messages of change, dialogue and cooperation issuing from the White House, time passes and in many ways the discourse does not appear to be supported by concrete actions. To cite just two examples: we are very concerned indeed at the renewed and aggressive interest of the United States in establishing new military bases in Latin America and its decision to relocate the Fourth Fleet in our region. Those are direct, unjustifiable threats to the sovereignty and integrity of the peoples of the Americas. If they wish to make a true contribution to international peace and security, they should immediately withdraw all foreign military bases from Latin America and the Caribbean, including the Guantanamo Naval Base. This is Cuban territory that is illegally occupied against the will of our people.

We hope that the declarations made in the framework of the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament that took place on 24 September (see S/PV.6191) will not be confined to mere media impact and trust that they mark

the beginning of specific actions to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament. Without further delay, a legal instrument must be adopted setting a specific time frame for the destruction of nuclear arsenals and guaranteeing a transparent, irreversible and verifiable process for which many States have been calling for many years.

It is unfortunate that the resolution adopted by the Security Council almost exclusively stresses issues of non-proliferation, leaving aside specific courses of action towards nuclear disarmament. We likewise draw attention once again to the interference of the Security Council in functions that fall to other bodies of the United Nations system, and instruments on disarmament and arms control that already exist. We stress that the International Atomic Energy Agency is the only competent authority to verify compliance with the obligations of member States through their respective safeguards agreements.

After too many years of inaction, it was a positive sign that this year a programme of work was adopted in the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome this step with optimism and we trust that next year the necessary flexibility will prevail, based on the rules of procedure and constructive dialogue, to make it possible to adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work for the Conference, taking into account current real priorities for disarmament and arms control.

Cuba reiterates its unwavering commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and supports all actions taken to make them universal. The total destruction of existing chemical arsenals is the most important task of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which also has an important role to play for the economic and technological progress of States parties, especially the least developed ones. We insist that the only way to reinforce and develop further the Biological Weapons Convention is through the negotiation and adoption of a legally binding protocol that will fill the gaps still contained in this instrument.

At the same time as we firmly defend the legitimate right of States to produce, import and stockpile small arms and light weapons to respond to their legitimate security and defence needs, Cuba advocates more effective measures to prevent and combat illicit arms trafficking and their use by those devoted to terrorist activities and international crime.

The people of Cuba have been victimized for almost half a century because of the indiscriminate use of weapons by terrorist individuals and organizations. Today, 6 October, is the anniversary of the destruction in flight of a civilian Cuban aircraft close to the coast of Barbados, where 73 innocent people perished. It is our duty to act so that monstrous acts such as this do not take place again.

In 2009, the first two substantive sessions of the Open-ended Working Group established by the General Assembly to promote a legally binding instrument establishing common international parameters for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons were held. Cuba reiterates the importance of not taking hasty decisions that will cast aside the progress made. The consideration of this complex and sensitive topic must continue within the framework of the United Nations in a balanced, transparent and open fashion, step by step, on the basis of consensus.

Mr. Muburi Muita (Kenya): I wish to add my voice to others who have spoken before me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the deliberations of this important Committee. My delegation has confidence in your leadership abilities and commitment to guide our work. Allow me also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and extend to you the assurances of our fullest cooperation. My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Kenya believes that multilateral negotiations and agreements are the only viable path to meaningful disarmament and security. Some of the weapons known to exist, by their very nature, call for collective and concerted action so as to prevent the colossal loss of lives and property that they could so easily precipitate. Weapons of mass destruction do not discriminate in their effects on populations nor are they confined by geographic limitations. We are all at risk in the event they are unleashed in any corner of the world.

The most frightful danger to mankind to date is posed by nuclear weapons. Kenya continues to advocate the belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the surest guarantee that the nightmare that such weapons pose to humanity will never take place. During this year we have witnessed very encouraging movements in the nuclear disarmament agenda.

We recall the positive message that Presidents Obama and Medvedev gave to the world at their April meeting in London. Their joint statement was a strong indication of their commitment to reduce nuclear weapons in line with States' obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Presidents' confirmation of their wish to commence negotiations with a view to concluding a new treaty is also a very welcome sign.

In May this year the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference managed to agree on an agenda. The adoption of a programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament, including agreement to start negotiations on the fissile material treaty, all give us hope and renewed energy to forge ahead towards negotiations to achieve complete nuclear disarmament.

It is encouraging to see a fresh impetus being injected into the quest for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We welcome the Final Declaration and measures to promote the entry into force of the CTBT that was adopted last month at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty in New York. We strongly urge all States that have not signed and ratified the Treaty to do so. We especially urge those States whose ratification is essential for the Treaty to become a legally binding instrument to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

As a member of the Conference on Disarmament, Kenya participated in the negotiations and drafting of the CTBT, signed the Treaty in 1996 and ratified it in 2000. Kenya has also supported and advocated the achievement of universal adherence to the CTBT and therefore continues to urge its early entry into force.

We are particularly pleased by the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba in July this year. Africa has sent an unequivocal message to the whole world that the continent is a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Henceforth, nuclear weapons will not be developed, produced, tested, acquired or stationed in Africa. The entry into force of this Treaty confirms Africa's commitment to strengthen the global nuclear-weapons regime and greatly contributes to international efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We note that, while this Treaty commits the continent to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it also provides for the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. This aspect is very important for Kenya especially in

seeking alternative sources of energy to spur the development agenda.

The problem of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons continues to plague my country and indeed the rest of the African continent. The volume of weapons diverted from the legal trade in small arms and light weapons to a thriving black market continues to grow at an alarming rate. Sadly, the merchants of doom continue to benefit from this illicit trade without the slightest regard to the suffering and violence meted out to the most vulnerable populations on the continent. In addressing the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons, it is important that we address such challenges as the absence of export, transit and import controls, failure to enforce already existing mechanisms due to loopholes in the law, and more importantly the root causes of demand for these weapons. It is imperative that States implement the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons at both national and regional levels as the problem is often a cross-border one. On the eastern side of Africa, the efforts of the Regional Centre on Small Arms are very commendable.

Although the global trade in small arms and light weapons is currently not regulated, we are pleased to note that significant progress has been made towards achieving a legally binding treaty governing the transfer of conventional weapons. In this regard, Kenya strongly supports the establishment of an arms trade treaty to govern the trade in arms. At the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty in July this year, there was unanimous agreement that international action is needed to address the problem of the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and the diversion of those arms to the illicit market. What is essential now is for members boldly to take the process forward towards a legally binding arms trade treaty. Kenya signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008. As in the case of the Ottawa Convention, my country is not a mine-affected State nor does it possess cluster munitions. However, we believe it is crucial to give support to both these conventions that seek to make our world safer and more humane. We have commenced internal processes that will enable us eventually to ratify the Convention.

It is widely acknowledged that economic development and the reduction of violence go hand in hand. Thus long-term development is impossible without long-term security. In this regard, I recall the

words of the former Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in his seminal report "In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", "we will not enjoy development without security, [and] we will not enjoy security without development" (A/59/2005, para. 17).

The cost of armed conflict and violence as well as the concomitant human tragedy in Africa is estimated at some \$18 billion annually. The effects of armed violence fuelled by readily available small arms and light weapons have been disastrous. Innocent civilians are killed, maimed, abducted and displaced from their homes. To address insecurity, governments are forced to spend considerable resources on arms acquisition and the training of security apparatus. This diverts their budgetary allocation from other much-needed socio-economic public services such as education and health care, thus overall having a negative impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It is for this reason that my country was among the first signatories to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report entitled "Promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence" (A/64/228) and looks forward to continue advocating the goals of the Geneva Declaration.

To conclude, Kenya urges all delegations to rededicate their efforts to further the work of this important Committee. My delegation will work diligently towards this end. All States should invest more in human beings than spending trillions on armaments. Investment in human capital is the only assurance of security, peace and stability globally.

Ms. Tauscher (United States of America): I want to welcome warmly all the representatives attending the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly First Committee. Since this is my first time taking the floor, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. My delegation is confident that under your leadership we will have a productive session. You can count on the full support of the United States as the First Committee deals with its comprehensive agenda of disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

This is an exciting time to appear with my colleagues in this body to discuss non-proliferation and disarmament. My Government applauds the dedicated

engagement of the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in addressing the compelling issues of non-proliferation and disarmament that we confront. Last month, at a historic Security Council meeting (see S/PV.6191), the United States led an effort to approve a ground-breaking resolution on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament (Security Council resolution 1887 (2009)). For the first time in a decade, the United States participated in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, also held last month. I was privileged to accompany Secretary of State Clinton when she led the United States delegation to the Conference last month and I look forward to continuing to work with your governments on this issue.

At the Security Council meeting, President Obama underscored the pivotal role of the United Nations in preventing nuclear proliferation. The historic resolution adopted by the Security Council enshrined our shared commitment to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons and achieved Security Council agreement on a broad framework for action to reduce nuclear dangers as we work towards that goal.

The spread and use of nuclear weapons is a fundamental threat to the security of all peoples and all nations. As President Obama said in his speech in Prague last April, just one nuclear weapon exploded in one of our major cities could kill hundreds of thousands and destabilize our security, our economies, and our very way of life. Stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and preventing nuclear terrorism must be a shared responsibility because no single nation, no matter how powerful, can do this alone.

I should like to use my time to expand on the agenda that President Obama set forth in his Prague speech in April and that was advanced by his Security Council speech in late September. The United States Government has begun taking concrete steps towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. In the short term, these steps in their own right will promote a more secure and stable international environment, enhance the nuclear non-proliferation regime and make it more difficult for terrorist groups to acquire nuclear weapons or materials. As a first step towards reducing the world's nuclear arsenals, the United States Government is negotiating with the Russian Federation to draft a follow-on agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The Obama Administration will pursue ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-

Ban Treaty and its entry into force so that nuclear testing remains a distant memory.

The United States, following the consensus adoption in May of a workplan at the Conference on Disarmament, looks forward to the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We urge Conference members not to get bogged down in procedural motions and objections to halt FMCT negotiations when the Conference reconvenes in January. The United States understands that some governments have concerns about some of the provisions in a fissile material cut-off treaty, but there will be plenty of opportunity to discuss those issues as we move forward. The Conference has been idle too long; it is time we got back to work.

The United States is also pursuing measures in other areas of the Committee's purview. We are fully committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and we are working to stem the proliferation of ballistic missiles. No government has done more than ours to eliminate excess conventional arms and ammunition and to stem the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

President Obama has also called for a nuclear security summit to be held next April in Washington. The summit will address the serious dangers of nuclear terrorism and encourage States to deepen their commitment to secure nuclear materials. But there is more to do to renew our nuclear compact. The United States will do its part to reinvigorate the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

As President Obama said in Prague, the basic bargain of the NPT is sound: countries with nuclear weapons will move towards disarmament, countries without nuclear weapons will not acquire them, and all countries can access peaceful nuclear energy. We are prepared to do our part to fulfil all three pillars of this vital international agreement. But, as I said, the United States cannot do it alone. The effort to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty calls for a global response. Not only must the United States and Russia act to reduce our arsenals — and we are already doing this, so that within a few years the United States will have 75 per cent fewer strategic nuclear weapons deployed than at the end of the cold war — but given the stakes for our security, all countries must take ownership in an effort to reduce nuclear threats. That

responsibility does not end with a decision to forgo nuclear weapons and accept safeguards to demonstrate the sincerity of that decision. It must continue through the participation in collective efforts to impede others from crossing the nuclear threshold.

Every country's national security is profoundly impacted by the outcome of these efforts. The Security Council took an important step last month when it unanimously adopted its resolution 1887 (2009). This breakthrough resolution calls on all NPT parties to comply fully with their non-proliferation and disarmament obligations. It affirms that effective International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards are essential to non-proliferation and it makes clear the Security Council's intent to address NPT violations.

Our Government hopes that our allies and partners will join us on our journey to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, strengthen the world's non-proliferation regime, and I hope one day achieve the peace and security of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Ms. Poptodorova (Bulgaria): To the many other delegations that have extended their congratulations to you, Sir, on your election I would add those of the Bulgarian delegation. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are certain that given the commitment already expressed of all delegations here, we are bound to have a fruitful session of the First Committee this year.

Bulgaria associates itself fully with the statement made by the Swedish presidency on behalf of the European Union. Therefore, I need not reiterate the views expressed in it which my country fully shares. I would therefore like to use my time to highlight a few points that we have all been very much engaged in discussing. Bulgaria places great emphasis on the work of multilateral mechanisms in the sphere of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

As one of the six Presidents (P-6) of the Conference on Disarmament in 2010, Bulgaria will spare no effort to promote and support the shared goal of getting this very important forum for negotiations back to work. The adoption of the comprehensive programme of work last May was a big step forward to overcome the 12-year deadlock. We share the regret that the implementation of the programme has not started yet. As one of the P-6 in 2010, we will strive to ensure regained momentum within the Conference on

Disarmament and early commencement of substantive work.

We are equally committed to further strengthening the international treaty system, by expanding the existing normative basis and by ensuring effective and full implementation of the existing instruments, as well as rendering them universal. The full and universal implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is and must remain a priority. Bulgaria is committed to the strengthening of all three pillars of the Treaty and to a successful 2010 Review Conference.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — another crucial tool of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation — needs to enter into force as early as possible, as well as to have its verification regime completed without delay. A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is an instrument that is long overdue. With that in mind, we join those previous speakers who have launched an appeal to all members of the Conference on Disarmament to engage constructively in negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as the Conference resumes its work in January 2010.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention are rightfully considered to be of key importance in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As the 2011 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Review Conference draws closer, Bulgaria would like to add its voice to those who recognize the importance of developing a compliance verification mechanism and stands ready to contribute to future efforts in this direction.

Bulgaria attaches great importance to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. On several occasions, we have reiterated our support for this key instrument of international humanitarian law and have expressed our determination to contribute to making it universal and to its strict implementation. Bulgaria took an active part in the work of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts dealing with cluster munitions. In search of consensus on a new legally binding instrument on cluster munitions, the Group continued its deliberations in 2009. We believe that consensus within the Group of Governmental Experts is achievable and therefore we should strive to achieve it. Furthermore, in our view

this consensus should be generated around a protocol on cluster munitions which is compatible with the Convention on Cluster Munitions signed in Oslo last December.

Small arms and light weapons have been rightfully defined as the new weapons of mass destruction. Statistics show that they account for a human toll of more than half a million a year. An effective tool to combat the spread and accumulation of this type of weapon is the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Bulgaria fully supports the goal to strengthen the implementation of the Programme and stands ready to contribute to a successful Biennial Meeting in 2010.

Along the same line of thought, Bulgaria is committed to the negotiation and adoption of a legally binding arms trade treaty. As we have pointed out on several occasions, including at last year's session of the First Committee, strong demand for such an instrument by both civil society and most States is at hand. My country took part in the first two sessions of the Open-ended Working Group in 2009. We are determined to pursue our engagement within this Group and hope that the end product of its deliberations will be an international, legally binding instrument, setting the highest possible standards with regard to the export, import and transfer of conventional arms.

I should like to end on a note that has been touched upon by all speakers so far and most recently by a long-time friend of mine, Ms. Ellen Tauscher, that is, the importance of sticking together and of being able to form new coalitions that will take us to a truly general disarmament, especially in the nuclear field.

Mr. Kongstad (Norway): Two weeks ago, when the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1887 (2009), it was sending a strong message that the proliferation of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and that the safest course of action is to abolish them. Indeed, this year's session of the First Committee of the General Assembly takes place at a time when we are seeing historic opportunities for pursuing the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Our immediate challenge is to ensure that the forthcoming Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) produces

a tangible, substantive and forward-looking outcome. Norway expects the Review Conference to stake out a clear path towards the irreversible and unequivocal elimination of nuclear arms. The NPT must agree on specific steps to close any loopholes in the nuclear non-proliferation and security regimes. The NPT must pave the way for the peaceful use of nuclear applications, which will be important for reaching the Millennium Development Goals, and it must agree on a review process that holds us all accountable for fulfilling our legal obligations and commitments. Such an outcome is not guaranteed, however, and a firm, determined and cooperative effort is required by all States parties to the NPT. If not, we run the risk of the NPT compact gradually dissolving.

There can be no doubt that nuclear weapons are the most inhuman and indiscriminate weapons ever created. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are essential from a humanitarian perspective. There are important lessons to be learned from achievements in the field of humanitarian disarmament. The Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction have demonstrated that it is possible to make a real difference to human security by breaking old habits. By mobilizing political will, working across traditional groups and in partnership with survivors and relevant stakeholders, we have adopted new international humanitarian law and disarmament instruments. We can all support this work by participating at the highest level at the Mine Ban Convention's Second Review Conference in Colombia later this year.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions was opened for signature in Oslo in 2008. Today 100 States have signed the Convention and some 20 countries have already ratified it. We urge all other States to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible. The first meeting of States parties to the Convention will take place in Vientiane in 2010. We warmly welcome the offer of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to host this important event. The Convention has set an international norm promising that cluster munitions are not to be used again. Against this background, we seriously doubt the utility of continued deliberations on cluster munitions in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and whether this could attract consensus at the CCW

meeting of States parties in November. We should rather have an in-depth discussion on where the CCW in future could be relevant and possibly provide any added value.

Armed violence leads to violations of human rights and hinders development. Norway believes that in order to be successful the arms trade treaty would have to bring about real improvements for both individuals and societies. According to United Nations reports there has been a nearly 30 per cent increase in global weapons transfers. The devastating impact of armed violence affects many States and societies, but this is an unequally shared burden. The countries that are most affected by armed violence are paying the highest price, not only in terms of human suffering, but also in purely socio-economic terms through loss of human and other resources, increased health-care costs and lack of security. An effective arms trade treaty would therefore be one sound investment in prosperity and development. To be effective, an arms trade treaty should establish the highest possible standards for all imports, exports and transfers of conventional arms and not be limited to addressing so-called unregulated trade. We believe that the successful conclusion of an arms trade treaty will depend on the active participation of civil society, United Nations field-based organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is another example of an intergovernmental process that has not lived up to any humanitarian expectations. The current Programme of Action was a compromise reached in 2001. Since then millions of civilians have been killed or wounded by small arms. Efforts to reach legally binding instruments to further strengthen the Programme of Action have so far not succeeded. It is therefore high time to take a more than critical look at whether the present Programme of Action provides the best framework to address the humanitarian and developmental challenges posed by small arms.

Norway continues to believe that advancement in the field of disarmament and arms control can only be achieved if States listen to, learn from and include strong voices from civil society that advocate change. Such advocates for change must include field-based organizations, women's organizations and representatives of the people affected by the continued

stalemate over these issues. As States we need to look at how and with whom we conduct our work.

That brings me to my last point. The structure of the present intergovernmental machinery in the field of disarmament was set up in 1978. The world has changed profoundly since then. Today it is becoming even more apparent that institutions like the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission are not delivering. They are simply dysfunctional. The Conference on Disarmament has been paralysed for more than 10 years. Even after the adoption of its programme of work, it was unable to start the much-needed negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. It is also a paradox that the Conference is tasked to negotiate global, legally binding treaties, while more than 120 United Nations Member States are excluded from membership of the Conference. We need to look into the working methods of the Conference to ensure that it is truly inclusive, and that no country can single-handedly bring it to a standstill.

The state of affairs in the Disarmament Commission is even worse. That body was intended to be a deliberative forum but the disturbing fact is that very few representatives from capitals bother to attend the regular sessions of the Commission any more.

Norway has for several years advocated improving the working methods of the First Committee in order to make it more relevant in addressing current and new security challenges. If we fail we will continue to see other bodies, like the Security Council, assume responsibility for matters related to disarmament and non-proliferation. While there have been some steps in the right direction, much more remains to be done.

Against this background, we see the wisdom of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, provided that we can agree on adjusting our multilateral deliberative and negotiating bodies to better respond to the window of opportunity that is now emerging. The active participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations is crucial in order to raise awareness and provide substantial contributions to the discussions. Their expertise and experience are much needed in our quest to develop new instruments in the field of disarmament.

To conclude, the historic opportunity we have this year to make real progress is heartening and it should be grasped. Let this year's First Committee

mark the beginning of a new and much more productive phase in multilateral disarmament and arms control diplomacy to the benefit of us all.

Mr. Abuhassan (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of my country's total support and cooperation. I offer congratulations also to the other members of the Bureau on their election. I also wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo, who successfully conducted the work of the Committee at the previous session. I also wish to commend Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and his team in the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Jordan associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Jordan welcomes the important positive developments that we have witnessed in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation during the past six months, after years of stalemate. Jordan believes that these developments offer an opportunity to realize real progress on the international agenda for disarmament and non-proliferation during the work of this Committee at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

We are optimistic that the call of the United States Administration for a world free of nuclear weapons constitutes a real opportunity to add strong impetus to this goal. The beginning of the Strategic Arms Reduction (START) talks between the United States and the Russian Federation provides considerable momentum on which we can build to reach multilateral agreements. Jordan views positively the successful agreement reached at the Conference on Disarmament on a programme of work in 2009, which includes the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. This represents real progress in view of the deadlock that affected the work of the Conference during the past two years, and will allow work to resume on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The historic Security Council meeting on 24 September 2009 (see S/PV.6191) expressed the wish of the international community to inject new impetus into the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The summit achieved several major objectives, in particular by emphasizing as immediate priorities

the need for universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. My delegation believes that the positive developments of recent weeks have given new impetus to negotiations to be held during the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and provide conditions for the success of the Conference. The Jordanian delegation will contribute positively towards that end.

The Jordanian Government believes that the 2010 NPT Review Conference should seek to attain four strategic objectives: to maintain the Treaty as the cornerstone of the international regime for non-proliferation and disarmament and as a key tool for the attainment of international peace and security; to strengthen the provisions of the Treaty to deal with nuclear threats and nuclear terrorism, while strengthening the responsible use of nuclear energy; to maintain the balance between the three pillars of the Treaty — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy; and to advance the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

In that connection, my delegation wishes to make the following points. First, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, based on the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), Annex), is a vital issue, not only for the security of my country but for the security and stability of all the States in the Middle East.

Secondly, the credibility of international efforts in disarmament and the effectiveness of the international regime of non-proliferation rely on the readiness of the international community to acknowledge that this objective is of strategic importance to international peace and security, as recognized in the many resolutions adopted on the subject by the Security Council, the General Assembly and other international forums, as well as in reports of the Secretary-General. Jordan calls again on Israel to join the NPT and subject all its installations to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That action would indeed strengthen confidence among the States of the region, would have a positive effect on the security and stability of the region and would rule out any possibility of nuclear radiation disasters in that heavily populated region.

Jordan believes that the main threats to international peace and security arise from the existence of weapons of mass destruction, whether possessed by States or by non-State actors. As a member of all international conventions and treaties on disarmament or non-proliferation, Jordan is keen to fulfil its international, regional and national obligations stemming from its membership. Jordan calls specifically for a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and for strengthened bilateral and international agreements that will lead to this result, and encourages all Member States to fulfil their obligations and commitments towards these treaties and to pursue their universalization. The universality of the NPT is a high priority for Jordan, as the Treaty is the most effective instrument to put an end to the regional arms race in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

Thirdly, Jordan welcomes the constructive deliberations during the third Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference which concluded its work in New York on 15 May this year. The achievement of any progress at the 2010 NPT Review Conference will rest on our readiness to review the results of previous Review Conferences, especially the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the resolution to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. My delegation is fully committed to contribute positively to this review in order to realize a world free of nuclear weapons and to support the universalization of the NPT.

Fourthly, the NPT recognizes the inalienable right of States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Recognition of this right will remain a crucial issue during the 2010 Review Conference. My delegation believes that nuclear terrorism and the possible use of radiological devices as weapons of mass destruction are real and escalating threats and need international efforts to seek solutions to combat them.

The availability of fissile materials to member States and non-State actors is increasing. The threat of these materials finding their way into the hands of non-State actors is real and dangerous. Jordan considers Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) an important international instrument to deal with this threat. Implementation of the resolution requires a huge effort, as well as the cooperation of all international actors and sectors of civil society. The

importance that the Jordanian Government attaches to this issue was demonstrated by hosting the first regional workshop on implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Amman in 2007.

To achieve some of the same objectives intended by resolution 1540 (2004), Jordan supports the start of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and welcomes the position of the United States on this issue.

As a member of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Mine Ban Convention), Jordan has taken a number of important steps and measures in response to its obligations under the terms of the treaty. The most important of these steps was destruction by the Jordanian armed forces of the entire stock of anti-personnel mines in 2003 and the removal of 70 per cent of anti-personnel mines used in border areas, so as to return those lands to economic, agricultural and development use. We expect to complete this mission within the next two years. Moreover, a National Commission for Demining and Rehabilitation has been established with support from the Government of Norway and the European Union. The Jordanian Government attaches great importance to the Mine Ban Convention and is deploying considerable effort to increase its membership at the regional level. As Chair of the Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in 2007, Jordan hosted the Conference at the Dead Sea in Jordan.

In conclusion, my delegation fully supports the work of the First Committee and wishes it all success during this session.

Mr. Al Nafisee (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes sincerely to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee during this session. I wish you and all the members of the Committee success and good wishes for an effective completion of the Committee's work in a manner that we all have come to expect.

In 1978, the international community outlined the priorities for addressing disarmament issues with the adoption of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (S-10/2). That document set out the priorities of international efforts, starting with nuclear disarmament followed by the disarmament of other

weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. This should be followed by control of conventional weapons, including those that may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, and then the reduction of armed forces. All of this was set out with a view to achieving the most noble goal of the Charter of the United Nations, that of maintaining international peace and security.

Despite the many efforts that have been deployed since, negligence has been the dominant characteristic of multilateral efforts to fulfil the aspirations of the international community. Though treaties and international controls on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction have had some success, we find that these treaties have lost their value and prestige because of the failure of some States to comply with them and the international community's display of utter disregard and silence, based on policies built on double standards. This consequently has led to inertia in most disarmament mechanisms, including the Conference on Disarmament.

We recently witnessed the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament held on 24 September 2009 (see S/PV.6191), which reaffirmed the efforts of the international community to prevent proliferation and placed emphasis on preventing terrorist groups from having access to nuclear weapons.

After the disappointment we experienced with the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we hope we can overcome this sense of disappointment and achieve success at the NPT Review Conference to be held in New York in 2010. We hope the Conference will lead parties to end efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, to ban countries from seeking nuclear weapons and to promote the acquisition of nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes.

My Government has expressed its full commitment to adhere to the letter and spirit of the principles of disarmament outlined by the international community. My country was one of the first to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin

Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the small quantities protocol. It has also continuously cooperated with the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by providing it with the required successive reports as well as the necessary information on existing and new regulations and legislation, the latest but surely not the least of which was the putting in place of a national system to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention, adopted by the Saudi Cabinet on 28 November 2005.

My Government has taken all possible measures in the field of combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons by the enactment of many laws, regulations and policies. On 30 August 2005, the Kingdom submitted a detailed report to the Office for Disarmament Affairs within the reporting framework of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The international community has always aspired to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Yet, the constant refusal by the State of Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or to place all its nuclear facilities under inspection — facilities that constitute a threat to regional peace and security — is an obstacle to the achievement of that goal. The continued exclusion of some countries from international pressure aimed at establishing the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and the application of double standards in this regard raise a big question mark for the countries and peoples of the region. Such double standards send the wrong signal to all Member States concerned.

While the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports every country's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including the right of access to the peaceful nuclear technology and know-how, it calls on all parties to adhere to the path of negotiations and peaceful solutions. From this rostrum, my delegation calls on all Governments to commit themselves to a peaceful solution of the Iranian nuclear issue in order to preserve the security of the region and to avoid the perils of wars from which the countries of the Middle East have suffered in recent years.

In conclusion, the world today faces grave challenges and responsibilities that maximize the responsibility of the Organization. It is imperative to make hope the beacon that leads us to be objective, serious and to work with a constructive spirit. That is what we aspire to during this session under your wise chairmanship, Sir.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of the Algerian delegation on your election to chair the First Committee and to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of the full cooperation of my delegation. I should also like to welcome the presence here with us of Mr. Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Indonesian delegation on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as the statements made on behalf of the African and Arab Groups.

This session of the First Committee is being held on the heels of the entry into force last 15 July of the Treaty creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, the Pelindaba Treaty. This is a crucial contribution of Africa to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and of the preservation of international and regional peace and security. Algeria, which was among the very first countries to ratify the Pelindaba Treaty, in particular calls on those nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to proceed to the ratification of the relevant protocols to this Treaty.

The year 2009 was particularly rich in commitments to move forward the cause of disarmament and the advancement of international peace and security on solid, consensual and reliable bases. The new attitudes voiced by the leaders of the great Powers, in particular those of nuclear-weapon States, for specific nuclear disarmament measures are, for us, a reason for optimism after years of deadlock. The statements of Presidents Obama and Medvedev in London on 1 April and their commitments to substantive reductions of their arsenals, as well as numerous other statements made by the leaders of great Powers speaking in favour of a world free from nuclear weapons are for us all encouraging elements and reasons for hope.

More than 30 years after the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament,

which was a historic turning point for multilateral action for disarmament, and for which the Final Document served as a guide for disarmament efforts, the United Nations in this area is still having difficulty to accomplish the progress that it had hoped to make. Algeria, which is a party to all of the conventions and treaties regarding weapons of mass destruction, would like to recall here that the objective of these instruments and, in particular, of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is to forever rid our planet of these weapons.

Algeria wishes to reiterate its dedication to the NPT and its determination to apply its provisions and promote its ideals. It is the shared responsibility of us all to provide the necessary credibility to this important instrument and to ensure its universality. The conditions for that credibility and universality are based in particular on the balanced and decisive implementation of the three pillars of the NPT which mutually strengthen and reinforce each other. Any trend designed to attach priority to one aspect of the NPT over the others would in fact be watering down its credibility and threatening a delicate balance between the obligations laid down and the rights consecrated in the Treaty. Measures and efforts designed to ensure the implementation of the non-proliferation provisions must be accompanied by real, parallel and verifiable efforts in nuclear disarmament. Indeed, under article VI of the NPT, nuclear-weapon States have an ongoing obligation to work first for the reduction and then for the elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We should like to recall here the advisory opinion of 1996 in which the International Court of Justice reaffirmed that obligation.

In that context, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of specific importance for my delegation. Thirteen years after its signing, conditions have never been as conducive to make a reality of this instrument. In addition, the negotiation of a treaty banning fissile material at the level of the Conference on Disarmament, as is provided for by the programme agreed upon in the Conference on Disarmament, would represent real progress within the framework of efforts at nuclear disarmament. While reiterating its dedication simultaneously to the non-proliferation regime established by the NPT and to the right of all States parties to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Algeria, regarding the nuclear issues of Iran

and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, supports a diplomatic settlement of these questions with strict respect for the provisions of the NPT and the statutes of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In a world characterized by a plethora of transformations and unprecedented economic and technological developments, the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as enshrined in article IV of the NPT, is of particular importance. The use of nuclear energy for many countries is a strategic and inevitable choice to meet their needs and the needs of their energy security. The proposals put forward, including those made within IAEA for the establishment of a multilateral mechanism to provide for nuclear fuel, should be the subject of broad concerted action within the respect of the inalienable right of all States parties to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This process should in no case result in limitations or restrictions of that right.

The next NPT Review Conference provides us with a genuine opportunity to translate all the statements of intention made through the most highly authorized channels, particularly those of the nuclear Powers, into commitments with specific disarmament measures for nuclear disarmament. The primary task here set for that date, which comes after the painful setback of the 2005 Conference, would be to identify ways and means designed to ensure finally the implementation of the 13 practical nuclear disarmament measures agreed on in 2000 and the implementation of the resolution of 1995 on the Middle East.

In this context, the fruitful and frank debates held during the third Preparatory Committee, and in particular the adoption of the agenda for the Review Conference on that occasion, are a promising indication for us.

The entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba in Africa leads us to refer to the request of the international community for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. Indeed, despite the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly and the decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, this project remains blocked because of the intransigence of Israel which refuses to adhere to the NPT and to place its nuclear installations under IAEA guarantees. We welcome with satisfaction to this

end the adoption by the fifty-third General Conference of the IAEA of resolutions GC(53)/RES/16 and GC(53)/RES/17 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and on Israeli nuclear capacity.

On the regional level, my country has made its dedication and devotion to the advancement of international peace and security a permanent element of its foreign policy. My delegation is honoured and gratified annually to submit to the First Committee and General Assembly a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region". We are counting this year again on the support of the traditional sponsors, as well as on that of all Member States to provide their support to this draft resolution.

My country's commitment to international peace and security was also expressed during its presidency last spring of the Conference on Disarmament. In taking the opportunity now provided by the new international climate, Algeria, as President of the Conference, undertook the initiative of relaunching the work of that forum after 12 years of deadlock. The Conference, indeed, through lengthy and painstaking consultations, finally succeeded in adopting by consensus a programme of work covering all the items on its agenda. The implementation of this programme, starting with the 2010 session, is now the priority for the Conference. It is the responsibility of all members of the Conference and of the international community in a general fashion, to work to make a reality of this programme, which represents a significant step forward and a precious gain for all of us.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in numerous countries. That is why we reiterate our dedication to the implementation and strengthening of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This important instrument has unquestionably contributed to a true growing awareness of the negative humanitarian and political consequences of this scourge and how it contributes to supplying terrorist groups and major organized crime. Regarding the initiative for an arms trade treaty, Algeria for its part has supported this process from the very outset, convinced that an international instrument concluded under the aegis of the United Nations, designed to establish norms for the import, export and

transfer of weapons, would contribute to a strengthening of international peace and security. The debates conducted within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group during the sixty-third session, have demonstrated the interest and importance attached to such a topic. In that context, the Algerian delegation insists that any developments in the work of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty be on the basis of consensus to the extent possible.

In conclusion, the consideration of disarmament issues each year provides us within the First Committee an opportunity to review the state of the important steps made in our system of collective security. Only the commitment of the international community to an effective disarmament enterprise, in particular nuclear disarmament, using the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability, will provide the needed answers to the multiple challenges that today face us in this area.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair for the 2009 session of the First Committee and to assure you of South Africa's full support and cooperation. My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the representative of Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

At the outset, let me congratulate fellow African States on the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba on 15 July this year. This is yet another expression of the African continent's conviction that our collective future development and safety is only guaranteed when nuclear weapons are disarmed and abolished.

South Africa shares the concerns regarding the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. During the past year, we have witnessed a number of important developments that gave rise to a new optimism, signalling that the stalemate of many years, particularly in the area of nuclear disarmament, may well be over. However, the experience of the past decade that saw a reversal by some States of their commitments and a reinterpretation of their obligations in relation to both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation have contributed to a confidence deficit and scepticism about the prospects for progress.

While welcoming the positive statements made during the recent past in relation to nuclear

disarmament, it is disconcerting that endeavours to address some of the most serious threats to international peace and security continue to be characterized by actions that serve narrow interests and paralyse the relevant multilateral forums that were specifically established to address such concerns. In this regard, we have noted the recent adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 1887 (2009), on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. While South Africa is fully supportive of efforts aimed at strengthening non-proliferation measures, we are nevertheless disappointed that the same attention has not yet been accorded to the equally important issue of nuclear disarmament.

South Africa is of the view that the established instruments in the fields of non-proliferation and disarmament can effectively address the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Universal adherence to, full implementation of, and compliance with these international agreements, and the complete and early elimination of these weapons, will guarantee that they will never be used. It is our hope that this year's session of the First Committee will contribute to our efforts to secure consensus on the important challenges facing our collective security.

The long-outstanding entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) continues to weaken the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and undermines the international community's quest for a world free of nuclear weapons. The entry into force of the CTBT is a pressing goal and a non-negotiable commitment. South Africa will therefore work relentlessly with all concerned to achieve the earliest possible entry into force of this important pillar of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this connection, South Africa welcomes the recent ratification of the Treaty by Mozambique, Malawi and Timor-Leste. We are encouraged by the recent positive commitment regarding ratification of the Treaty by the United States of America.

South Africa welcomes the positive developments in the Conference on Disarmament that led to the adoption by consensus of a programme of work on 29 May 2009. We would have hoped that the Conference would be able to agree on the modalities for the implementation of that decision. We therefore call upon all Conference members to build on what has been accomplished in 2009 and spare no effort to

ensure an early start to substantive work in the Conference at the beginning of its 2010 session. Negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a verifiable fissile material treaty can hopefully soon become a reality, provided that all Conference members are prepared to show the necessary political will to make it happen.

Turning now to conventional weapons, South Africa looks forward to the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on 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. South Africa has the honour, along with Colombia and Japan, to introduce the omnibus small arms draft resolution during this session and we look forward to constructive consultations on the draft text that we will be submitting shortly. We believe that we have made substantive progress in setting a forward-looking programme of work until 2012. My delegation hopes that the General Assembly will be able to adopt the draft resolution by consensus. On substantive matters relating to the Programme of Action, we believe that there is still room for improved cooperation on the international instrument to trace illicit small arms and light weapons, as well as on illicit brokering.

South Africa will continue to work with other United Nations Member States towards an arms trade treaty and welcomes the work of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. Although there are still many questions to be answered concerning, inter alia, the specific details of the regulatory framework to be utilized, this alone should not deter Member States from moving forward with this important course. Any further delay in the regulation of the arms trade and transfers will see continual human rights violations and abuses, the destruction and displacement of innocent lives and the oppression of humankind that will continue to undermine developmental goals.

On the issue of landmines, South Africa attaches great importance to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In this regard, South Africa welcomes the conclusion of the second preparatory meeting of the Mine Ban Convention that took place on 3 and 4 September 2009 in Geneva. South Africa also hosted an African Union conference from 9 to

14 September 2009 to assess the developments in Africa since the 2004 Conference with a view to updating the Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Landmines and to prepare for the Second Review Conference of States parties to the Convention that will take place in Cartagena, Colombia, from 29 November to 4 December this year. South Africa looks forward to participating in the Review Conference and hopes that we will emerge from that Conference united in our quest for a world free of anti-personnel mines. We also hope that the Conference will be able to consolidate some of the implementation provisions, including victim assistance, mine clearance, cooperation and assistance and stockpile destruction.

South Africa was one of the States that signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo on 3 December 2008, and we are now working towards ratification of the Convention. We firmly believe that a new international standard has been set in the regulation of these weapons. My delegation is of the view that as momentum gathers and more States sign and ratify this Convention, the bulk of cluster munitions will be stigmatized to the extent that they are no longer used, in much the same way as has been the case with anti-personnel mines.

Efforts are currently under way in The Hague for the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to appoint a new Director-General for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) towards the end of this year. It is important that the successful candidate enjoy the widest possible support to ensure the full confidence and backing of States parties in dealing with the challenges that lie ahead. These challenges include the fact that one of the major possessor States parties has already indicated that it will not be meeting the final 2012 destruction deadline, which has the potential to do serious harm to the CWC. The OPCW also needs to determine destruction deadlines for new possessor States parties as well as dealing with new situations not foreseen by the Convention such as the destruction of chemical weapons in conflict situations. It will further be expected of the new Director-General carefully to balance the OPCW's non-proliferation activities with its support and cooperation in benefit of the majority of its member States that possess neither chemical weapons nor significant chemical industries.

While the Disarmament Commission failed to reach any substantive conclusions during its previous three-year cycle, South Africa is encouraged by the agenda which the Commission adopted earlier this year and by the work already undertaken in this regard. We wish to reiterate that we attach the highest importance to the role of the Commission as the sole deliberative body in the United Nations disarmament machinery.

In conclusion, this Committee has the responsibility collectively to address concerns related to the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction as well as conventional arms. In fulfilling this responsibility, it is incumbent upon us to agree collectively on actions that will strengthen the multilateral system of governance, thereby contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your chairmanship of the First Committee this year. You of course have my own delegation's cooperation in this critical role.

Australia welcomes the encouraging signals over the last 12 months for international peace and security — most recently the historic and successful Security Council Summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament on 24 September. The dynamics have shifted. We are at a point where, with resolve, we can move beyond signals and make genuine progress. The Australian Government is committed to the United Nations, to multilateral diplomacy and to nuclear disarmament, and we pledge our own continued determination to inject greater energy, focus and emphasis on substantive outcomes into the deliberations of this Committee and other disarmament and non-proliferation forums.

That is why the Australian and Japanese Prime Ministers established the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament in June 2008. The Commission has engaged comprehensively in an effort to generate new thinking to overcome what have too often been sterile and formulaic debates in the past. The Commission is working with nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, with parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and non-parties, and across all regions. In the next few months, the Commission will produce its report. Its aim is to chart a practical course to achieve a strengthened non-proliferation and disarmament regime, leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons,

drawing clear attention to who should be doing what and when, and how all the many different policy elements come together over the short term, medium term and long term.

Australian Prime Minister Rudd said in his address to the General Assembly two weeks ago, "One truth remains absolutely clear: the proliferation of nuclear weapons can never make any country more secure" (A/64/PV.4). We look to States possessing nuclear weapons to exercise leadership. We were greatly encouraged by the bold restatement of a commitment to a world without nuclear weapons by President Obama of the United States in April. We welcome the commitment made by the United States and Russia in their START negotiations to reduce their nuclear arsenals and we welcome the important reductions by France and the United Kingdom. Of course, Australia fully endorses the Security Council's historic resolution 1887 (2009) of 24 September.

We are particularly encouraged by the revitalization of efforts to bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and we welcome Trinidad and Tobago's public commitment on 1 October that it would join the Treaty. We acknowledge, indeed we stress, the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones and would congratulate African States on the recent entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty.

In building an enduring commitment to a world without nuclear weapons, the challenge rests not only with the nuclear-weapon States. We all have a part to play. Again, as our own Prime Minister said in his General Assembly speech "The United Nations is not a place; it is not an institution. The United Nations is us."

As one of the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in 2009, Australia was pleased to contribute to the achievement of the Conference's 29 May decision on a programme of work. Appropriately, the work programme includes the negotiation of a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, an instrument that we consider to be decisive for progress. Disappointingly, the Conference failed, as we know, to find the consensus it needed to implement its own decision. The international community should be rightly frustrated by this institutionalized inertia which, frankly, brings all of us into disrepute. Certainly I cannot explain to the average Australian why we

cannot make progress. The Conference on Disarmament is important. We have to do better. It is essential that the Conference on Disarmament undertake substantive work in 2010 in all areas of its work programme.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference must be a compelling priority. The Treaty is under great pressure and all of us must work to ensure a successful Review Conference, which recognizes and underlines the collective security benefits that the Treaty continues to provide to all member States. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear test earlier this year was a stark reminder of the need to maintain and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The recent disclosure of Iran's covert second enrichment facility reinforces our concerns and those of the international community about Iran's nuclear programme. Australia urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its international obligations, including United Nations Security Council resolutions, to return to the Six-Party Talks and to implement its commitments to abandon its nuclear-weapons programme. Iran too must abide by Security Council resolutions and cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to reassure the international community that its own nuclear programme is entirely peaceful. The 1 October meeting of the Permanent Five plus one (P5+1) and Iran was a constructive first step. Iran needs now to follow up by providing IAEA full and transparent access to the enrichment facility at Qom.

Continuing our efforts on conventional weapons must also remain a key priority for the Committee. As my own delegation has stressed on a number of occasions, an arms trade treaty is greatly needed if we are to arrest the irresponsible and illicit transfer of conventional arms and components. We welcome the outcome of the Open-ended Working Group sessions this year and strongly endorse the proposal to use the remaining sessions as preparatory committees ahead of a diplomatic conference to negotiate the convention. Efforts on small arms and light weapons should also remain a focus. Efforts in our own region, the Pacific, on implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects have and will continue. In their August communiqué, the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum — of which Australia is current Chair — underlined how genuine

the threat from these weapons is in that region and beyond.

As some States are aware, in partnership with the United Nations, Australia hosted a regional meeting on the Programme of Action in Sydney in June this year, where experiences and ideas were exchanged on curbing the illicit trade in small arms. We fully support the draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons presented at this session by South Africa, Colombia and Japan, which sets a strong framework for enhancing understanding and implementing the Programme of Action ahead of the next Biennial Meeting of States and Review Conference.

I also wish to highlight the ongoing priority Australia attaches to the early entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and our continued efforts under the auspices of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to achieve meaningful prohibitions on the use of cluster munitions by those who have not yet committed to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We also remain committed to the goal of a comprehensive solution to the global landmines problem and look forward to ambitious outcomes from the Cartagena Summit on a mine-free world to be held in late November this year.

In closing, I should repeat what I started with, that the Australian Government is dedicated to identifying pragmatic steps to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation across the entire agenda of this Committee. The challenges are obvious, but it is the costs of inaction that we must more forcefully acknowledge. We are at a pivotal moment when we must all recognize that the possession of nuclear weapons in particular comes at a strategic cost to States, a cost that is greater than the perceived strategic benefits. We look forward to working closely with other delegations and you, Sir, as we face this reality. We must all recommit to do much more.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, let me congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you of our support and cooperation. We are confident that under your able leadership we will have successful deliberations. I also thank the High Representative for Disarmament, Mr. Sergio Duarte, for his introductory statement. Nigeria associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

This session of the First Committee is being held at a time of great concern because of the global economic and financial crisis and the risk posed to international peace and security caused by the prevailing stalemate in multilateral negotiations.

It is therefore no surprise that while resources for aid and development assistance continue to plummet, military expenditure continues to escalate. On the one hand, world military expenditure, which stood at \$780 billion at the beginning of this decade, has now risen to \$1.464 trillion, a 4 per cent increase in real terms since 2007 and represents a 45 per cent increase since 1999. This figure also corresponds to 2.4 per cent of world gross domestic product, or \$217 for each person on Earth in a world where some people live on less than \$1 a day. On the other hand, less than 1 per cent of what the world spends every year on weapons would have put every child into school by the year 2000. Yet this did not happen.

The international community cannot watch this development continue unabated. Consequently, the need to reverse this negative trend has become one of the greatest challenges of the international community today. The above notwithstanding, the recent reawakening of the international community on how best to address the issues of arms control and disarmament was amply demonstrated by the summit on nuclear disarmament convened by the Security Council on 24 September 2009.

For this session, our expectation is that the positive momentum generated so far on how to implement disarmament and non-proliferation measures — which are increasingly becoming major challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security — should be pursued with renewed vigour. We must therefore do all within our means to avert the failures that have characterized the disarmament agenda in the last couple of years so as to realize the shared international concerns about the dangers that weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons pose to mankind.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm its belief in multilateralism as the core principle for addressing issues of disarmament and international security, and will continue to abide by our commitments under the various disarmament and arms control agreements to which Nigeria is a party. We will work with other nations in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation

in all their aspects. It is our hope that such cooperation will lead to the achievement of the overall objective of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Nigeria also reaffirms that all States parties, nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon alike, share a common obligation to ensure non-proliferation in all its aspects. We maintain that the call for non-proliferation must be complemented by concrete action in the area of nuclear disarmament, as we see it as the most effective way of ensuring that such weapons do not fall into the hands of non-State actors.

It is in this regard that all Member States should intensify their commitment towards the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in particular through adherence by the remaining Annex 2 States whose ratification is mandatory for the Treaty to enter into force. Pending its entry into force, nuclear-weapon States should continue to maintain the existing moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device. However, Nigeria believes that a moratorium cannot replace a treaty. The CTBT is the ultimate goal.

The Nigerian delegation will continue to maintain its position on the need to guarantee the inalienable right of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nigeria also wishes to reiterate its support for the concept of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States in the regions concerned. Africa has again demonstrated its commitment to the principle of universal denuclearization with the recent entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, called the Pelindaba Treaty.

My delegation reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We, however, wish to underline that in spite of efforts at various levels, the circulation of these weapons, especially in the West African subregion, is fast turning the region into a major transit point for illicit trafficking in arms and drugs. These also facilitate the growth of criminal syndicates, some possessing sufficient firepower to challenge a nation's military force. That is why we

continue to call on the international community to demonstrate commitment to check this menace by implementing existing initiatives, as well as by developing new and legally binding ones where necessary. These instruments should be geared towards achieving the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and regulating the transfer of conventional weapons in general. The full implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons would be a very good beginning. In this connection, we hope that the next meeting of the Open-ended Working Group will make more substantial progress.

Finally, the Nigerian delegation will again this year sponsor, as it has done before, the following three draft resolutions entitled: “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty” (A/C.1/64/L.33); “Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes” (A/C.1/64/L.34); and “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa” (A/C.1/64/L.32/Rev.2).

We appreciate the support of Member States that have continued to provide resources and facilities for participants in the Disarmament Fellowship Programme. We are equally grateful to the Secretary-General for the able manner in which he has implemented them over the years. We call on member States to support these draft resolutions when presented as they have always done in the past.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your well-deserved elections. I am confident that your able leadership and wisdom will guide our work in the Committee to fruition. Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Given the recent encouraging developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, this session’s work of the First Committee will be critical for turning the corner in our disarmament agenda after many years. The necessary political will is apparent to make a difference. I agree with the Secretary-General that now is our time to be united in purpose and in action for a nuclear-weapon-free world and that nuclear disarmament is the only sane path to a safer world.

Resumption of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva after many years of stalemate is surely a welcome development. We are also encouraged at the pronouncements emanating from different capitals on their promises to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda in a substantial manner. The historic Security Council summit on 24 September (see S/PV.6191), which unanimously adopted resolution 1887 (2009) can be a step in the right direction if all parties fulfil their obligations under the United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. We must remind ourselves that the greatest threat to humanity comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. We should not have any doubt that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. All our endeavours, therefore, should aim at achieving this noble goal for the sake of humanity’s existence.

Bangladesh has never doubted that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Security Council has just reconfirmed it. Bangladesh reiterates its call, as also reflected in Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) that States not parties to the NPT should accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States so as to achieve its universality at an early date and pending their accession to the Treaty to adhere to its terms. Bangladesh calls for adopting a balanced approach in addressing the three pillars of the NPT — nuclear disarmament of countries currently possessing nuclear weapons, non-proliferation to countries not yet in possession, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for all.

Bangladesh also reiterates its call for all States, particularly the remaining Annex 2 nations, to refrain from conducting nuclear-test explosions and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Bangladesh was the first Annex 2 South Asian nation to join the CTBT. We are convinced that universalization and entry into force of the CTBT at an early date is a critical building-block for a nuclear-free world.

Bangladesh also calls upon the parties to the NPT, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty, to undertake

to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear arms reduction and disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, and calls on all other States to join in this endeavour. We are looking forward to the 2010 NPT Review Conference for a balanced outcome in all the Treaty's three pillars — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Bangladesh, a country constitutionally committed to general and complete disarmament, enjoys an impeccable record in disarmament and non-proliferation, in nuclear as well as in conventional weapons. We are party to almost all United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, and make endeavours within our limited resources towards their full implementation at the national, regional and international levels. Bangladesh, a country having no nuclear-weapon ambition, reiterates its demand for security assurances through the establishment of a universally binding legal instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We support Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) which recalls the statements of 1995 by each of the five nuclear-weapon States guaranteeing security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT against the use of nuclear weapons. Strict adherence to this assurance is essential for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We would like to emphasize here that while we support all non-discriminatory efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Bangladesh recognizes, as stipulated in article IV of the NPT, the inalienable right of the Parties to the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of that Treaty. Bangladesh, for example, has consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. We are currently working on making good use of the NPT provision on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for improving the living standards of our people under the guidance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Bangladesh has also concluded safeguards agreements with the IAEA, including the Additional Protocol, as part of its commitment to non-proliferation.

Bangladesh has long been advocating the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout

the world. We value the establishment of such zones as confidence-building measures against the threat of nuclear weapons. While we welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty this year, we continue to support the establishment of such regimes in South Asia, the Middle East and in other parts of the world.

We must continue to work on eliminating weapons of mass destruction from the face of the Earth but we must not lose sight of the perennial threats posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. Bangladesh lends its support to the global effort to conclude an arms trade treaty to ensure the transparent transfer of conventional weapons. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the real weapons of mass destruction in use on a daily basis, are destabilizing regions and societies with devastating impacts on the vulnerable groups of people, including women and children.

The unanimous adoption of the 2001 Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons was a watershed moment in the history of disarmament and non-proliferation. This carefully crafted document has been the cornerstone of our efforts in building norms and setting standards in matters related to small arms and light weapons. Progress in its implementation, however, has been uneven. Full implementation of the Programme of Action therefore is of paramount importance for all societies.

Bangladesh also calls for putting an end to the use of anti-personnel landmines. Many civilians, including children and women, have fallen victim to landmines in conflict and post-conflict situations. Bangladesh has fulfilled its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction by destroying its stockpile. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Ottawa Convention. Assistance should also be extended in mine-clearing operations as well as in the rehabilitation of victims in the affected countries.

The disarmament agenda, of both nuclear and conventional weapons, is absolutely critical for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by developing countries, particularly the least developed

countries. Appalling military expenditures in excess of \$1 trillion every year are morally unacceptable at a time when the financial and economic crisis has pushed millions throughout the world below the poverty line and made more than 1 billion people, one sixth of humanity, go to sleep hungry every night. It is estimated that the world spends some \$3.5 million every day on weapons and soldiers, and that more than \$42 billion worth of conventional weapons are sold to developing States every year. We reiterate our demand that the major military Powers stop this mindless arms race and divert the resources to the much more worthy cause of ensuring the development of all our peoples. That would be the best guarantee for peace, security, human rights and development and would ensure a shared prosperous future for all of humanity.

We have, more than ever, good reason to be hopeful about making progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, and at the NPT Review Conference in 2010. This could indeed be a time to look beyond what has been perceived to be achievable all these years and work for an ambitious disarmament agenda to make this planet a safer place for all of us and our future generations.

It is from this perspective that the work of the First Committee, the United Nations forum responsible for setting norms and standards in matters related to disarmament and international security, assumes high significance at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. It will be up to us to rise to the task of preventing a nuclear nightmare. Mere talk and resolutions are not enough. All these statements and resolutions must be implemented in letter and spirit and with due urgency. We cannot afford anything less than that.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who wishes to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply. In this regard, I remind delegations that the number of statements in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any topic at a given meeting must be limited to two. The first statement, in accordance with the rules of procedure, shall be limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I should also like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election

to the chairmanship of the Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support for a successful session.

I should like to respond to the references made by some delegations, including those of South Korea and Japan, to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Certainly, my delegation strongly rejects the statements of those delegations and I wish to make the following remarks with a view to facilitating the better understanding of other representatives, specifically with regard to the issue of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is a direct product of the United States hostile policy to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its nuclear threats which have continued for more than half a century. Nevertheless, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has never renounced the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and, indeed, of the rest of the world. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea does not pursue a nuclear arms race. My country has done everything it could to realize the peaceful reunification of the country, remove nuclear threats and the source of war, and secure peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

To this end my Government initiated the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and advanced a proposal on replacing the armistice agreement with a peace agreement, as well as the proposal of adopting a Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States non-aggression treaty. However, our efforts did not receive the due response from the United States. The United States rather responded to our sincere efforts with its increased nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States went as far as to argue that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must not launch even a peaceful satellite, making an issue of it at the Security Council, making operational the sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Consequently, what are called the Six-Party Talks were driven to collapse. Our satellite launch was legitimate, as it was an exercise of our sovereignty and also fully conformed to relevant international law. The Security Council cannot stand above international law.

In view of the continued hostile acts of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we came to the conclusion that we had no other option but to rely on our nuclear

deterrent, taking it as a reliable means for ensuring nuclear balance in the region. The mission of our nuclear weapons is to deter a war on the Korean peninsula. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will possess a nuclear deterrent only to the extent that it can deter a military attack and nuclear threats.

Our nuclear deterrent has made the Democratic People's Republic of Korea more secure than before, enabling our people to concentrate all their efforts and resources on economic development. While possessing

nuclear weapons, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will act in a responsible manner in management, use and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and in nuclear disarmament.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): Before adjourning the meeting, let me remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed today at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.