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Official Records

Chairperson: 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*): Once again we have a long list of speakers for this morning. Therefore I would kindly ask that delegations respect the agreed time limits for their statements.

Mr. Hernández-Milian (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Costa Rica welcomes your election, Sir, to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are sure that you will lead our work with great success. We commend you and your colleagues in the Bureau.

As has been clear in the statements from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Duarte, and others who have already spoken, this past year has on balance been positive and there has been significant progress despite some notable setbacks. The dominant feature of this complex situation is the strengthening of multilateralism, as evidenced by the resumption at the United Nations of major global disarmament activities. The Secretary-General revitalized the international agenda with his historic five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament emerged from a long period of paralysis, and the Security Council, in addition to adopting a historic resolution on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation (Security Council resolution 1887 (2009)), was the scene of an unprecedented meeting on that subject (see S/PV.6191).

The leaders of the great nuclear Powers came before the international community and gave the initial push to a process that will dominate the scene in future.

There has been other progress. Despite regrettable episodes, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has gained status and we are moving ahead, optimistic about the Review Conference next year. It is also an encouraging sign that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has been bolstered by significant accessions. The possibility of initial work aimed at producing an international instrument on fissile material is also closer than ever. There are still some who will want to see the glass as half empty. Those of us who worked hard to reduce armaments of all types and to free the people from the heavy yoke of military expenditure look optimistically towards the future.

Costa Rica is finishing a year characterized by a vigorous and robust engagement in disarmament, peacekeeping and international security. Soon we will conclude our service in the Security Council. There, in addition to participating in the work of the Council, Costa Rica presided over the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), making its contribution to enhancing that Committee as a useful and vigorous mechanism for international cooperation. Further, some weeks ago, Costa Rica handed over the presidency, which it had shared with Austria, of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We continue to preside over the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Together with six other

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United Nations Member States, Costa Rica is spearheading the process of consideration of an arms trade treaty and is presenting again a draft resolution proposing a draft model convention for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which we presented two years ago with Malaysia.

With scarcely concealed pride, we take great satisfaction in listening to the references made to Article 26 of the Charter which imposes on the Security Council the obligation of preparing plans for the regulation of armaments, and ensuring thus the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources. Allow me to repeat those words "with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". Costa Rica believes it has contributed to breathing new life into this Article that was a dead-letter one year ago. During our presidency in the Security Council, we organized a debate on this very topic and our President, Nobel Peace Laureate Oscar Arias Sánchez, gave life once again to Article 26 of the Charter. He referred to this as "the text that holds up this building" (*S/PV.6017, p. 20*) because that was the dream of the founders of the Organization, a world living in peace and using all resources to ensure the well-being of peoples, the well-being of humanity.

For this reason, I cannot conclude without once again raising the voice of Costa Rica to call for wisdom, to protest against the demented arms race that squanders astronomical sums of money with which we could attain the Millennium Development Goals. We could use that money to reduce carbon emissions to levels that would avoid further global warming and also to attain other human development goals for all. We are absolutely amazed that \$1.4 trillion was destined for military expenditure last year while there is not enough to satisfy the needs of official development assistance that was set three decades ago. What fills us with anguish also is the \$60 billion that our Latin American and Caribbean region is devoting to military expenditures. Our region has great inequalities; poverty affects and punishes some 200 million people and most do not get more than seven years of schooling.

In sum, we are encouraged by the progress that has been made although the panorama is still complex in the area of weapons of mass destruction and we believe there is a need to redouble our efforts in the distressing field of the conventional arms trade. We

must reduce military expenditures and use these resources to address other crises. It is thus that we are willing to work for the success of the Committee.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is particularly pleased that, once again, the chairmanship of the First Committee is held by a representative of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ambassador José Luis Cancela of Uruguay, and we offer you, Sir, our full support. We are confident that under your leadership we will be able successfully to complete our work. My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My country is characterized by its respect for international instruments and its deep attachment to institutionality and international law. Its pacifist nature and its commitment to peace and security are expressed through its active participation in forums in which disarmament and non-proliferation, essential components of its foreign policy, are discussed.

As a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, my country supports all initiatives aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as a guarantee for peace and world security. In this regard, we welcome the entry into force of the treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in Central Asia and Africa. These are significant advancements towards the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation recognizes the important role played by nuclear-weapon-free zones. Because of that, we support the holding of the second Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, to be held under the coordination of Chile in April 2010, in New York.

Colombia, as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is confident that the work performed in the three preparatory meetings will contribute to the success of the Review Conference, to be held in New York in May 2010 under the presidency of the Philippines. My delegation will participate actively in the discussions that will occur on the three pillars of this international instrument — disarmament, non-proliferation and the production of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. I would like to emphasize the importance of implementing the commitments emanating from this instrument in a non-selective and balanced manner to ensure their credibility and effectiveness.

Since my country deposited the instruments of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 2008, we have been committed to its entry into force. We underline the United States announcement that it would seek ratification made at the sixth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty held September this year in this city. Given that the United States is an Annex 2 country, the Treaty's entry into force seems closer than ever.

We welcome the adoption by consensus of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament on 29 May. Though substantive work did not begin this year, we are sure that it will be possible to get started in 2010 under the presidency of Bangladesh. We coordinated the Group of 21 during the third part of the 2009 session of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and we worked hard to advance the items on its agenda. We believe we can achieve significant progress in the work of the Conference.

My delegation is confident that the renewed momentum gained at the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament that took place on 24 September in this city (see S/PV.6191), and the adoption by consensus of Council resolution 1887 (2009), will lead to the consolidation of a concrete, transparent, verifiable and irreversible international regime in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the implementation of commitments already in place and in the adoption of new agreements to achieve the goal of a world free of the threat of nuclear weapons and their use.

Although Colombia was not involved in the Oslo process that ended with the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, it was among the first countries to sign it. With the decision to sign that legal instrument, my country renewed its obligation to respect human rights and international humanitarian law and its willingness to ban from its territory all humanitarian impact weapons. As a demonstration of its commitment to this Convention, Colombia destroyed 57 per cent of its arsenals. This process culminated last May. The Colombian Government has decided to destroy the remaining 43 per cent of its existing stocks before the end of this year.

My delegation would like to draw attention to the problem of antipersonnel landmines, a problem that is reflected in the hundreds of victims every year

throughout the world, and in the large areas of agricultural land contaminated by these devices. The international community should resolutely support the fight against this scourge, including efforts to restore the fundamental rights of survivors. That is the common objective that we will reiterate at the second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction, under the title "Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World" that will be held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 29 November to 4 December 2009. My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate the importance of broad participation at that Conference, at the highest political level, as a sign of the commitment of States parties and observers to the Convention.

In Cartagena we will have a unique opportunity to review the achievements of the Convention on the tenth anniversary of its entry into force. We will also be able to discuss the important challenges that the international community faces in its action against anti-personnel mines and draw up corresponding lines of work. Colombia considers it to be of paramount importance, in this framework, to identify and discuss the challenges that the new modes of production and use of anti-personnel mines impose on the Convention. Likewise, my delegation believes that we must insist on a more vehement condemnation of the use of these devices by any actor, including terrorist groups and drug traffickers. The Conference should give special emphasis to the need to care for victims, who constitute the rationale for all efforts in the fight against anti-personnel mines.

My delegation attaches great importance to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Colombia is committed to making progress in this area and continues to work at all levels, exchanging experiences and adopting joint mechanisms that contribute to the implementation of politically and legally binding instruments in this field. In this regard, we express our strong support for the work of the Chairman-designate of the fourth Biennial Meeting of States to be held in New York from 14 to 18 June 2010. We offer our full willingness to work together for its success.

My delegation also calls for the support of all member States for the draft resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its

aspects” that Colombia traditionally presents alongside South Africa and Japan. I also reiterate my country’s readiness to continue to participate actively in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty in 2010. The search for consensus for the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the matter to establish stronger controls on arms transfers is a priority that my delegation would again underline.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm our support for the work of the First Committee. We are confident that this will be reflected in renewed political momentum that will enable effective progress on the issues on the disarmament agenda.

Mr. Ja’afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement and the constructive role he plays in supporting our work. My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Arab Group.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, set forth the priorities of the international community in the field of nuclear disarmament. It put those priorities into a specific programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament. But, as members know, the absence of political will by some Powers impeded international efforts and prevented the Conference from shouldering its responsibilities owing to double standards and the provocative exemption of some countries from the international consensus. For this reason, challenges still remain and international concern continues to grow about the risk of nuclear proliferation, especially regarding nuclear weapons. There also continue to exist large quantities of these weapons, ready for use by some who claim publicly that they can use these weapons to achieve political ends. The international community made concerted efforts to devise arrangements to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons in a process that was supposed to be completely transparent. However, it is a source of concern that some nuclear-weapon States are

still trying to manage this file in twisted ways that serve their narrow interests and the interests of their allies at the expense of international peace and security.

The statements by some representatives of these countries were clear and indicate that their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation is subject to what they call their national security and the security of their allies. They have forgotten that the maintenance of national security is not selective but is a universal right of all States, as ensured by the Charter of the United Nations. It is not a privilege for some by which they justify their flouting of the principle of nuclear non-proliferation and the application of double standards that impede nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The provision by some countries to Israel of reactors, heavy water, scientists and advanced technology over decades has enabled Israel to make and produce nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles in a way that threatens the peace and security of the whole Middle East. That proves the validity of what we say. The protection provided by these countries which has exempted Israel and given it preferential treatment, despite its continued aggression against the States of the region, its continued occupation of Arab lands and the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, all undermine the credibility of claims by these countries that they are keen to achieve the universality of nuclear non-proliferation. It confirms that their motives when they talk about universality are selective and have nothing to do with maintaining international peace and security. It is instead related to settling wrong bilateral accounts outside international law with certain countries that do not agree with the policies of these influential countries.

My delegation hopes that, during the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we will reach agreement on a genuine process of implementation of the Middle East resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty, as well as the implementation of the 13 practical steps of the 2000 Review Conference. We would like to recall that the package deal made in 1995, which extended the Treaty indefinitely, was not a consensual one without agreement on the resolution on the Middle East. The non-achievement of that resolution, which calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, would strip this package of its credibility.

In that connection, we welcome all the efforts made to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, Asia, Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In that respect, we express regret that there is no serious international effort to free the Middle East region of nuclear weapons in order to achieve international peace and security. We emphasize the need to take the necessary measures to establish such a zone, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. Israel should accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and it should place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), according to Security Council resolution 487 (1981).

The United Nations and the IAEA should be the natural framework for serious negotiations to make the Middle East region a zone free of nuclear weapons. Syria matches its words with actions. The Committee will remember that we, on behalf of the Arab Group, on 29 December 2003, submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council to free the Middle East zone of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons (S/2003/1208). However, regrettably, it was not adopted and the initiative is still “in blue” because of the opposition of one large nuclear Power at that time.

My delegation welcomes the adoption by the General Conference of the IAEA at its fifty-third session of two important resolutions relating to the Israeli nuclear arsenal. These two resolutions called upon Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards system of the Agency and to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State (GC (53)/RES/16 and 17, respectively). They also called on the Director General of the Agency to implement these international demands. Unfortunately, however, the Israelis rejected those two resolutions, and the international community, in order to maintain international peace and security, is thus called upon once again to bring pressure to bear on Israel to implement them, as well as other relevant resolutions. It is important for us to remain alert to the risk of continued international silence on the position of Israel. That position shifted from a policy of nuclear ambiguity to claiming publicly that it had nuclear weapons and threatening to use them. That highlights the connivance of some people with Israel to protect it from having to implement the provisions of relevant obligations and it maintains the abnormal situation

which has continued for a long time and has made the people of the area lose their hope in nuclear non-proliferation. It has also encouraged the revival of an arms race, which could have serious repercussions on international peace and security.

My country thinks that the right of people to have nuclear technology and use it for peaceful purposes is inalienable, according to article IV of the NPT. My country opposes any attempt to reinterpret that text in a way that diminishes that right, or restricts it in a selective way.

My country also supports the General Assembly resolution entitled, “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*”.

We are also of the view that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. We welcome the adoption of its programme of work after so many years of stalemate. We call on the Conference to include in its future programme the establishment of machinery to negotiate the issues on its agenda: nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a ban on the production of fissile material.

In conclusion, my delegation stresses the need for nuclear-weapon States to provide to non-nuclear-weapon States, in a legally binding instrument, negative security assurances that they will not use or threaten to use these weapons against them.

Mr. Jeenbaev (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): May I first of all congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to that important position and wish you every success in your difficult task. I assure you of the full support and constructive cooperation of my delegation as we work together here. We would also like to thank the High Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Duarte, for his contribution and the efforts made for disarmament and non-proliferation.

Pursuing a policy of disarmament and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are fundamental principles in the foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. One of the main ways to proceed here is strengthening the international regime on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The foundation for this is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Kyrgyzstan considers the

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as one of the key instruments for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to ensure strategic stability and security.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials that can be used to develop weapons of mass destruction, and ensuring the secure and safe use of nuclear materials are essential. Consistent with those policies, one of the steps taken by the Kyrgyz Republic was to bring into force in February 2004 a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In 2007, Kyrgyzstan signed an Additional Protocol to its IAEA safeguards agreement. Kyrgyzstan considers the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction as an effective means of strengthening international peace and security and calls for universal accession to it.

We are deeply convinced that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia represents a real contribution to nuclear disarmament. The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was signed in September 2006 and entered into force on 21 March 2009. Kyrgyzstan was one of the main initiators and an active participant in establishing the zone. This is a demonstration of the firm and unwavering position of the Kyrgyz Republic on matters of nuclear disarmament. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all States and international organizations, particularly the United Nations, for their full support for our initiative. As members know, a number of resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly and this initiative was included in the outcome document of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. We are also very grateful to States of Central Asia and the United Nations for identifying the Kyrgyz Republic as the depositary for the Treaty. This is an indication of great trust in us and recognition of the substantial contribution made by Kyrgyzstan to achieving the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

Ensuring our own safety and as proof of our policy of openness and good neighbourliness, Kyrgyzstan has always worked with other States in the region, as well as international organizations, especially the United Nations and the IAEA, in making Central Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We continue to advocate a strengthening of the process of

disarmament, the non-proliferation regime, and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we call for further negotiations on establishing other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Kyrgyzstan is deeply concerned over how to store nuclear-weapon waste. At the present time, there are still storage sites of radioactive waste on Kyrgyz territory. How to deal with them in order to prevent an environmental regional disaster is a very serious issue on our agenda. In summer this year in Geneva, on the initiative of my Government, a high-level international forum on the question of radioactive material stored on the territory of Kyrgyzstan was held.

Kyrgyzstan also advocates a multilateral dialogue on a cut-off of the production of fissile material, preventing an arms race in outer space, and for achieving nuclear disarmament.

The Kyrgyz Republic attaches great importance to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We agree that it is necessary to block access by non-State entities to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons technologies and materials and means of their delivery, inter alia through the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). To that end, our Government is working on strengthening the exports control regime. All States must cooperate on export controls in order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery. States with advanced weapons-of-mass-destruction technology should prevent the proliferation of such technology so that it cannot fall into the hands of other States or groups that might threaten the world with the use of those weapons.

Kyrgyzstan is disturbed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and is taking appropriate steps at the national level to combat the illegal circulation of such weapons. We call for the active participation of the United Nations in this matter. We support the proposal to develop a legally binding international instrument that would regulate the tracing and marking of small arms and light weapons and also a document against illegal brokering.

We should also focus on conventional arms control. We must take the opportunity that presents itself to build up trust between countries and to create an atmosphere of comprehensive understanding, transparency and cooperation which will lead to a reduction in weapons. We regret the absence of

progress at the Conference on Disarmament. Kyrgyzstan advocates dialogue on prohibiting the production of fissile material, stopping the arms race, and achieving nuclear disarmament in this forum.

Mr. Ramafole (Lesotho): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the sixty-fourth session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. My delegation assures you of its support during your tenure as Chairman of the Committee. My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively.

This year's session of the First Committee is being held when there is hope that the landscape of the disarmament machinery is changing. Disarmament issues have received some illumination from various stakeholders during the year. However, problems still exist. We continue to witness some setbacks in this field. Sadly, this demonstrates a lack of common ground and common purpose. These challenges not only threaten international peace and security but also undermine the treaties and conventions aimed at bringing general and complete disarmament.

My statement will cover the following aspects of disarmament: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and small arms and light weapons.

In the recent past, the international community witnessed an upsurge in nuclear testing and missile launching by some nuclear-weapon States. That is regrettable. Such defaulting member States need to restore the confidence of the international community by complying with all United Nations resolutions and fostering meaningful cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. It is not in dispute that every country has the sovereign right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Our quest for the entry into force of the CTBT, without any further delay, should be pursued vigorously. A secure nuclear-free world can only be realized through the entry into force of that Treaty. Consequently, we call on the Annex 2 States which have not yet done so to hasten their efforts to ratify the Treaty.

My delegation was encouraged by the deliberations at the just-ended Conference on

Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We commend those Annex 2 States that joined the consensus in the Final Declaration that was adopted by the Conference.

By the same token, my delegation welcomes the timely convening of the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191). The obvious complementarities between the statements made by the heads of State or Government at the summit and the contents of the Final Declaration adopted by the CTBT Conference do not need to be overemphasized.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains crucial as a framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. The progress achieved by the May 2009 meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference is encouraging. My delegation will join other members of the international community in ensuring that the 2010 Review Conference yields positive results. It is well settled that the three pillars of the NPT, namely, disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, are mutually reinforcing. As such they must be given equal and balanced treatment. We must not forget that the NPT is an instrument in terms of which the non-nuclear-weapon States have forgone their nuclear-weapon ambitions. Equally, it is our firm belief that the nuclear-weapon States will fully respect their commitment to nuclear disarmament.

The desire to create internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones was buttressed by the coming into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba, on 15 July 2009. Through this Treaty, Africa has demonstrated its commitment to building a safer world for mankind. We call on those regions that have not yet done so to follow suit and ensure a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The use of cluster munitions violates international humanitarian law and indeed the Geneva conventions relative to the protection of civilians during war. As a fervent believer in human rights and a supporter of all efforts aimed at protecting civilians, the Kingdom of Lesotho was among the 93 States that signed the Convention when it was first opened for signature in Oslo on 3 December 2008. The signing of the Convention by Lesotho was made with a clear understanding that it was a prerequisite to ratification.

Lesotho intends to ratify the Convention at the earliest opportunity. My delegation fully supports the campaign for ratification and entry into force of this very important instrument. We further support all efforts aimed at promoting its full and effective implementation, as well as the universalization of the norms of this Convention. We congratulate those States that deposited their instruments of ratification during the treaty event that was held in September 2009. We call on all other members that have not yet done so to seize an opportunity publicly to deposit their instruments of ratification on 21 October 2009 at the side event that will be organized by the United Nations Development Programme for the same purpose.

The devastation caused by small arms and light weapons in the developing world is a cause for concern to my delegation. As a small developing country, conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are more of a threat to Lesotho than weapons of mass destruction. These are weapons that easily find their way into the hands of criminals. From the year 2006 to date, Lesotho has managed to destroy 5921 illegal small arms and light weapons. We must join hands in addressing the threat caused by the illicit trade in these weapons. The 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is key to promoting long-term security and development in the developing countries. Lesotho will actively participate in the fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the implementation of this Programme in June 2010.

I wish to conclude by underscoring the fact that multilateralism is indispensable to achieving international peace and security. Perhaps there is merit in the argument that membership of the Conference on Disarmament needs to be revisited. It is not sufficiently representative of the international community in its current form. It therefore may not fulfil the requirements of multilateralism. It is only when we act as a collective that we will be able to make meaningful progress in the disarmament field. All member States should submit themselves to the regulation of universally-agreed international instruments under the auspices of the United Nations.

Ms. Ochir (Mongolia): My delegation aligns itself with the principled position of the Non-Aligned Movement outlined by Ambassador Marty Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, in his statement earlier this week. Over the course of this

week many delegations underscored, albeit to varying degrees of enthusiasm, the encouraging developments that have occurred on the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda since we last met. Highlights include the Secretary-General's five-point proposal, the breaking of the stalemate in the Conference of Disarmament, the start of the United States-Russia talks on further reductions of their strategic offensive arms, the entry into force of two nuclear-weapon-free zones, the holding of the first ever Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (S/PV.6191), and the recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Positive developments were also repeatedly mentioned in the conventional arms control area, including issues related to cluster munitions, work towards an arms trade treaty, preparation for forthcoming meetings on landmines and regulating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Yet fundamental challenges and serious threats continue to hinder our efforts to build a more secure and safer world: there are still 23,000 nuclear weapons and thousands of missiles and bombers to deliver them. Weapons of mass destruction treaties fall short of universal and strict adherence. There are still no legally binding treaties to deal with missiles, trade in small arms and cutting off the production of fissile materials. Past commitments, including the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament adopted at the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), have yet to see their full implementation. Hence, outstanding issues on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda need to be addressed with renewed vigour and a pragmatic approach.

My delegation would like to underscore the significance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. As long as nuclear-weapon States argue for gradual and step-by-step nuclear disarmament, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be strongly encouraged as one of the most feasible and pragmatic approaches. Nuclear-weapon-free zones not only complement global efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, but also strengthen the NPT regime. Therefore, we call on nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify any relevant treaty protocols.

In the history of nuclear-weapon-free zones, this year will go down as a remarkable one with treaties entering into force for the two regions of Central Asia and Africa. This year has also witnessed some initial steps towards enhancing cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones. At the first meeting of focal points of nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia held in Ulaanbaatar last April, the participants discussed the implementation of the Tlatelolco Declaration adopted at the first Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in 2005. In addition, the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, practical issues related to promoting cooperation and strengthening the coordination among focal points of zones, and preparations for the second Conference scheduled for next year, were also on the agenda. I wish to inform interested delegations that we have submitted the Chairman's statement at the Ulaanbaatar meeting as an official document of this session of the General Assembly (see A/C.1/64/4).

Having had its status recognized by the General Assembly since 1998 and assured by the five permanent members of the Security Council, Mongolia will continue to work with other focal points as well as members of nuclear-weapon-free zones jointly to promote the goal of creating a world free from nuclear weapons in the lead-up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the second Conference of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Mongolia, as a non-nuclear-weapon State with a unique location that does not permit it to be part of any traditional regional nuclear-weapon-free zone, is pursuing the policy of institutionalizing its nuclear-weapon-free status by concluding an appropriate international treaty. We hope that the relevant trilateral meetings at Geneva will soon bring about concrete results. In looking back, we could conclude that declaring our territory nuclear-weapon-free in 1992 did not weaken our security. On the contrary, as our Secretary of State pointed out at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum ministerial meeting in Bangkok last summer, the nuclear-weapon-free regime, along with the open, transparent and predictable foreign policy of Mongolia, strengthened our security. This policy made the territory of Mongolia safe from either national or foreign programmes and practices that are inconsistent with a nuclear-weapon-free status. Thus, we earned the

confidence and comfort of our partners and discarded the reasons for the unnecessary potential interest from the military of other countries. Another benefit worth mentioning in this regard is the fact that now we talk with comfort about the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and no one frowns at us. On the contrary, everyone has endeavoured to support our modest ambitions. If it has worked for us, there is no reason why it would not work for others, be it in North-East Asia or beyond.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to the Non-Aligned Movement and other members of the international community for their continued support for Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

I join other delegations in underlining that the chances for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's entry into force today are higher than ever before. Its effective implementation and adherence is an imperative for an effective and viable NPT regime. Apart from its primary purpose, the CTBT's International Monitoring System proved to be useful for broader civil and scientific applications. Mongolia, being a host to four international monitoring stations, stands ready to work with others in exploring this untapped potential.

In addition to its humble efforts to promote global disarmament and non-proliferation, Mongolia is endeavouring to contribute its share to the maintenance of international peace and security through its active involvement in peacekeeping operations. We are proud that Mongolia is becoming one of the top 20 troop contributors to the United Nations peacekeeping operations with its latest deployment of a battalion to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). Mongolia stands committed to further enhance its contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping operations and efforts by the international community in pursuit of global peace, security, disarmament and non-proliferation. In concluding, let me reiterate my delegation's full support for your efforts, Mr. Chairman, to lead the work of the Committee to a meaningful conclusion.

Mr. Pálsson (Iceland): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation over the coming weeks.

The impasse that has largely characterized multilateral discussions and negotiations on arms

control and disarmament over past years has been broken. These important issues are now at the forefront of the international agenda and, as was observed by speakers during the Security Council's meeting two weeks ago, the next 12 months will be instrumental in setting the tone for our future efforts.

For the first time, a world free of nuclear weapons, a distant vision at the time of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Reykjavik in 1986, has become a realistic working goal. The unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) pledging the Council's support for progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has brought that goal a step closer. The recent commitments made by United States President Obama and President Medvedev of Russia to pursue a legally binding successor treaty to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty have also provided an important impetus to further disarmament efforts. While witnessing these positive developments, the world community remains confronted with grave risks of nuclear proliferation. We call upon all States to honour their international obligations and cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of our global security. While the Treaty has stood the test of time, it has confronted numerous challenges in recent years. These include the risks of further proliferation, the acquisition of nuclear weapons by non-State actors and nuclear terrorism. Such challenges should harden our resolve to strengthen the NPT's universality, effectiveness and authority and to combine our efforts to ensuring a successful 2010 NPT Review Conference that genuinely restores confidence in the non-proliferation regime.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a critical building block in the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. Therefore, it is disappointing that out of the 44 States whose ratifications are required for the Treaty to enter into force, nine have yet to either sign or ratify it. We welcome the positive signals coming from the individual countries in that regard which hopefully will encourage others who have yet to ratify the Treaty to come forward. Thanks to these recent developments, the CTBT's entry into force could be within reach.

A verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is another essential step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We sincerely welcome the adoption of a programme of work by the Conference on Disarmament and hope that negotiations on an FMCT will begin early next year. Two other key areas of the weapons of mass destruction arms control and disarmament agenda are biological and chemical weapons. Iceland fully supports the universalization and complete implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention and calls upon those countries that have not acceded to these instruments to do so without delay.

Small arms and light weapons have often been referred to as the real weapons of mass destruction. A major challenge confronting global peace and security is their misuse and illicit spread. Working to prevent the proliferation of such weapons also serves the cause of development and human rights. Therefore, Iceland strongly supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and calls for reinforced efforts to further strengthen its implementation. Likewise, landmines and cluster munitions have been shown time and again to cause unacceptable harm to civilians, both during and in the aftermath of conflict. We therefore fully support the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention and hope that the summit in Cartagena, Colombia later this year will bring us even closer to its universalization. Iceland also wishes to acknowledge the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions last year as a major milestone in addressing the humanitarian damage inflicted by these munitions.

Furthermore, we believe that a legally binding arms trade treaty to regulate the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is much needed in our efforts to reduce the human cost associated with the proliferation of conventional arms. Iceland will support measures to that end during this session of the General Assembly and we hope that the negotiations on the treaty will begin as soon as possible.

My delegation shares the view expressed by some previous speakers that in order to take full advantage of the conducive atmosphere that seems to be emerging, a fundamental review of the intergovernmental machinery in the area of arms control and disarmament

set up by the United Nations more than 30 years ago may now be called for.

My country is among the 20 plus Member States that either have never had or have abolished their own military. Therefore, it was particularly revealing for my delegation to hear Mr. Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, at the opening of the session, inform the Committee that the estimated global military expenditures last year exceeded \$1.4 trillion, a 4 per cent real increase compared to the previous year, and an alarming 45 per cent increase from 1999. Let us hope that the current optimism and high expectations in the field of arms control and disarmament can be converted into a reversal of this disturbing trend over the coming years.

Mr. Rivera Mora (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of El Salvador, we wish to offer you, Sir, our most sincere congratulations on your election to lead the work of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. We are absolutely certain that under your leadership, we will continue to advance our agenda. We also wish to congratulate the Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur for this session. Their diplomatic and professional capacities will certainly be key in facilitating the work of the Committee. We further wish to express our pleasure at the presence of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Duarte. He has been a tireless promoter of the disarmament agenda in its broadest sense. We also wish to reiterate our great appreciation to Ambassador Marco Antonio Suazo, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Honduras, for his excellent work during the First Committee's 2008 session.

We are certain that during the meetings this session we will be able to make substantial progress in the matters to be considered in the First Committee as we have seen promising signs of progress in the area of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The recent Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191) has generated encouraging prospects for our common goal, the strengthening of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. This was reflected in the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) on 24 September. We believe that this resolution offers a series of guidelines and measures that, should they be attained, will significantly

strengthen peace and international security and stability.

The Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty also generated express statements that we received with great pleasure, including the very serious intention of the Governments of the United States, China and Indonesia to undertake those steps necessary to submit the Treaty for ratification by their competent authorities. We hope that those ratifications will take place and will encourage and stimulate other countries to do the same.

We also welcome the agreement reached between the Russian Federation and the United States on holding negotiations to reduce and limit strategic weapons, creating a successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty before 5 December, which is when that agreement expires. We urge other countries to join this type of effort and in particular those in regions of conflict or which have serious disputes with other States.

We are also encouraged by the adoption of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament after 12 years at a standstill. We are certain that with this, 2010 might see substantial progress in the matters on that agenda. It is important that the Conference on Disarmament launch negotiations to establish a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We have heard numerous commitments made in the field of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We applaud them and hope they are complied with. But we also wish to consider ways to make progress in the field of conventional weapons, in particular in the control of small arms and light weapons. Today, these are the weapons that are the greatest cause of death resulting from armed violence in our countries. For my country, El Salvador, this is a priority for national and regional security, not only because increasing proliferation of illicit trafficking causes greater harm in and of itself, but also because it has negative implications for normal economic development and social peace in general.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is one of the greatest threats to national, regional and international security. That is because this is the category of weapon that is most used by organized crime, gangs, common criminals and others

acting outside the law. It contributes to wresting security from the citizenry, leads to violations of human rights, and exacerbates armed conflict and armed violence. At the regional level, we support the handling of the issue of illicit trafficking in arms in the framework of the Central American Security Commission.

In general, we believe it is of the utmost importance that there be continued efforts to make progress in negotiations to promote a treaty for the establishment of common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, which would include small arms and light weapons, in accordance with the mandate of the General Assembly as contained in relevant resolutions.

Another matter of interest for my country is anti-personnel mines, in particular programmes for the physical and psychological rehabilitation of the victims of these explosives, as well as those that promote economic and social reintegration. We hope that this matter will be addressed in detail at the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 29 November to 4 December 2009. We hope that new and greater humanitarian commitments will be made at the technical and financial level by the international community to strengthen such programmes of rehabilitation and reintegration.

The Government of El Salvador has a resolute and firm commitment to joining forces with the international community to promote disarmament in general because of the high cost of the arms build-up, which is to the detriment of the necessary and urgent economic and social development needed by most countries. As we can see with great concern, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, military expenditures increased 4 per cent in 2008, reaching the record amount of \$1.4 trillion, that is, 50 per cent more than in 1999.

These alarming figures should motivate those countries that have increased their military budgets to stop and think, clearly, transparently and responsibly, about whether they would have been better off if they had invested, instead of in an unjustified arms race, in combating poverty, hunger and other pressing needs of their peoples.

If only a small amount of the expenditure that currently goes to arms could be invested in international cooperation for development, then the commitments made at the different international summits and conferences would be attainable, including the Millennium Development Goals, the fight against food insecurity, the fight against climate change, and the fight against the different pandemics that affect the world. We believe that it is time to go beyond rhetoric and discourse to concrete actions. For this reason, we believe that the First Committee should strengthen the close symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development so that we can find a way to reverse the trend towards arms build-ups, and instead move along a road to peace and well-being for all the peoples of the international community.

Lastly, we wish to underscore the valuable contributions and praiseworthy work of the non-governmental organizations that have helped to raise public awareness of the injurious effects of the arms race at the human level as well as on sustainable development.

Mr. Boureima (Niger) (*spoke in French*): May I first of all, on behalf of my delegation, congratulate you, Sir, most warmly on your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. The delegation of Niger wishes to assure you of its full and complete cooperation with you in your very important work. We feel very confident that the work of the Committee will proceed in an atmosphere full of cordiality and that our work will be successful. The organizational meeting, which you chaired so masterfully, ably, professionally and effectively, showed that this would be the case and you have continued since then to demonstrate the same qualities. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

This year's session of the First Committee is taking place in a rather favourable context in terms of disarmament issues, whether of weapons of mass destruction or conventional weapons. The year 2009 has already been marked by some very encouraging events. As though to give a positive follow-up to the five-point plan of action in which the Secretary-General urged member States to put disarmament issues back on the agenda, several of the most

important players have taken important initiatives. For example, on 29 May the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, for the first time in a decade adopted a programme of work for its 2009 substantive session, thereby opening up the way to substantive negotiations and discussions on strategic disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The Disarmament Commission, for its part, as the deliberative body of the General Assembly, although unable to make recommendations to implement its triennial 2009-2012 programme of work, nevertheless did serve as a forum for member States to put forward some rather promising ideas and even to enter into commitments that could lead to real progress in non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

These positive developments at the multilateral level were given a new impetus by the mutual understanding and cooperation between the two major nuclear Powers, namely the United States of America and the Russian Federation. The joint statement by Presidents Obama and Medvedev led to an agreement in principle in July on negotiating a successor treaty to the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms (START-I) which will expire at the end of 2009. This was unanimously welcomed and commended. It was no doubt this same general atmosphere of understanding which reigned during the convening in September 2009 of the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (S/PV.6191) and during the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The year 2009 has certainly cleared the way for some crucial deadlines that will be coming in 2010, particularly the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. One way to clear the ground was the adoption of Security Council resolution 1887 (2009). In this same year, 2009, it is worth noting the important contribution made by Africa to nuclear disarmament when, on 15 July 2009, the Pelindaba Treaty, the Treaty making Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone, entered into force.

While nuclear weapons are the major threat to the human race, other weapons of mass destruction continue to disrupt the peace and quiet of the world. Accordingly, it is only achieving that very lofty goal of general and complete disarmament, which was advocated in General Assembly resolution 1378 (XIV)

and which was the topic dealt with at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (see resolution S-10/2), that can actually keep the planet safe. That is why we place great hopes in the Disarmament Commission's substantive session in 2010. That is also why we continue to work for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the elaboration of a draft declaration on the Fourth United Nations Disarmament Decade.

In addition to the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, developing countries face other scourges which are the so-called conventional weapons. Mines and cluster munitions mean that vast areas of fertile land in several parts of the world remain inaccessible and cannot be used. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, which opened for signature in Dublin in December 2008 and which my country was one of the very first to ratify, can be extremely helpful in this regard. We welcome the holding of the second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Ottawa Convention, in Cartagena, Colombia, from 29 November to 4 December 2009. We also welcome the convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions which is to be held in the Lao People's Democratic Republic even before the Convention enters into force.

Small arms and light weapons tend to increase transnational organized crime in many parts of the world and also lead to an increase in all kinds of trafficking, including drug trafficking. People actually living in those regions find themselves helpless in the face of this and look to the international community for help.

The international community, for its part, must prevent this phenomenon, in particular by fully implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted in 2001.

The third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action, held in 2008, conducted a thorough analysis, which the fourth Meeting of States in 2010 could use to move towards the goal of having international legally binding

instruments on identifying and tracing small arms and light weapons and on brokering.

The conclusion of an arms trade treaty would be particularly helpful in regulating conventional weapons. In that connection, my delegation supports and encourages the Open-ended Working Group set up under resolution 63/240 and encourages that group to redouble its efforts to reach the goal. All this shows, if there were any need to show it, that multilateralism is important in seeking solutions to world-wide problems, particularly in the area of disarmament.

Mr. Lomaia (Georgia): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee and also congratulates the other members of the Bureau on their election. We are confident that under your able leadership we will be able to achieve significant results in our work. Let me assure you of my delegation's full preparedness to cooperate with you during the work of the Committee. At the outset I would like to say that Georgia fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the Swedish presidency of the European Union on 5 October.

In my brief remarks, I should like to express our views on the issues of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, the regulation of global trade in conventional arms, the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, and the impact those issues are having on the situation in my country.

On the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, we are looking forward to the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons which is scheduled to take place in 2010. Universal accession to the Treaty is essential and therefore we would join other speakers in calling upon those member States that are not parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to join that Treaty.

Another vital instrument that contributes to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We believe that the Treaty needs to enter into force in the nearest future. We also believe that its verification mechanism should be completed without further delay.

My delegation commends the work of the Conference on Disarmament which, after a decade of stalemate, agreed a programme of work and considers it as a positive development. We are looking forward to

the continuation of this encouraging dynamic during next year's session of the Conference.

On the issue of the regulation of global trade in conventional arms, on numerous occasions my country has had a chance to express its full support for the international arms trade treaty initiative. Indeed, such a mechanism could be an effective tool in the field of the non-proliferation of conventional arms. As many speakers in this hall have emphasized, the illicit manufacture, accumulation, transfer and flow of small arms and light weapons remains one of the most challenging topics on the international security agenda. The existence of so-called white spots and occupied territories where international control mechanisms are either very weak or non-existent, creates fertile ground for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear materials, as well as the accumulation and illicit transfer of conventional arms.

As all delegations are well aware, huge numbers of armaments are being accumulated in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. As long as international control mechanisms cannot be exploited in those territories, there are no guarantees whatsoever that these arms, including those especially dangerous such as man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS), would not be transferred to terrorist or criminal groups, which would pose a serious threat not only to one particular region but to the entire international community.

Georgia joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and continues to support consolidating efforts of the international community to combat the illicit acquisition, usage or transportation of nuclear materials and radioactive substances. The fact that in recent years there were several attempts at nuclear smuggling via territories in my country uncontrolled by the central authorities further amplifies the sense of danger. Due to effective measures carried out by the Georgian law enforcement bodies, these attempts were prevented. It should be emphasized though that these smuggling attempts occurred at a time when there were some international control mechanisms on the ground in the so-called white spots. In the absence of an international presence in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, it has become impossible to conduct any type of verification activities there and therefore the risk of the proliferation of nuclear materials and weapons of mass destruction has increased tremendously.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the impact all these issues are having on the situation in my country. As I speak before you, two regions of my country remain under illegal foreign occupation. Our northern neighbour continues its illegal military build-up in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, in grave violation of the six-point agreement brokered by the European Union as well as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Instead of being disbanded, the Gudauta Military Base which had to be shut down in accordance with the Istanbul Joint Statement of 1999, is being reinforced. Overall, there are up to 10,000 occupational troops located in the illegal military bases in these two regions, namely in Tskhinvali, Djava, Sokhumi, Gudauta and Ochamchire. At the same time, we have heard about the need to establish new security architecture from the representatives of this very country which is still challenging the existing universal security arrangements, the country that fails to implement its obligations undertaken vis-à-vis the international community, while it continues grossly to violate the Charter of the United Nations, the norms and principles of international law, and the six-point agreement. We are confident that the implementation of existing obligations must be a necessary precondition for any meaningful discussion on new European security architecture.

We are convinced that, under these circumstances, it is an appropriate time for the international community to stand up for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Al-Ansari (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I wish to express to you, Sir, our congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the disarmament and international security committee: the First Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I wish every success to all and I assure you, Mr. Chairman, of the full cooperation of my delegation. I should also like to thank my friend Ambassador Sergio Duarte for his participation and his statement earlier in the session. Further, I wish to associate myself with the statements made by representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Sudan on behalf of the Arab Group.

Qatar has always sought to strengthen its capacities in the field of disarmament. My country is a party to a number of international disarmament treaties

and conventions. We have participated in all international conferences and have supported pertinent resolutions. We have presented substantive annual reports on various aspects of disarmament to the Secretary-General, as requested by the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Qatar established in 2004 a special committee on international disarmament, with which relevant sectors of the Government work closely. We have conducted training workshops on disarmament and carry out technical exchanges in the area of putting international instruments into effect. We have done work in the area of implementing international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as relevant international instruments and protocols. We have set out national legislation aimed at implementing our commitments in disarmament and international security.

At the national level, we have laboured to raise public awareness, in particular about the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons Conventions, as well as the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention. In March last year, we held a regional workshop in Doha on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), covering weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear disarmament is a top priority of the international community's efforts. As we approach the Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) next year, we see that more progress is needed on nuclear disarmament as the five nuclear-weapon States have refused to move ahead on complying with some of the most important articles, particularly a reduction in their nuclear arsenals and stockpiles. Also, several nuclear countries have not yet acceded to the Treaty. The 2010 Review Conference should take account of the resolutions and decisions that have been adopted at previous conferences, and should take clear and genuine measures agreed to by all countries. We wish to underscore that nuclear disarmament is a central pillar of the Treaty and one of its basic requirements. We also reiterate the need urgently to seek a legally binding instrument by which the nuclear-weapon State will provide assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States that nuclear weapons will not be used or threatened to be used against them.

Qatar supports the strengthening of the three pillars of the NPT — non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The inalienable right of all countries to the peaceful

use of nuclear energy should not be denied. Obstacles should not be placed in the way of non-nuclear-weapon States that are party to the Treaty, when such States are seeking to develop their nuclear capacities for peaceful purposes. We call for the peaceful resolution of the Iranian file in strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The universal implementation of the NPT hinges on the application of the resolution on the Middle East of 1995, at which time the decision was also taken on the indefinite extension of the Treaty. Indeed, that resolution was adopted as a result of negotiations that permitted agreement to be reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT. The resolution called for specific practical measures that would lead to the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It also called for the accession of Israel to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and demanded that Israel submit its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), adopted at the Council summit last September (see S/PV.6191), recalled the decisions and resolutions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference.

Qatar unflinchingly supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its implementation. Over the past three years, the Treaty's verification system has shown that it can be effective, successful and credible in monitoring nuclear tests. We look forward eagerly to the Treaty's entry into force and, in that regard, we are devoting a great deal of effort, at the bilateral, regional and multilateral level, or during international conferences, to trying to convince those countries that have not signed or ratified the Convention to do so as quickly as possible. We call upon the States that are not yet parties to the CTBT to become parties as early as possible and we also call upon the nine remaining countries of the Annex 2 group of 44 States to ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date. We also called for the implementation of this Convention as quickly as possible at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held on 24-25 September 2009.

Small arms and light weapons pose major challenges and are of great concern to us. We must address this matter in a professional manner. Some producer States seem to shirk their responsibilities and

continue to export millions of such weapons without any controls.

There is also the matter of landmines and cluster munitions used by Israel in South Lebanon that still injure and disable the civilians of that area. We signed the Wellington Declaration on cluster munitions and we are considering adherence to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, adopted in Dublin in 2008.

We share the international community's concern about conventional weapons and their production. Addressing this matter, nevertheless, should be done in a fair and equitable manner without targeting certain States in such a way as to reduce their defensive capabilities. Other States develop these weapons, which creates an arms race and squanders resources that could be used to strengthen development. They also degrade the environment.

Mr. Shalgham (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): May I first congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We firmly believe that, with your wise guidance, the Committee will succeed in its work this session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We support the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the League of Arab States. In our statement today, we would like to refer to several issues that are of particular concern to us.

The issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a top priority, and is vital for the security and survival of the human race. We recall the historic decision of my country voluntarily to halt production of nuclear weapons, which we were preparing to develop. We believe that decision greatly promoted international peace and security. That initiative reflected a sincere desire by our President to save the human race from weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

Libya deserves the world's gratitude and respect for what it has done. My country now wishes to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Every country has the right to use nuclear power and nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes. In accordance with article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), States in fact are encouraged to exercise that right. As President Muammar Al-Qadhafi said in his

statement during the general debate (see A/64/PV.3), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must play its part in verifying that, without exception, all States accept the safeguards regime in order to make it truly universal. That means that inspections should also be carried out at the Dimona nuclear reactor in Israel. Otherwise, all States in the Middle East would seek nuclear weapons. We appeal, therefore, to the IAEA to verify reductions by nuclear-weapon countries so that we can be sure that the entire world can be free of nuclear weapons.

We call on the international community to bring more pressure to bear on Israel to accede to the NPT without any further delay, and to place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA. That, we believe, would be the first step towards confidence-building in Middle East and to freeing the region of nuclear weapons.

We welcome international efforts to establish zones free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction so as to achieve international peace and security. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to comply with their commitments made under article VI of the NPT. We call on them to implement the outcome documents of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and in particular, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which, inter alia, calls for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are two sides of the same coin. We must ensure that they are seen as such and that a balance is maintained between the two. An approach that would focus only on nuclear non-proliferation and not on nuclear disarmament would be selective and lead to a double standard.

Freeing the world of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is a noble and lofty goal. Libya welcomes the renewed vision of the international community to free the world of nuclear weapons. That vision has been revived by the recent initiatives of the United States of America and the Russian Federation in undertaking to hold negotiations on a successor treaty to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) and by the United States announcement that it would undertake work on ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. That new vision can also be seen in the commitment to commence negotiations on a

fissile material cut-off treaty. The latter must, of course, be verifiable. We trust that these gestures will be followed by concrete measures so as to achieve the goals intended.

We furthermore call for an international verification arrangement to check the information supplied by nuclear-weapon States about any reductions they make in their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with bilateral treaties they might conclude with other countries. As a manifestation of turning words into concrete action, we call again for an unconditional and legally binding instrument that would guarantee non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We support the Secretary-General's inclusion of this proposal in the five-point action plan for nuclear disarmament he put forward in October 2008.

My country joins the international community in its concern about other challenges relating to disarmament. We are disturbed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, conventional weapons and landmines. These concerns require a multilateral approach based on respect for the principles of the United Nations of transparency and the necessary flexibility for dealing with them in an objective and balanced manner, taking into account the concerns of all parties.

On mines and other explosive remnants of war, there are many parts of the world that suffer from such weapons, which remain on their territory and continue to take and threaten the lives of populations. The presence of such weapons creates an atmosphere of insecurity and instability. Unfortunately, the current international arrangements have not really dealt with the problem in an objective and balanced manner, and have not taken account of the concerns of many affected countries.

Anti-personnel landmines are dealt with in an incomplete manner in the Ottawa Convention and thus some weaker countries believe they have been deprived of a accessible resource which they could use for the defence of their borders. States that have suffered from invasion, aggression and occupation are the ones most affected by this.

There should be no justification for the acquisition of mines. If we want the Ottawa Convention to be accepted and abided by, it should be reviewed and revised. The first order of business is the

elimination of the mines and other explosive remnants of war in affected countries, especially since the reason for planting the weapons has ceased to exist. Secondly, victims of mines must be treated and assistance and rehabilitation provided. Thirdly, fields must be cleared of mines and explosives. Fourthly, the use of mines in the territories of other countries must be banned and compensation given to those affected by them. Fifthly, there should be a complete ban on the production and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, long before the ban on mines could be accepted. Sixthly, weaker countries must be able to use mines to defend their borders and territories.

The 1997 Ottawa Convention in its present form does not actually protect the interests of all States and is not appropriately balanced. My delegation is calling for a review and revision of the Convention in order to cover the concerns of a broader number of countries. Without such a revision, countries will highlight the shortcomings of the Convention to explain their vote against the draft resolution on the subject that will be introduced later this month in the First Committee. Some countries that are party to the Convention might in fact withdraw from it under article 20, "Duration and withdrawal".

I should also like to refer to the suffering of the people of Libya because of the staggering number of mines and explosive remnants of the Second World War still on our territory. In addition to impeding development and investment in the mined areas, there remain many victims and thousands of injured people, particularly women, children and the elderly. The States that placed those mines should now shoulder their moral responsibility and cooperate with Libya by providing financial and technical assistance for the removal of mines, as well as victim compensation, rehabilitation and reintegration into society. In that connection, we commend the cooperation between Libya and Italy and hope that other States will follow that example.

We are convinced that we need to work cooperatively at the multilateral level if we want to succeed in tackling the many challenges facing us in all areas of disarmament. It is my delegation's hope that this Committee will be able to attain its goals.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): I should like to express our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee for the sixty-

fourth session of the General Assembly. We are sure that your experience and leadership will help the Committee to complete its work. We would like also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

(spoke in Arabic)

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Arab Group.

The Government of Iraq supports all international and regional efforts aimed at making our world more secure for this generation and succeeding generations. We firmly believe that the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation falls on all our shoulders. We must take collective action to prevent nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery, from falling into the hands of non-State actors or terrorists. We need to unite our efforts to fight these threats effectively because of the seriousness of the situation.

My Government is compliant with and respects international agreements, conventions and other arrangements relating to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We have taken a number of legislative and executive measures to translate commitments into reality. My Government calls for universal accession to international treaties and conventions on weapons of mass destruction, as well as for their non-discriminatory implementation and with a view to the ultimate elimination of such weapons. That is the only way to give the international community a guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Iraq reaffirms that it is a country free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and we have declared our observance of conventions and agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation.

We have recently witnessed positive developments which are welcomed by my country. These include the 24 September 2009 Security Council summit (see S/PV.6191) and its adoption of Council resolution 1887 (2009). We have also welcomed the progress made at the fifty-third session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which adopted two important resolutions: one on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle

East and another on the nuclear capabilities of Israel (GC (53)/RES/16 and 17, respectively). These two decisions are of priority concern to the Arab countries given the situation in the Middle East.

Iraq has acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. We have declared our full commitment to implementing its provisions through the establishment of a national focal point, in which the National Monitoring Directorate is represented, and which, inter alia, completed for presentation the annual report on confidence-building measures to the Office for Disarmament Affairs in Geneva. We also set up the necessary mechanism to control dual use materials in accordance with the terms of Security Council resolution 1051 of 1996. Following termination of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission under Security Council resolution 1762 (2007), new mechanisms and lists have been made in that respect.

Iraq signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 19 August 2008. We are now pursuing legislative action in the Council of Representatives in order to ratify the Convention as soon as possible. Iraq also ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention on 13 January 2009. Iraq has presented the required declarations to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

In October 2008, Iraq also signed an Additional Protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Further, the Iraqi Council of Ministers adopted resolution 283 (2009), thereby agreeing to ratify the Protocol and referring it to the Council of Representatives for ratification as soon as possible. In that context, relevant Iraqi bodies have prepared regulations including on non-proliferation within the country, which will enable us, through a unified national system, to comply with the prohibitions contained in the conventions and agreements on chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. They would apply also to all peaceful uses, governing technology, materials and equipment connected with the production, stockpiling, export, import and any other measures, in a way that would ensure that these items would not be used for military purposes but remain limited to peaceful purposes only.

My delegation emphasizes that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination, on a gradual basis and in a way that would lead to confidence-building among the parties to the NPT. That would be the best incentive to join that could be given to countries outside the Treaty.

We would also like to refer to the opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 1996 (see A/51/218, annex), which emphasized that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was in contravention of international law of armed conflict, as well as the need for countries to commit themselves in good faith to negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Iraq has always expressed its firm belief in the need to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That was embodied in our practical support of United Nations resolutions under the item, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East". Iraq is of the view that the Middle East zone will not be free of nuclear weapons as long as the nuclear capabilities of Israel are not subject to verification, while the nuclear facilities of all other countries in the region are under the supervision of the IAEA. Based on that, Iraq believes that any endeavour to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East should be preceded by the following basic steps: Israel must dismantle its nuclear weapons programme, accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under the safeguards system of the IAEA. In addition, Security Council resolution 487 (1981) should be implemented. These are the necessary first steps that would contribute to easing tension in the region.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to emphasize the right of all countries, without discrimination, to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, consistent with the terms of the NPT and the safeguards system of the IAEA. We would also like to reiterate that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of these weapons. Efforts to stop such weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists should be carried out consistent with the principles of the United Nations and international law, and to the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In this vein, we express the hope that the 2010 NPT Review Conference will successfully move on from the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and lead to practical and balanced results in order to maintain the credibility of the Treaty and to achieve its universality. We cannot afford another failed Review Conference because that would jeopardize future international efforts on the issue and put into question the NPT, the very cornerstone for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): At the outset, allow me to join representatives who have taken the floor before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee during the sixty-fourth session. I also wish to seize this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. My sincere appreciation goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Marco Antonio Suazo of Honduras, who led us to a successful conclusion at the sixty-third session. Allow me once again to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement. My delegation fully associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

It is encouraging to note that the yearly session of the First Committee comes at a time when some progress has been made in the field of disarmament. As the challenges of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation continue to constitute the greatest threat to international peace and security, my delegation welcomes the positive signs of the past months and hopes concrete progress will be made towards nuclear disarmament. It is encouraging to see, among other things, a growing number of States express support for a nuclear-weapon-free world, the successful third preparatory meeting of the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation aimed at a new treaty on strategic arms reduction.

My delegation also welcomes the progress recently made in the Geneva talks on the Iranian nuclear issue and appreciates the flexibility shown by all parties during the process. A momentum is building and the international community must be ready to take

advantage of the opportunities that arise to ensure that they bear tangible outcomes.

While we cannot expect to change the somewhat strained international climate overnight, my delegation believes that there are actions that can be taken to preserve and build international confidence to advance the cause of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, that is, by reaffirming collective commitment to preserve the sanctity of international agreements and by collectively recognizing the need to pursue progress concurrently on both the fronts of disarmament and non-proliferation.

There is almost universal agreement that the international community can meet the challenges to peace, security and stability only through multilateralism, especially when it is under the auspices of a strengthened, revitalized and reformed United Nations. Multilateralism can provide credibility and legitimacy when addressing issues related to disarmament and international security. It is, therefore, imperative that the international community come together and work harder to promote a world free of fear from nuclear armaments. Nuclear issues should be addressed through dialogue and negotiation. Imposing sanctions or resorting to force can hardly offer a sustainable solution to proliferation concerns.

Peace and security are not threatened by nuclear weapons alone. Other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological and toxin weapons, pose threats to international security. In the field of conventional weapons, too, the proliferation and easy access to small arms and light weapons, which have been rightfully defined as the new weapons of mass destruction, is also a source of serious concern. These weapons are known to escalate conflict and violent crime, fuel terrorism, impede post-conflict reconstruction and undermine long-term sustainable development in many regions of the developing world, particularly in my continent, Africa. It is for this reason that Eritrea attaches great importance to, and sees no better instrument than, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, since its adoption in 2001 as a politically binding instrument.

The balance among the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty must be maintained. The relationship among nuclear disarmament,

non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be appropriately addressed, and nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be pushed forward in a balanced way. In this regard, Eritrea strongly believes that it is an inalienable right of all States to develop all aspects of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, as long as it is consistent with obligations under the NPT. My delegation reiterates its strong support for increased input and assistance by the International Atomic Energy Agency to developing countries in the fields of nuclear power, nuclear safety and security and nuclear technology application.

Disarmament benefits mankind not only because it eliminates threats to peace and security, but also because it helps divert financial and economic resources to development efforts. Let me conclude my statement by calling on all concerned parties to demonstrate sufficient political will in the reduction and destruction of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Kulima (Zambia): As this is the first time the Zambian delegation is taking the floor, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee, a compliment I also extend to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that with your able leadership, the Committee will successfully deliberate on the work before it, and you can count on the support of my delegation. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

My delegation takes note of the unilateral reductions in nuclear arsenals in recent years. However, the continued possession of such weapons by some member States, coupled with the ambitions of others to own the same, remains one of the fundamental threats to global human and environmental security. This unfortunate situation has come about at a time when the United Nations has brought into existence various arms control treaties, the paramount objective of which is disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As States parties to these treaties, our compliance and adherence to these instruments have not only been elusive but contentious. It is for this reason that Zambia acknowledges and appreciates regional efforts towards the creation and establishment of nuclear free zones and welcomes the commitments made by the

leaders of Russia and the United States to follow up on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, as well as other areas of interest to the world.

As a member of the African Union, Zambia supports and is committed to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba. Zambia would like to urge the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to continue providing the necessary leadership in achieving the universalization of the Treaty. In addition to this, there is need also for the Security Council to strive for the enhancement of existing multilateral efforts and transparency in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention are core instruments in the fight against the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Some biological and chemical substances have dual uses which pose both challenges and opportunities. Zambia welcomes the support provided by the International Cooperation and Assistance Division of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to member States, particularly developing countries, in implementing the Convention. In this age of international terrorism, the detection of proliferation at the border by member States is important to their security and well-being. Given Zambia's geographical location, there is need for support from the international committee in order to enhance both technical and human capacity.

The problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has continued to be one of the difficult arms control and disarmament issues for Zambia. This is mainly based on the following problems: the never-ending civil strife and conflict in some neighbouring countries; and our geopolitical position which makes border policing a very costly exercise. Zambia is committed to the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Lack of resources, however, has slowed down our pace of implementation. As a developing country faced with limited resources, the rendering of international assistance by way of bilateral or multilateral cooperation is critical to its realization.

Landmines continue to pose a stumbling block to growth in sustainable socio-economic development at the same time placing huge financial obligations on

Zambia's efforts in executing the demining exercise, the costs of which are enormous. Although we experience limited injuries from landmines, the challenges Zambia still continues to face are the cost of treating and rehabilitating such victims and the demining exercise itself. It is in that connection that Zambia appreciates the assistance rendered to it in undertaking a national landmine survey from August 2008 to July 2009. The survey covered seven out of the nine provinces suspected of containing affected areas. It is our hope that the expected report on the survey will go a long way to providing the much-needed comprehensive statistics on the prevalence of landmines, and eventually form the foundation upon which policy action could be pursued. Zambia acknowledges and appreciates the cooperation it has had with its neighbours in demining our common borders.

Zambia reaffirmed its commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions through its ratification of that Convention in August 2009 and urges other member States that have not yet done so to do the same in order to stop the serious violation of international humanitarian law associated with the use of these munitions.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my Government's commitment to general and complete disarmament. It is our hope that all clusters of weaponry under negotiation will be treated with the attention they deserve in both the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Ms. Mourabit (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to associate myself with delegations that have already spoken in extending to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation our most sincere congratulations on having assumed the chairmanship of the Committee. Your professional qualities and great diplomatic experience are guarantees that you will be successful as Chairman. We wish also to avail ourselves of this opportunity to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation and its support to you and to the Bureau. Allow us also to pay homage to your predecessor, Ambassador Marco Antonio Suazo Fernández of Honduras. We commend him for all the effort he invested in leading the work of the First Committee at the previous session. I must also thank the members of the Secretariat for their valuable assistance and essential contribution to the fine operations and success of our work.

We begin the sixty-fourth session with the hope that the positive and encouraging signs that we have seen throughout this year will materialize and become reality so as to bring about our goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. We can never overemphasize the need to strengthen the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes. If we wish to move ahead with efficacy against the consequences of unleashing these weapons of mass destruction, if we wish to prevent the risk of seeing terrorists and non-State actors using these armaments, we cannot insist enough on the importance of this regime.

Today, the international community cannot allow itself to ignore the multiple, persistent calls for the full, global and complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction and, more specifically, nuclear weapons. It is clear and evident that the primary responsibility is incumbent upon the nuclear Powers when it comes to freeing the world of the spectre of nuclear weapons. It is up to them to put an end to the updating and development of these weapons.

It is also incumbent upon the entire international community to move ahead in close cooperation in order to counteract the proliferation of these weapons without, of course, undermining the legitimate right of developing countries to use nuclear energy for purely peaceful purposes. Those are the three pillars that form the foundation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and give it its strength and balance and make it the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In that connection, it is also appropriate to re-emphasize the relevancy of the outcome documents of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Unfortunately, their implementation has been insufficient and piecemeal, in particular with respect to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the 13 practical steps adopted in 2000. Step four calls for the creation of an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament and to elaborate a convention on the topic (see NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Part I)). Further, the need to make the NPT universal is imperative and cannot be ignored. In that regard, it is essential that Israel accede to the NPT and place its nuclear installations under the verification regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

As we find ourselves on the eve of the NPT Review Conference, we must all measure the true importance of this crucial event and be aware of the expectations surrounding it, given the multiple challenges that we face and that demand rapid and appropriate responses.

In that respect, the Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the momentum brought about by the new United States Administration in favour of the common objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament. Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), adopted at the Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191), has enshrined the renewed commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to disarmament and non-proliferation. It also enshrined the shared vision of the international community, a vision based on collective responsibility and the need to free our world of all forms of nuclear threat. That resolution also pointed to a return to multilateralism. My country attaches particular importance to this aspect and we think that this will allow for new perspectives on the issue. We hope that this will translate into renewed vigour in the disarmament machinery, and a relaunch of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which has been blocked for more than a decade. Progress in this way would help us to move ahead with the disarmament agenda.

Morocco welcomes the efforts made by the United States of America and Russia to significantly reduce their nuclear arsenals. In that regard, we welcome the decision made by those two countries to sign a successor agreement extending for another period the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), which expires on 5 December 2009.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is highly topical. With nine States remaining to ratify, the Treaty cannot be effectively implemented and its verification regime cannot be strengthened. We place high value on the will of the United States delegation to do more work so that the Senate will ratify the CTBT. We are also aware of the importance of the impact that this ratification would have on other Annex 2 countries and their accession to the Treaty. Morocco together with France chaired the sixth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, on 24 and 25 September 2009, and we will spare no effort, during the two years of its co-presidency, to facilitate the Treaty's entry into force.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to urge those countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty, as well as to work on improving its verification system, which is an oversight system of international scope and which has already proved to be effective on various occasions.

I will not spend more time on this important issue of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, as we will be able to discuss it later in the session during the thematic debate. I should like to turn now to a subject of no less importance, that of small arms and light weapons, which have had considerable impact on the security of our States and populations. The African continent, in which my country finds itself, is one of the continents that is most ravaged by the proliferation of these dangerous weapons. These weapons undermine efforts to keep and build the peace. They encourage crime and terrorism, and present an obstacle to the economic development of our people. The many conflicts that destabilize Africa will not be resolved unless there is a regulation of the trade in and brokering of these weapons. Along these lines, respect for the provisions of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is essential. The international community should mobilize around that effort. We welcome the convening of different meetings at the national and regional level that are aimed at implementing the Programme of Action, which resulted from the decisions taken at the third Biennial Meeting of States of July 2008.

Given the current state of affairs, the work of the First Committee during the sixty-fourth session is of particular importance and calls for close cooperation on a wide array of questions. Whether in the adoption of resolutions or in its deliberations, this universal body will constructively tackle the many matters at stake in multilateral disarmament. This Committee will also provide needed momentum for continued efforts in other relevant bodies. My country, the Kingdom of Morocco, fully endorses the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, and thus will spare no effort to ensure that the results of the work of the First Committee will meet our expectations and reach the desired objectives.

Morocco, because of its convictions and in step with its policies based on respect for international law, committed as it is to the objectives of international peace and security, believes firmly in the principle of

indivisibility of security. Evidence of this principle is growing with the increased interdependence of the modern world, in which threats and challenges have become universal. These threats will only find an effective response through multilateral forums, through strengthened international and regional cooperation, and through respect for the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity as contained in the Charter of the United Nations. Only in the application of these principles can we hope to preserve peace and security and build a better future in which human and economic development come before unrestrained militarization, and are viewed as priorities in government policies.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Benin congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and also congratulates the other members of the Bureau. You will have our full cooperation. Benin associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

In recent months, the world has seen some significant changes occur which augur well for the future negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. We urge the two super-Powers to provide genuine leadership in bringing a new comprehensive impetus to the efforts of the international community to restore and strengthen consensus on the three pillars of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We welcome this clear support for a world free of nuclear weapons. We call for total neutralization of those weapons in the military doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States. That would be a first step towards total elimination, which is still the main goal of nuclear disarmament within the context of general and complete disarmament.

To achieve this, we have to make all possible progress in order to open up the path to institutionalizing what has already been achieved and what we hope to achieve. The Conference on Disarmament has an essential part to play here. We hope for a successful outcome of the United States-Russian negotiations currently under way to conclude a successor agreement to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-I). The prospect of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the United States is a positive development.

We hope that this will happen soon as it would represent one decisive step towards the zero option at the worldwide level. A nuclear posture by which the nuclear Powers would guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States would be another important contribution to the zero option. In this way, one can change the conduct of States and actors in international relations in order to create a situation where any attempt at proliferation, whatever its source, would be discredited.

We hope that the differences that undermine consensus on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be overcome at the forthcoming 2010 Review Conference. We should work to ensure universal accession to the Treaty and to strengthen its authority. Benin believes that we must continue, through multilateral machinery and the International Atomic Energy Agency, to seek the best possible peaceful solutions to the differences of view that exist on the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Benin voices its support now for Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), adopted on 24 September past.

My delegation was honoured to have been in charge of the dialogue between nations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in its capacity as Chairman of Working Group I of the Disarmament Commission over the past three years. The Conference on Disarmament must now implement the programme of work it agreed in May this year and take concrete action in the four envisaged working groups so that even greater progress can be achieved on disarmament.

The international community should be more resolute in taking up the critical issues that arise in connection with conventional weapons. Those problems are extremely disturbing. Excessive accumulation of conventional weapons should be prohibited. There should be a greater sense of morality in arms transfers. We hope that the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty will be able to reach consensus on the matters before it so that we can have a legally binding instrument that establishes healthy and responsible practices so as to eliminate destabilizing arms transfers.

The fundamental principles established at the regional level by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials are a useful point of reference and

may be helpful for work currently under way. We stress the need to seek the most effective and legally binding ways of definitively stopping any arms transfers to non-State actors, which we consider a serious violation of international law, with grave consequences. We reconfirm our full support for the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. We have to mobilize the international community within the context of implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

As will be recalled, my delegation said here one year ago that we must focus on obligations imposed on the Security Council under Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. We welcomed the open debate on 19 November 2008 in the Security Council on the maintenance of international peace and security and regulation of arms (see S/PV.6017). Benin would like to thank Costa Rica for having organized that debate. We should remember that Article 26 provides for the “least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources”. We would reiterate the appeal made by the Security Council to all States to limit their military expenditures and to devote as many resources as possible to economic and social development, in particular to combat poverty and to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

In that light, a clear mandate must be given to the Secretary-General to monitor and analyse military expenditures and their impact on the world economy and international security. This is of crucial importance in the context of efforts to divert the least possible amount of resources to armaments and to reorient the world economy so that one can give attention to the non-military challenges facing the human race. This consideration should be reflected in the draft resolution being circulated on the relationship between disarmament and development and also in connection with the mandate given the Group of Governmental Experts under General Assembly resolution 62/13, which will review the operation and the further development of the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures.

Benin is pleased to have signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions and calls for universal accession to this important disarmament instrument. Benin has worked for implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their

Destruction. We urge all States parties to ensure the success of the second Review Conference which is scheduled to be held from 29 November to 4 December 2009 in Cartagena, Colombia. The international community must continue working to prohibit excessively injurious weapons and should provide humanitarian assistance to victims and help countries to deal with the consequences.

Terrorism is still a serious threat to international peace and security. We reiterate here our strong condemnation of this threat in all its forms and manifestations. Action taken to prevent non-State actors from having access to weapons of mass destruction must be strengthened. We welcome the comprehensive review of implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) which was held from 30 September to 2 October this year. Technical assistance for capacity-building for vulnerable countries is of particular importance.

Finally, my delegation would like to reiterate the appeal made from the rostrum of the General Assembly on 25 September 2009 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Benin for respect for the value of human life (see A/64/PV.8). We urge all States and their nationals to live in national and international harmony, to promote good-neighbourliness, to seek the common weal of the human race, to cooperate, and to work together to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among religions and civilizations for the benefit of international peace and security.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Young (International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC): With the signing of the Convention on Cluster Munitions by 94 States in Oslo last December, international humanitarian law now provides a comprehensive framework for preventing and addressing the terrible effects on civilian populations of weapons that continue to kill and maim long after conflicts have ended. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and Protocol V of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) are

each at a different stage of implementation. Together they address all types of explosive ordnance that pose a threat to civilians. They send a collective message that each party in an armed conflict is responsible for the human consequences of the explosive munitions that they use, even after hostilities end. The ICRC urges all States that have not yet done so to adhere to these three important instruments.

A decade of implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines has improved the lives of populations in all regions of the world by prohibiting the use of these weapons, by ensuring the destruction of stockpiles and by clearing contaminated land. Yet serious challenges have emerged that must be addressed by the Convention's second Review Conference in Cartagena, Colombia, next month. These include: increasing mobilization of national and international resources to fulfil the Convention's commitments; ensuring better respect for clearance and stockpile-destruction deadlines; and increasing the quality and quantity of assistance available to victims.

If faithfully implemented, the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the CCW can save lives by rapidly providing to clearance personnel essential information on all explosive munitions used in a conflict, clearly identifying those responsible for clearance, and providing long-term commitments to victims. The Protocol has been in force since 2006, but is not yet fully implemented in conflict or post-conflict situations. It has yet to address concretely the problem of existing explosive remnants of war. Although work has begun to promote planning for the range of national measures to implement the Protocol, we urge the November meeting of States parties to this instrument to demonstrate that they also intend to address the problem of existing explosive remnants of war in affected States parties. This is essential if the Protocol is to deliver real benefits in contaminated communities in the short and medium term.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is likely to enter into force in 2010. The Convention's adoption in Dublin and signing in Oslo last year marked an historic step to end use of a weapon that is particularly harmful to civilian populations because of its inaccuracy and unreliability, and because of the massive numbers of submunitions they can deliver. In 2010, the first Meeting of States Parties is foreseen. It is appropriate that the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the country most affected by this weapon, has offered to host this

important meeting. States that have adhered to the Convention can do much in advance of the Meeting of States Parties to ensure that the meeting is a success. For example, States can promote adherence by others, adopt implementing legislation and identify resources needed for implementation. Stockpiling States can prepare plans for stockpile destruction, within deadlines, and even begin such processes. Affected States will benefit from well-developed plans for fulfilment of the Convention's clearance and victim-assistance obligations. In this regard, I note that there will be a side event on cluster munitions on Wednesday, 21 October, over the lunch hour, in this room, at which the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the ICRC will make presentations. All delegations are invited to attend and contribute.

We urge all States parties to the CCW to ensure that any protocol on cluster munitions developed in the Convention's framework urgently and effectively addresses the humanitarian problems caused by these weapons on the basis of clear legal rules. Any protocol adopted in this framework should be complementary to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The ICRC strongly supports the elaboration of a comprehensive arms trade treaty that establishes common international standards for responsible trade in conventional weapons and ammunition. Conventional weapons are used to commit the vast majority of violations of international humanitarian law. They cause untold suffering among civilians caught up in armed conflicts and their aftermath. Yet, a vast array of conventional weapons remains easily accessible, even to those who consistently flout this law. The human costs of this phenomenon far surpass those of any weapons whose use is prohibited or specifically regulated by international humanitarian law. We thus consider it urgent that States begin to negotiate an arms trade treaty. Having participated in both sessions of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty this year, the ICRC understands the complexity and sensitivity of many of the related issues. However, we believe that these issues will be best addressed in the context of negotiations.

In August 1945, an ICRC delegate, Dr. Marcel Junod, was among the first foreign witnesses to the catastrophic destruction caused by the use of a nuclear weapon in Hiroshima. His memoir, "The Hiroshima Disaster", records the overwhelming devastation he faced and the unspeakable human suffering he

witnessed. His testimony compels us to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again.

With this in mind, the ICRC can only welcome the fact that the elimination of nuclear weapons is now back on the international agenda. We welcome, in particular, the agreement in the Conference on Disarmament to resume addressing nuclear weapons issues, the recent Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament (see S/PV.6191), and the initiatives taken by a variety of States before next year's Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The ICRC notes that, in 1996, the International Court of Justice confirmed that the principles of distinction and proportionality found in international humanitarian law apply to nuclear weapons. In applying these principles to nuclear weapons, the Court concluded that "the use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law" (A/51/218, annex, p. 36).

Given the unique characteristics of nuclear weapons, the ICRC, as a humanitarian organization, goes beyond a purely legal analysis. Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power, in the unspeakable human suffering they cause, in the impossibility of controlling their effects in space and time, in the risks of escalation and in the threat they pose to the environment, to future generations, indeed, to the survival of humanity. The ICRC appeals to all States to ensure that these weapons are never used again, whatever their views on the legality of such use.

Preventing the use of nuclear weapons means preventing their proliferation and combating the transfer of materials and technology needed to produce them. It requires the fulfilment of existing obligations to pursue negotiations to prohibit and completely eliminate such weapons. The ICRC urges all States to seize with determination and urgency the unique opportunities now available to achieve these noble objectives.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): A delegation has asked to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply. However, we have gone over our allotted time and have less than 10 minutes of interpretation, so we will hear that statement at the end of this afternoon's meeting, in accordance with annex V, section F, paragraph 8 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

(*spoke in English*)

"Delegations should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings have been scheduled for that day and whenever such meetings are devoted to the consideration of the same item."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

That is the case today. Hence, we shall hear statements in exercise of the right of reply at the end of the afternoon meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.