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Sixty-fifth session

First Committee

7th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Miloš Koterec (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 88 to 104 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Cuello Camilo (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Chile on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Rio Group, respectively. My delegation would also like to express its satisfaction to you, Ambassador Koterec, on your election as Chair of this Committee and, through you, congratulate other members of the Bureau. Above all, I would like to thank the anonymous foot soldiers, the members of the Secretariat. We could not do our work without them.

Two decades after the disappearance of the antagonisms that justified the existence of nuclear arsenals, we are still debating their uselessness, the timeliness of their destruction and the fear that they could fall into the hands of non-State actors beyond all control.

For the Dominican Republic, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation will always be essential prerequisites for fulfilling the most important United Nations goal: the establishment of lasting peace throughout the world. We therefore share the more favourable expectations that have arisen in recent months.

It seems as if we might be at the dawn of achievements of historical significance: the New START agreement, signed by the United States and the Russian Federation; the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, D.C.; the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the progress made towards achieving an arms trade treaty; the satisfactory Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; and the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, convened by the Secretary-General.

All of these are undoubtedly concrete achievements that together seem to be leading us on a journey of hope, which we hope will be irreversible. That is because the Dominican Republic is a developing country. If disarmament and non-proliferation can be achieved, that would free up the considerable share of global production that today is wasted on the maintenance of arsenals and the construction of new weapons. And as those resources are freed, the Dominican Republic believes that it would be crucial that they be used, even partially, to address the socio-economic causes that are at the root of the peacekeeping operations that we finance at such a high price at the United Nations, and to complete the transition towards peacebuilding, thus allowing the eventual withdrawal of military contingents. We hope

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that disarmament and non-proliferation end up laying the foundations of a true and lasting security in today's world by freeing the resources needed to finance development.

For the Dominican Republic, an island country with maritime and land borders, the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons remains one of the biggest challenges for arms control and the disarmament of the population. The Dominican Republic shares the view of many countries that top priority should be accorded to the strategies and policies aimed at combating the proliferation of small arms and at establishing legally binding measures that will enable us to control their sale and commercialization. In this context, we appeal for such efforts to be pursued in 2012 in order to achieve an international instrument that will in some way identify precise norms for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons.

I cannot pass up the opportunity to refer to the transport of radioactive waste through the Caribbean Sea. The Dominican Republic continues to believe that the transport of such harmful and dangerous materials is a real threat to our livelihood, our environment and our security. We have the urgent obligation to protect and preserve our ecosystem for future generations, fighting vigorously against all forms of pollution and deterioration of our environment and marine resources. We call once again for the exploration of alternative routes that do not jeopardize the socio-economic and environmental conditions of the countries of the Caribbean Sea.

Mr. Al-Abri (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman is pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that with your experience and skills you will lead the work of this Committee to a successful outcome. I assure you of the full support of my delegation towards the successful work of the Committee. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Furthermore, I wish to commend your predecessor, Mr. José Luis Cancela, the Chair of the Committee at the sixty-fourth session, and his fellow members of the Bureau on the distinguished manner in which they managed the work of the Committee during

their term in office. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive introductory statement and for the role he and his team play in strengthening the mechanisms for disarmament.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We welcome the developments that have occurred in the areas of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation this year and last, and consider them to offer an excellent opportunity to Member States, following the recession and the subsequent revival of optimism. My delegation believes that these developments must be used to achieve real progress in the international disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation agenda through the work of this Committee.

The lack of progress in negotiations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation over the past three decades encouraged some countries to seek to acquire nuclear weapons under the pretext of safeguarding their independence and national security. This can be ascribed to the failure of the major Powers to reach agreements or formulas reflecting the seriousness of their intentions. We consider the call of the United States Administration for a world free of nuclear weapons to be a real opportunity to strongly promote the international disarmament agenda and the beginning of a new era to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and treaties for their reduction and elimination.

Despite the fact that 40 years have passed since the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), some countries have yet to accede to the Treaty, creating an imbalance in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. My country again calls on those countries to demonstrate the necessary political will to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and without delay. At the same time, we reiterate the inalienable right of all States without exception to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, pursuant to the provisions of the Treaty and the international norms and regulations of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Like all Arab countries, the Sultanate of Oman reiterates its call for a zone free of nuclear weapons

and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We believe that the achievement of this goal would foster an atmosphere conducive to cooperation among the countries of the region, curb the arms race and spread a climate of peace and trust that would have a positive impact on the entire world and on international peace and security.

The proposal to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is of great importance and worthy of the international community's support. While my country supports this proposal, we call on Israel to accede to the NPT and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive monitoring system, in accordance with the safeguards agreement of the IAEA. Unfortunately, no progress has been made so far towards implementing the agreement reached at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which included the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East, substantially tied to the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the one hand, and to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction on the other, as well as to Israel's adherence to the NPT.

The success of the NPT Review Conference held in May and its adoption of a Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) are genuine expressions of the political will of the international community to move ahead on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The document emphasizes the Treaty's universality, which is aimed at enabling the whole world to enjoy security, stability and prosperity. This can be achieved, however, only through tangible progress and the implementation of the three fundamental pillars of the Treaty — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

My delegation expresses the hope that the action plan adopted at the Review Conference will lead to progress and accelerate the measures to be taken to achieve nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, thereby contributing to sustainable development and providing the energy resources that developing nations need. We are pleased to support the call of the Secretary-General a few days ago for further efforts to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force by 2012.

My country welcomes the ongoing cooperation among the Islamic Republic of Iran, the IAEA and the five permanent members and Germany on Iran's nuclear profile. We emphasize the importance of resolving this issue in a peaceful and diplomatic manner and hope for a successful outcome to the efforts to reach an agreement that can secure Iran's right to benefit from nuclear technology for peaceful purposes while dispelling all fears and suspicions.

My country also confirms its full commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In this regard, my country long ago enacted a number of laws and regulations to combat that illicit trade.

In conclusion, Oman calls on all Member States to fulfil their obligations and commitments under the various relevant treaties and agreements concerning disarmament, particularly nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and hopes that the deliberations and decision of this Committee, under the Chair's leadership, will help realize the aspirations of the peoples of the world to peace, security and stability.

Mrs. Phommachanh (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of this Committee and to assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the work of this session under your capable leadership.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic fully associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. My delegation will therefore make a few additional remarks from the national perspective of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

My country attaches the highest priority to global nuclear disarmament and the collective determination of United Nations Member States to achieve concrete measures that guarantee international peace and security. Our current session is being held in the context of several positive and encouraging developments in the area of disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons. The signing of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty by the United States and the Russian Federation, leading to a reduction in

the deployment of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons, has given new impetus to multilateral deliberations.

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concluded successfully with the adoption of a Final Document with a 64-step action plan (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). But this is not the outcome originally expected, and every possible effort must be made to vigorously implement all of the document's recommendations. Determined efforts will be required to achieve the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency and its surveillance machinery, and work towards the achievement of the NPT's three pillars of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Only then will it be possible to attain the targets set for the 2015 Review Conference, resulting finally in a convention banning nuclear weapons.

The High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament, convened on 24 September by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, called for greater political will and commitment to overcoming differences and the stalemate that has characterized the Conference thus far. It also urged Member States to strive to make the Conference once again a robust key disarmament entity for taking the international community's disarmament agenda forward. The Conference should resume its 2011 agenda in several key areas simultaneously, first among them being the formulation of a fissile material cut-off treaty as a means to control non-proliferation and nuclear terrorism by non-State actors.

The Conference should also focus on developing a legally binding agreement to curb the arms race in outer space and aim for a peaceful outer space. With such pressing issues ahead of us, it is imperative that the Conference thoroughly reorganize its procedures and expand its membership from 64 members to a number that reflects worldwide engagement on disarmament issues.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another significant instrument that must be brought into force without further delay. The Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York on 23 September, made it clear that a voluntary moratorium is not sufficient and

that only a total ban on nuclear testing can result in total nuclear abolition. It also pointed out that Member States must support the strengthening of the international monitoring and verification system, with all the necessary safeguards and scientific advances.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones has significantly contributed to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and to enhancing regional and global peace and security, but it is essential to have negative security guarantees from nuclear-weapon States. My delegation is committed to working towards the full operation of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. We also encourage nuclear Powers to accede to the Protocol annexed to the Treaty as soon as possible.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as reinforced by the NPT Review Conference in May, would contribute to the achievement of a lasting solution to the question of peace in that region. It is therefore imperative to ensure the successful outcome of the 2012 Conference on that issue. We share the view of other Member States that the entire world should strive gradually to become one large nuclear-weapon-free zone.

There is no doubt that the use of conventional weapons, particularly cluster munitions, has a long-term impact on people's lives and impedes national socio-economic development efforts. As a country very seriously affected by cluster munitions, the Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomed the entry into force, on 1 August, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is thus a great honour for the Lao People's Democratic Republic to host the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Vientiane from 9 to 12 November. That forum will mark an important milestone for the international community in reaffirming its strong determination to address the challenges posed by cluster munitions. Meanwhile, the First Meeting of the States Parties will provide an opportunity to chart a clear vision and adopt appropriate mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention. Once again, I would like to extend my Government's cordial invitation to all United Nations Member States, as well as to international multilateral, non-governmental and civil society organizations, to participate and contribute to the successful outcome of the Conference.

In conclusion, the Lao People's Democratic Republic would like to reiterate that the political will and flexibility of States are essential to making progress to overcome the challenges to achieving the long-cherished goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. Only then can we invest our full efforts and resources in reaching the Millennium Development Goals and in working for human betterment towards realizing our vision of a world free from fear and want. My delegation remains committed to constructive engagement in the work of this Committee to attain the collective aspiration to international peace and security.

Mr. Sipangule (Zambia): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this Committee — a compliment I also extend to other members of the Bureau. I am confident that, under your leadership, the Committee will be able to bring its tasks to a successful conclusion.

The Zambian delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important means of promoting cooperation in global efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. I wish in this regard to inform the Committee that Zambia ratified the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba, and has since deposited its instruments of ratification with the African Union. It is gratifying that Zambia's ratification was one of the last legal requirements for the entry into force of this important Treaty on the African continent. Our ratification further demonstrates our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

We also support the efforts being made in the context of other regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this regard, Zambia looks forward to enhanced cooperation and consultation among the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones through the establishment of concrete measures to implement the good principles and objectives of their respective treaties and contribute to the implementation of the treaty regimes.

President Obama's support for the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has renewed momentum in global arms control and disarmament efforts and has ushered in a new optimism and fresh commitment to disarmament

issues. As a consequence, the Conference on Disarmament met in New York early this year after 12 years of stalemate. Following many years of stagnation, disarmament and non-proliferation issues have started to move in the right direction.

The Zambian Government has always advocated and supports global efforts to address all weapons of mass destruction. It is clear that, with existing weapons technology, no country is safe from the threat or use of those weapons. Chemical and biological weapons pose a threat to developing countries in the absence of technology to mitigate abuse. In this regard, Zambia is committed to the guiding principles of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions and calls for their universal adoption as a way forward towards the total elimination of the risk of either biological or chemical warfare.

The problem of small arms and light weapons continues to be one of great concern to Zambia. This situation has been further exacerbated by the unregulated global trade in small arms and light weapons. As a developing country with limited resources, Zambia's implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has been slow-paced but determined. Therefore, Zambia has always welcomed international, regional and subregional cooperation in this matter. In this regard, Zambia welcomes the assistance of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, which supplied a firearm pin marking machine on 16 December 2009 to Zambia. The firearm pin marking machine will go a long way towards enhancing Zambia's support for the establishment of an international system for the marking of all weapons and ammunitions.

I am pleased to report that the national landmine survey exercise conducted in my country from August 2008 to July 2009 concluded that all mined areas are safe for normal human activity in our country. Zambia's clearing of all mined areas has been done ahead of schedule in the framework of our obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which we ratified in 2001. That accomplishment was possible thanks to the support that Zambia received from bilateral partners, in particular the United States of America. Zambia also expresses its appreciation for the

assistance that other cooperating partners rendered towards this achievement.

Still, unexploded remnants of war remain a serious problem, especially in rural areas bordering neighbouring countries experiencing conflicts and where liberation wars were more intense. In this connection, Zambia welcomes any assistance in the identification and clearing of those affected areas.

Zambia welcomes the ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions by Burkina Faso and Moldova, which enabled the Convention to enter into force. This development is an important one in the global community's efforts towards stopping the serious violation of international humanitarian law associated with the use of cluster munitions.

As a troop-contributing country, Zambia wishes to express its concern about both the decision-making and mandates of peacekeeping missions. The lack of clarity in the mandates often endangers the lives of peacekeepers. The recent incidents in which peacekeepers have been shot and killed by rebels are clear examples of the dangers posed to them. I wish therefore to call upon the Security Council to consider reviewing the mandates of peacekeeping missions as part of a major global approach to disarmament.

In conclusion, my Government believes that the realization of international peace and security can be achieved only through a multilateral framework. In this regard, it is my hope that, under your good leadership, Mr. Chair, the First Committee will be able to contribute to that realization.

Mr. Šćepanović (Montenegro): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the office of Chair of the First Committee and to assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Montenegrin delegation. I am confident that, under your able leadership, this year's session will come to a successful conclusion.

Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union. In addition to this, allow me to stress certain points which are of particular interest to my country.

The year 2010 has been a good one for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We have seen substantial progress on a number of fronts, including the New START agreement, the Nuclear Posture Review of the United States, the Review

Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the beginning of negotiations on an arms trade treaty. In particular, the action plan adopted by this year's NPT Review Conference lays out a path for work towards the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Montenegro warmly welcomes these developments, but we certainly need to maintain and strengthen this momentum in order to come closer to the achievement of our ultimate common goals. To this end, I assure the Committee that Montenegro is fully committed to cooperation and the comprehensive implementation of agreed outcomes and all other relevant mechanisms.

Despite those positive developments, some serious challenges remain. One of the great concerns has been the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, which has not been able to engage in substantive negotiations for almost a decade and a half. It is critical that States members of the Conference begin negotiations immediately on a fissile material cut-off treaty based on the 1995 Shannon mandate, negative security assurances, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We cannot afford more delays and must stay engaged in finding sustainable ways to overcome the deadlock. In this regard, Montenegro commends the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene the High-level Meeting on this matter, and fully supports the recommendations and follow-up steps aimed at moving the multilateral disarmament agenda forward. We are confident that only a multilateral approach to security issues can contribute to the establishment of long-term peace and stability.

Even though Montenegro is the youngest Member of the United Nations, we have taken all the necessary steps to achieve membership in organizations and treaties that share the objective of enhancing international peace and security. As the latest such development, I am proud to report that Montenegro was among the first 30 countries to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, thereby making it possible for it to enter into force and become a legally binding international instrument. Furthermore, I would like to underline that last week, by destroying its remaining 353 cluster bombs, my country concluded the process of destroying its cluster munitions stockpiles, well ahead of the Convention's specified

timeline. That is just further proof of Montenegro's firm dedication to playing an active role in constructively contributing to the overall efforts in global disarmament and non-proliferation.

As for Montenegro's contribution to regional and subregional peace and stability, allow me to mention that Montenegro is currently chairing the 1996 Sub-Regional Arms Control, or so-called Article IV, Agreement. This Agreement, regarded by many as a success story, has ensured that appropriate defence-force levels in the region are maintained, while at same time becoming an essential element in achieving a high level of stability, cooperation, transparency and confidence among the four signatory countries. More than 9,000 items of heavy weaponry have been eliminated so far.

In order to ensure comprehensive and thorough implementation and as a sign of its commitment to regional security and cooperation, in accordance with its foreign policy strategic priorities, Montenegro, *inter alia*, continuously accepts and conducts more inspections than suggested by the country-specific ratio. Montenegro is determined to continue to play a stabilizing role in our region.

It is important to say that further progress in the implementation of the Agreement would significantly help countries on their path to European and Euro-Atlantic integration, the common perspective of the region. As I mentioned earlier, the model approach of the Article IV Agreement has proved to be a critically important factor in strengthening regional and international peace and security. We stand ready to share our experiences on the implementation of this mechanism with a view to its possible usage and application in other similar cases and circumstances.

The Montenegrin delegation looks forward to engaging in future issues on the agenda of the First Committee and is open to constructive cooperation in all fields. I would like to assure the Committee of our support for its efforts towards an effective organization of our forthcoming work and the achievement of tangible results.

Mr. Coelho da Silva (Timor-Leste): At the outset of my remarks, please allow me to join in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I am confident that, with your rich experience and wisdom, the current session will be steered towards success. I assure you of the full

cooperation of my delegation in making this year's session successful.

Timor-Leste is pleased to see the several substantial and positive achievements on disarmament and international security measures and policies realized over the past year. Particularly encouraging are the signing of the New START agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation in order to achieve further cuts in their strategic and tactical nuclear weapons — an important milestone for nuclear security and non-proliferation — and the adoption of a comprehensive and forward-looking Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), including its recommended action plan, at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held in New York in May. In this regard, my delegation wishes to express our appreciation to Ambassador Cabactulan of the Philippines for his tireless efforts in conducting the work of the Review Conference to a successful conclusion.

Timor-Leste likewise welcomes all initiatives from world leaders, including that of the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Barack Obama, who made a landmark speech in Prague in which he expressed the commitment of the United States to seeking the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. Similarly, the United Kingdom issued a major report entitled "The Road to 2010: Addressing the Nuclear Question in the Twenty-First Century", which proposed a three-stage process to achieve greater progress, transparency and control, arms reductions and steps to a world free of nuclear weapons. Last but not least was the adoption of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty in Bangkok on 5 December 2007.

Timor-Leste also associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement and concurs with the statement delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to the effect that the issue of disarmament and security can best be addressed through multilateral diplomacy. The only sustainable method of addressing disarmament, non-proliferation and international security issues is indeed multilateral diplomacy, which has found its operational embodiment at the United Nations, specifically through this Committee.

Timor-Leste recognizes the importance of the work of this Committee of the General Assembly as a fundamental body to discuss current issues related to disarmament and international security. Likewise, it is an important forum to create synergy for finding solutions to these issues, envisaging global peace and security as a sine qua non condition for development and prosperity. We all believe that, in our globalized world, a local threat to local peace and stability automatically becomes an immediate threat to global peace and security, and as such local threats should be handled through multilateral mechanisms that involve other members of the international community. There is also a need to develop a more coherent and effective multilateral response to such challenges, instead of managing them on an ad hoc basis.

Committed to this principle, Timor-Leste — despite having regained its independence only in the past eight years, such that all elements and aspects of the process of State-building are priorities — has been working seriously to channel its efforts in signing, ratifying and implementing the international instruments that regulate disarmament and international security. Specifically, we have ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and we have concluded our comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Timor-Leste is also a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and intends to ratify it in due course. This is a clear testament to the sincere and serious commitment of my country to contributing to what is enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in my country's Constitution in regard to global peace, stability and prosperity.

In conclusion, Timor-Leste recognizes that the achievements to date in the areas of disarmament and international security, while plausible benchmarks, should impel the international community to further increase its efforts to achieve the ultimate goal of global peace and security, the undeniable driving force of prosperity.

Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of your Bureau on your elections. I would also like to offer the full cooperation of the delegation

of Ecuador in ensuring the smooth functioning of the First Committee and to achieve its stated objectives.

The delegation of Ecuador aligns itself with statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Chile on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Rio Group, respectively. In my national capacity, I would also like to make the following statement at the beginning of the First Committee's work during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The political Constitution of Ecuador, adopted in 2008, establishes a series of principles that guide our actions on the international stage. One of these is the declaration of Ecuador as a land of peace. In this sense and as an expression of its full and complete respect for human rights, Ecuador promotes universal peace and disarmament, condemns the development of weapons of mass destruction and prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, trading, importing, transfer, storage and use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. These constitutional postulates are the cornerstone of Ecuador's policy in the area of disarmament; reflect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and light the way towards my country's goal of achieving the aims of the Charter, in particular the maintenance of international peace and security.

Against this background, Ecuador believes that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the United Nations Charter. The mere existence of nuclear weapons in one country represents per se a threat to the integrity of other States, international peace and security, and the lives of innocent human beings.

The only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is total disarmament. Nevertheless, until this goal can be achieved, we believe it necessary, in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, to begin negotiations on a legally binding international instrument that would ensure non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of such weapons by possessor States. In that respect, it is urgent to complement negative security guarantees with the immediate launch of negotiations on a treaty to end the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosives, and

substantive efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

In this context, Ecuador, like other countries, has noted with great concern the current deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that the political will will be found among its members to move us towards a speedy and sustainable solution that will allow that body to demonstrate its relevance in achieving the sensitive and urgent objectives that justify its existence.

Ecuador calls on States that have not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and urges all States to implement the conclusions and recommendations arising from the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT held in May in the context of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Ecuador also champions the legitimate and undeniable right of every State to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

At the same time, we note the need to establish the necessary means of cooperation between States and international organizations in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in the framework provided for this purpose by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the context of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects, Ecuador calls on States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without further delay. That is especially true for those States whose significance and ratification are necessary for the Treaty to enter into force. At the same time, we are pleased to note that, over the past few months, several countries have given signs that they are moving in this direction. The entry into force of the CTBT will help to establish a safer world, as it will restrict the development of nuclear weapons. This is why it is a fundamental part of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We also call on other States to maintain the moratorium on nuclear-weapons testing or other kinds of nuclear explosions.

As a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Ecuador calls on all States to work for the definitive establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones across all regions of the planet.

In the area of conventional weapons, Ecuador shares the aims of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Likewise, we welcome the meeting in July of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. In this respect, Ecuador considers future negotiations on that treaty to be very important, given the serious risks associated with the uncontrolled trafficking in such weapons, both to economic and social development and to the collective security of peoples and States.

Faithful to our commitment to disarmament and universal peace, and in strict respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, Ecuador ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions in May. In this connection, Ecuador, which has never possessed such weapons because of their potentially devastating consequences on civilians, calls on States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention, and offers to the countries of the world its expertise and technical capacity to destroy their arsenals of anti-personnel landmines and to demine contaminated zones.

In this vein and in the context of its objective to transform its borders into areas of effective union and secure integration through its own development projects, as well as those shared with its neighbours, Ecuador attaches particular importance to all humanitarian demining activities carried out along our border with Peru. Ecuador believes that civil society is the main victim of anti-personnel mines, and calls on States that have not yet done so to adhere to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Finally, in addition to temporarily chairing the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), Ecuador has actively participated with States of the region in designing a mechanism for confidence-building and security measures, including concrete implementation measures and guarantees, as well as a

protocol of peace, security and cooperation. These instruments respond to the call to strengthen Latin America as a zone of peace that was issued by the Presidents of the 12 UNASUR Latin American nations in the Special Meeting of the Council of Heads of State and Government in Bariloche, Argentina, last year.

On that basis, I affirm the commitment of the Government of Ecuador to peace, universal disarmament and international security in the framework of full respect for international law, human rights and the United Nations Charter, and reiterate my initial offer to work with the First Committee — so worthily chaired by you, Mr. Chair — to achieve the objectives that the international community so urgently strives for.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Mr. Chair, permit me to join other speakers in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the affairs of the Committee during this sixty-fifth session. Please be assured of the fullest support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your duties.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. I do not intend to repeat what many speakers before me have said, but only seek to make a few comments from my national perspective.

There is no doubt that the year 2010 has thus far witnessed a number of positive and encouraging developments within the international security and disarmament realms. First, in May 2010, the international community came together during the Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and managed to set aside national interests and differences in order to achieve a modicum of consensus, which is contained in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). In our view, the outcome of the Conference and the renewed spirit of cooperation emanating therefrom need to be harnessed by the community of nations to ensure that concrete political action is taken towards our ultimate goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

In June 2010, we also witnessed the successful conclusion of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of

Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The importance of the Meeting cannot be overemphasized by my delegation. Coming from a subregion that has experienced the havoc and mayhem caused by the illicit traffic in and easy availability of small arms and light weapons, we remain convinced that they are indeed the real weapons of mass destruction of our peoples.

For developing countries like Ghana, the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to pose a threat to our national security and socio-economic and political stability, given its close linkage to terrorism, organized crime, drugs and human trafficking, inter alia. The unanimity of purpose demonstrated during the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States should guide us to do what is right for our peoples by ensuring the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action.

Although there is no doubt that the 2001 Programme of Action and regional protocols and conventions adopted thereafter have played a major role in combating the scourge of small arms and light weapons, much work remains to be done. To that end, we look forward to participating actively and constructively in the Open-Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action scheduled to be held in May 2011.

Ghana fully supports the attainment of an arms trade treaty; hence our satisfaction with the outcome of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty held in New York in July. We view a strong and effective arms trade treaty as an essential step in preventing conventional arms transfers to destinations where they are likely be used to commit human rights violations, fuel conflict and undermine national or regional development. Of specific significance to my delegation is the need for the treaty to include a comprehensive system for controlling the cross-border movement of all conventional arms, ammunition and associated equipment, and to cover the import, export, transit and trans-shipment and brokerage of all conventional weapons. Importantly, the arms trade treaty should also close any loopholes that allow conventional weapons to flow from the legitimate to the illicit market.

We also hold the position that the arms trade treaty must incorporate a provision for ensuring that transfers of conventional weapons remain under national control, and that States should guarantee that all international transfers of conventional weapons from their jurisdictions are subject to strict control and licensing, in line with internationally agreed and verifiable standards.

Ghana remains resolute in its commitment to the global effort to attain a world free of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, my delegation welcomes the entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty — the Pelindaba Treaty — and is pleased to report that efforts are continuing at the national level for the Treaty to be ratified as soon as practicable. In the same vein, my delegation wishes to encourage the nuclear-weapon States, particularly the United States and Russia, to take the necessary steps to sign and ratify the respective protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty, and to work with other signatory countries to ensure that the African region remains a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

It is the hope of my delegation that this session of the First Committee will be characterized by free, frank and even-handed negotiations. We as representatives of our respective peoples need to demonstrate that we are genuinely committed to advancing the cause of international peace, security and disarmament for the benefit of posterity.

Mr. Loayza Barea (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to lead the work of the First Committee, and the members of your Bureau. We are certain that your leadership will be successful.

Bolivia associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Chile on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Rio Group, respectively.

With the uncompromising pacifist convictions enshrined in its Political Constitution, the Plurinational State of Bolivia reaffirms its commitment to nuclear disarmament, which is the only path that will lead to lasting peace. We never tire of repeating that nuclear weapons, given their massive power of destruction and long-term effects, are the most inhumane invention ever conceived by humankind. Amassed in arsenals, they now have the capacity to destroy life on this planet several times over. Despite its limited

conclusions, the Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) served as a forum to reiterate once again the urgent need for their total elimination through concrete disarmament and non-proliferation measures and the strengthening of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

My country reiterates its concern that, while even one country still possesses nuclear weapons, there will always be others that will want them. So long as these weapons exist, it is probable that they will one day be used accidentally or intentionally, destroying human life and Mother Earth.

On many occasions, Bolivia has expressed its alarm over the outcome of research carried out by the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which has confirmed that, 20 years after the end of the Cold War, there are still at least 23,000 nuclear warheads with a combined explosive capacity equivalent to 750,000 Hiroshima bombs. The United States and the Russian Federation together have more than 22,000 warheads, while France, the United Kingdom, China, India, Pakistan and Israel have around 1,000 in total. Almost half of all warheads remain in operational mode, and both the United States and Russia have more than 2,000 weapons in a state of high alert, prepared to be deployed immediately within specified time frames following a decision if an attack is verified.

The signing of the New START agreement by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States was a positive step. Now is the time for this willingness to deepen and grow so that we may live in a world free of nuclear weapons. One first concrete step would be a tangible reduction by 2015 of 500 nuclear warheads in the arsenals of both countries. The other nuclear-weapon States should also demonstrate an explicit commitment to halving their nuclear arms over the same period. A worldwide maximum of 1,500 nuclear warheads would represent a reduction of more than 93 per cent in current stocks by 2015.

With such measures, by the end of 2020 we should achieve the goal desired by all humankind of a world completely free of nuclear weapons. This would also quickly lead to a halt to all nuclear testing. Only thus can we ensure the continuing existence of humankind and Mother Earth.

We non-nuclear-weapon States feel the constant threat posed by those that continue to develop and modernize their nuclear arsenals, to the detriment of a global atmosphere of peace and security. In this regard, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in conformity with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, would be a concrete response that the Plurinational State of Bolivia firmly supports. An increase in nuclear-weapon-free zones is also a concrete response to the dissipation of the nuclear shadow.

Securing the future in a constructive way will require encouraging the peaceful use of nuclear energy as one of the three pillars of the NPT, along with disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, the Plurinational State of Bolivia recognizes the inalienable right of States to the use and development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, within the framework of article IV of the Treaty.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is being strengthened by the implementation of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. We have reaped the benefits of the struggle to build a climate of peace and consolidate democracy, with greater transparency and dialogue between the countries of our hemisphere.

In this context, Bolivia remains firm in its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which has served as an international touchstone in the fight against illicit trade in such weapons. Domestically, we are strengthening our national and institutional capacity to address this issue. Regarding the arms trade, my country has participated actively at the regional and subregional levels, in the understanding that irresponsible and poorly regulated arms trading fosters tension, human rights abuse and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

We are also very concerned about the growth in military spending worldwide. We call for peace and are committed to that noble cause; yet this baffling trend to allocate resources to fuel destruction flies in the face of the overriding necessity to devote all our efforts to eliminating poverty and hunger. The Plurinational State of Bolivia is committed to multilateralism and will continue to make every necessary effort to support

mechanisms aimed at freeing the world from the danger of an arms race. We can now ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The twenty-first century can be the century for responding to the cause of peace, the century for responding by eradicating all forms of mass destruction, the century for responding by helping the afflicted and marginalized, and the century for responses that can ensure the well-being of our Mother Earth.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): At the outset, Sir, allow me to join those who spoke before me in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its sixty-fifth session. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. My sincere appreciation goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Canela of Uruguay, who successfully guided the work of the Committee during the sixty-fourth session. Allow me once again to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statements delivered by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Nigerian delegation on behalf of the African Group.

In 2010, as always, issues relating to international security, disarmament, arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have been high on the international agenda. As the challenges of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation continue to constitute the greatest threat to international peace and security, other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological, as well as conventional weapons, also present a great danger to international security. The proliferation of and easy access to small arms and light weapons are problems not only for the maintenance of peace and security, but also for the social and economic development of many countries.

It is for this reason that Eritrea attaches great importance to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and believes that there has been no better instrument for its purpose since it was adopted in 2001. With that in view, my delegation welcomes the successful outcome of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider

the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in July.

My delegation is pleased to reiterate that Eritrea is deeply committed to international efforts aimed at arms control and the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Accordingly, Eritrea is a State party to many of the conventions on arms control. My delegation notes with great interest the positive signs of recent months and hopes that concrete progress will be made towards nuclear disarmament.

It is encouraging to see, among other instances, a renewed determination to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world; the adoption by consensus of a programme of work aimed at revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament; a successful conclusion to the New START agreement; the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference; and the Nuclear Security Summit. My delegation is convinced that the remarkable progress made at the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September, will enable the international community to move forward with renewed determination to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

There is now near universal agreement that only through multilateralism can the international community meet the challenges we face, including traditional and new threats to peace, security and stability. A strengthened, revitalized and reformed United Nations is an indispensable instrument in humankind's quest for disarmament, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and the termination of the threat posed to developing countries by small arms and light weapons, and to bring to an end the scourge of terrorism and similar phenomena. The momentum is building, if not at the pace we could wish for, and the international community must be ready to take advantage of the opportunities that arise to ensure that they bear fruit.

Let me conclude by adding my delegation's voice to the demands that the renewed commitment towards disarmament be pursued in good faith and brought to its logical conclusion so that much of the funds currently allocated to military spending can be redirected to development efforts.

Ms. Chan (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica welcomes your election to lead the First Committee, Sir, and congratulates you and the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that you will guide our work to success. As always, we commit ourselves to contributing constructively to the deliberations.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

As the High Representative for Disarmament, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, made clear in his opening statement, echoed by many delegations, the international system is enjoying unique momentum that seems to underscore the urgent need to reanimate multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy at both the global and regional levels. Among the factors contributing to that momentum, we note the growing support for the Secretary-General's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament, the signing in April of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, and the consensus reached at the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in May.

We also note that, with the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 1 August 2010, one of our most pressing humanitarian needs since the Second World War has been addressed at the global level. In our own region, we are delighted to report that, with the success of Nicaragua's national demining plan, we can declare Mexico and Central America a zone entirely free of anti-personnel landmines.

In addition to those historical advances, many Member States, including Costa Rica, have taken an important conceptual leap in their understanding of peace and security towards a focus on the correlation between security and development. The delegation of Turkey clearly identified that correlation both in the concept paper it presented on 23 May to the Security Council summit on ensuring the Council's effective role in maintaining international peace and security (S/2010/461) and in the presidential statement issued at the end of that meeting (see S/PV.6389). Costa Rica welcomes that presidential statement and particularly appreciates that in it the Council

“underlines the necessity to address the root causes of conflicts, taking into account that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing” (*S/PRST/2010/18, p. 1*).

The recognition of security and peace as multidimensional and interconnected gives a healthy new direction to our discussions in this Committee and other forums engaged in multilateral disarmament diplomacy. Above all, however, it shows that there are a number of obstacles in the road to security and development, among them excessive military expenditure, the illicit arms trade and the existence of nuclear weapons, to name a few. Let me focus my statement on those three problems.

As the first country in the world to become completely demilitarized, Costa Rica does not want to dismiss the legitimate security and defence concerns of other Member States, or the need for many to incur military expenses that are reasonably and proportionately justifiable. What Costa Rica questions are military expenditures that are excessive, especially in the current international economic and financial crisis, during which Governments should ethically rearrange their spending and international cooperation priorities. The estimate of \$1,531 billion made by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute for international military expenditures in 2009 speaks for itself. It represents an increase of 6 per cent in real terms compared to 2008 and a 49 per cent increase from 2000. Seen from another angle, military expenditure represented approximately 2.7 per cent of global gross domestic product in 2009. Moreover, according to the Institute, every region of the world — with the sole exception of the Middle East — increased military spending in 2009 while, despite the crisis, 9 of the 10 countries that spent the most on armaments continued doing so in the same year.

Costa Rica particularly worries that Latin America may be on the verge of an arms race, without any justifiable need for one. In the conviction that international cooperation should not overlook the ethical dimension of public expenditure, Costa Rica continues to remind the Security Council of the need to abide by its obligation under Article 26 of the United Nations Charter “to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources”. In that vein, we also support

the Arms Down! campaign, an initiative of the Religions for Peace network, and its three stated objectives: abolishing nuclear arms, halting the proliferation and misuse of conventional arms, and redirecting 10 per cent of military spending to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The second problem that I wish to address is armed violence, frequently associated with organized crime and drug trafficking. Armed violence kills 2,000 people every day — one person every minute. The United Nations Development Programme estimates that approximately 14 per cent of the gross domestic product of Latin America is spent covering the economic cost of that violence, and the situation is even more alarming in subregions such as Central America.

In Costa Rica’s view, weapons — all weapons — are triggers of violence, and violence is a real obstacle to development. The President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Her Excellency Mrs. Laura Chinchilla, stated our position clearly during the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, when she said:

“The accumulation and transfer of weapons, especially nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, is not only a threat to humanity’s peace and survival; it is also an assault on development” (*A/65/PV.11, p. 20*).

We are encouraged by the experience of the Western European countries and Japan in this matter, because it confirms our conviction that there is a connection between gun-control legislation and low rates of criminal homicide.

In order to create international regulations to control the flow of arms into our countries, Costa Rica is one of seven countries promoting an arms trade treaty as a legally binding instrument to codify existing State obligations into international arms trade legislation. Such a treaty would not only regulate that trade and promote greater transparency; it would also carry a strong human security component, prohibiting the sale of arms to groups or individuals when there is sufficient reason to believe that they will be used to violate human rights or international humanitarian law. It is vital to expedite the negotiating process for this treaty and to enlist the support of all States. My country, like many others, is working to include small

arms and light weapons as a category of conventional weapons.

From my country's perspective, nuclear weapons are a constant, daily threat to human civilization. For that reason, we advocate their complete elimination, universal accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Costa Rica is pleased that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons highlighted the Secretary-General's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament, which proposes, among other things, that parties consider negotiating a framework nuclear-weapons convention.

Costa Rica is proud to have worked with civil society experts to prepare a model nuclear-weapons convention, which it submitted to the Secretary-General in 1997 (A/C.1/52/7) and to the General Assembly in an updated version in 2007 (A/62/650). Costa Rica believes it is time to take the necessary steps to prepare the way for a universal, legally binding convention banning nuclear weapons. We have already done so with biological weapons and chemical weapons; it is time to do the same with nuclear weapons. What all these weapons of mass destruction have in common is that their use violates international humanitarian law.

Disarmament is not an isolated event; it is a process that affects and engages the interests of us all. Despite progress in other areas, we are concerned that the Conference on Disarmament approaches disarmament from an armament point of view and not from a humanitarian point of view, which is the one that should prevail. Consequently, my country believes that the Conference's difficulties lie not in its agenda or its programme of work, but in its militaristic assumptions and approach, and that the situation will not change until the Conference changes its fundamental perspective and working methods. In all areas of disarmament, it is time to dispense with a strictly military model of security and to progress towards an approach based on human development, liberty, tolerance, opportunity and the rule of law.

The Chair: I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, allow me to

join others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

The year 2010 offers some hope in the field of disarmament and arms control, which is to be welcomed, but it may be overshadowed by the threats to security and peace that continue to concern the international community. Policies promoting disarmament and arms control reflect an idea of order that the people of the world desire. For this reason, such policies are crucial to everyone's destiny, and they cannot be limited to one strategy alone. A renewed effort is required at the national, regional and international levels. It needs to include sound values, fresh logical thinking and an integral political vision that understands the link between disarmament and the development of peoples.

As the representative of Costa Rica recalled earlier, according to the information furnished by States, world military expenditure in 2009 was \$1,531 billion, an increase in real terms of 6 per cent and 49 per cent compared to 2008 and 2000, respectively. These are astonishing figures, especially in the light of the United Nations Charter, which seeks to ground security and peace not upon a balance of fear but upon full respect for the rights and the fundamental liberties of individuals and peoples. Furthermore, the United Nations Charter engages States to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

The substantial resources, both human and material, committed to military purposes not only detract from but impede the promotion of authentic human development, the struggle against poverty and the ending of the present international crisis. As the late Pope Paul VI noted in a speech in Bombay in 1964, some of the resources destined for military spending could be used to create a world fund for development programmes, which would be of special benefit to the poorest. This is, unfortunately, a project still waiting to be realized, yet all it requires is States coming together in an expression of their good faith and thus contributing to international peace and security.

With regard to nuclear arms, on the one hand the language of many countries has changed, perhaps indicating a wish to turn the page and go beyond the idea of deterrence as a pillar of international relations;

on the other hand, it appears to be difficult to achieve real change in policy and actions. Strategic reductions in nuclear arsenals are important steps, but they are insufficient if they are not pursued within the context of general and effective disarmament conducted in good faith at the multilateral and international levels.

The Holy See has been making every effort, and encourages States to intensify their own, with a view to helping to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force and to promoting negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty and for a convention to ban the threat and use of nuclear weapons. The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 1995 on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons*, affirmed clearly that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law. This is a fundamental principle in favour of security, peace and the very survival of the human race.

The biological and chemical weapons sectors also remain sources of grave concern. Above all, in the biological field, most troubling is the absence of an international monitoring system for the security and safeguarding of laboratories and the guarantee of the peaceful civil use of biological technology that respects the rights of all humans. On account of this, the mandate given to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly and the Security Council to investigate possible cases of the use by States of biological technology contrary to international law is to be considered in a positive light. This solution closes a gap in the short term, but alone it is not enough without international monitoring.

Another aspect of great importance in the biological, chemical and nuclear fields is the overlap of the civil and military dimensions and of the possible dual use of materials, technology and know-how. A balance must be struck between legitimate military necessity and ethical scientific, medical and commercial interests. It must also be recognized that multilateral export control regimes are only a partial response. It is important therefore to be aware of the real risks and the need to identify limits and measures not only on a voluntary basis or from a commercial point of view, but also in line with the requirements of international peace and security.

In the field of conventional arms, there appear to be developments worthy of our attention and substantive action. On 1 August, the new Convention on Cluster Munitions, by which munitions that cause unacceptable damage to civilians are banned, entered into force. This new international instrument, the fruit of the Oslo process, now offers a rightful response to the numerous victims who have undergone and continue to undergo the tragic effects of this terrible kind of weapon.

For the first time in an instrument on disarmament and arms control, receiving assistance is described as being the right of victims. The Convention obliges States parties to review national policies, structures and mechanisms regarding human rights, development and the care of disabled persons. In the light of this significant development, Pope Benedict XVI underlined how the international community has demonstrated wisdom, farsightedness and skill in pursuing an important result in the field of disarmament and international humanitarian law.

The Holy See encourages the universalization and effective actualization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, as it makes assistance to the victims a priority and common objective. The lack of adherence to this instrument by some States has led some to consider the possibility of adopting an additional ad hoc protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. If motivated by the intention to reinforce the care of victims, this proposal could be taken into consideration. However, the risk that the introduction of a double standard that might render achievements on the humanitarian and military level ineffective must not be underestimated.

A further element of the complex disarmament and arms control agenda relates to preparatory work to the negotiation of an international arms trade treaty. The Holy See supports and is involved in this important process in the clear knowledge that arms are not in any way equivalent to other goods in the marketplace. Their possession, production and trade have deep ethical and social implications, and they must be regulated by paying due attention to specific principles of the moral and legal order.

Finally, institutions and agencies that specialize in disarmament and arms control merit special mention. In recent years, the Conference on Disarmament appears to have gone through a crisis that

made it less productive and practically unable to agree on an agenda of substance. This resulted in a search outside of the Conference on Disarmament and with the involvement of non-governmental organizations for alternative solutions, leading to the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and, more recently, to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Holy See looks favourably upon these experiences, insofar as they lead to reflection upon the reform and reinforcement of international institutions and, more generally, of the forums of multilateral diplomacy. The international community is called on to find original and practical solutions to desired objectives, among which is complete disarmament.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker for this morning.

Programme of work

The Chair: In connection with the preparation for the second stage of the Committee's work, namely, the structured discussion of specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions, an indicative timetable was circulated to the Committee at the 1 October organizational meeting in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1. It is also available at the QuickFirst web portal.

This segment will cover the period from Wednesday, 13 October, to Monday, 25 October, and a total of 10 meetings have been allocated for that purpose. In the event that the Committee should complete its general debate ahead of schedule, that is, before the end of Tuesday, 12 October, I propose that we begin the thematic segment on 12 October with the discussion on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past session and the presentation of reports.

In preparing this indicative timetable, I largely followed the practice already established by the Committee during its previous sessions. As foreseen in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1, we will begin the thematic segment of our work by considering the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past session and the presentation of reports by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. This exchange will be held in informal mode. In case we conclude our general debate ahead of time on Tuesday afternoon, we could listen to that report in the latter part of Tuesday afternoon.

As for the remainder of the thematic segment, I would like to propose that we carry out our discussions for the second segment of the Committee's work in the following manner.

First, during the first week of the thematic discussions, the bulk of the meeting in the afternoon of Wednesday, 13 October, will be dedicated to an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field. As indicated in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1, we will have as guest speakers the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. In case there is time available after the exchange on 13 October, we may begin listening to statements under the nuclear weapons cluster in the remaining part of the meeting on Wednesday afternoon.

The meetings on the afternoons of Thursday and Friday, 14 and 15 October, will be used to hear statements on the nuclear weapons cluster.

The meeting on the morning of Monday, 18 October, will be devoted to disarmament machinery. There will be a panel discussion involving the President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Chairman of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. This exchange will also be held in informal mode.

At the meeting on the afternoon of Monday, 18 October, we will discuss conventional weapons. I would like to remind delegations that we will have two meetings back to back on that day.

In the morning of Tuesday, 19 October, the Committee will continue discussion on conventional weapons.

On the morning of Wednesday, 20 October, we will discuss other disarmament measures and international security. At that meeting, there will be an

introduction by the Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

On the morning of Thursday, 21 October, we will take up the topic of regional disarmament and security. We will hold an interactive discussion with a panel comprising the Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Directors of the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

On Friday, 22 October, in the afternoon, we will take up the topics of other weapons of mass destruction and outer space (disarmament aspects).

On the afternoon of Monday, 25 October, a number of non-governmental organizations will make presentations to the Committee.

As seen in the note at the bottom of document A/C.1/65/CRP.1, it is my intention to divide the meetings into two parts so that the Committee can fully utilize the time allocated to it by engaging in productive and interactive discussions, as well as introducing all the draft resolutions in an efficient and timely manner. The first part will start with a panel or guest speaker for some meetings, as indicated in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1. After the opening statements, I will briefly suspend the formal meeting so

that we can have an informal question-and-answer session with the panel or guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall resume the formal meeting and proceed to the second part, consisting of interventions by delegations on the specific subject under consideration, as well as the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions.

As mentioned earlier, in accordance with past practice, the discussion on the follow-up of resolutions adopted by the Committee at its past session, the presentation of reports by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the exchanges on regional disarmament and security and disarmament machinery, as well as the meeting with non-governmental organizations, will be in informal mode.

I would also like to mention that, at the last meeting of this second segment of our work, on Monday, 25 October, delegations will still be able to introduce remaining draft resolutions, if necessary. I would strongly urge all delegations to do their utmost to introduce their draft resolutions during the upcoming second phase of the Committee's work.

May I take it that the proposed indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, as contained in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1, is acceptable to all delegations?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.