



# General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

## First Committee

**18<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Friday, 21 October 2011, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen ..... (Finland)

*In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Borland (Belize),  
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

### Organization of work

**The Acting Chair:** The President of the General Assembly is scheduled to address the Committee at approximately 10.45 a.m. The panellists for the next agenda item, on disarmament machinery, are scheduled to leave New York this evening. Therefore, I propose that after the presentation by the President of the General Assembly we proceed to consideration of the last panel, and when we meet again, on Monday, return to the regional disarmament and security agenda item and continue with the statements of Member States.

*It was so decided.*

### Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

#### Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Acting Chair:** The Committee will now continue the panel discussion on cluster 6, "Regional disarmament and security", which was suspended yesterday in order to accommodate the certificate presentation ceremony for the new graduates of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme.

Since our panellists addressed the Committee yesterday, I shall suspend the meeting to afford the Committee the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with them through an informal question-and-answer session.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.15 a.m. and resumed at 10.45 a.m.*

*Mr. Viinanen (Finland), Chair, took the Chair.*

### Statement by the President of the General Assembly

**The Chair:** I warmly welcome the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, who is here today to share some thoughts with us on disarmament and international security issues and development matters.

The President of the General Assembly is an accomplished diplomat who has made remarkable contributions to the global efforts to advance the multilateral agenda in many critical areas, including the question of international peace and security.

It is especially notable in that regard that while representing his country, Qatar, on the Security Council in 2006 and 2007 the President, during his presidency of the Council in December 2006, presided over the Council's deliberations on a range of complex peace and security issues. One of the most notable was the Council's action regarding international cooperation to combat terrorism.

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The President's interest in being with us today is an inspiring gesture, which should further energize our deliberations.

Your Excellency, it is an honour and privilege to welcome you to this meeting of the First Committee, and I invite you to address the Committee.

**Mr. Al-Nasser**, President of the General Assembly (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to join the Committee today.

I congratulate you, Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen, Permanent Representative of Finland, on your exemplary leadership of the work of the First Committee, which is studying important items on its agenda.

It is not traditional for the President of the General Assembly to address the First Committee. Therefore, my presence today is dictated not by tradition, but rather by my personal interest in conveying to the Committee a message of appreciation and strong encouragement.

As the Committee approaches the stage of adopting draft resolutions, it seemed to me to be important to reiterate my full support for your work. It is my strong hope that you will manage, in a spirit of understanding, cooperation and compromise, not only to achieve positive results, but also to make progress in advancing the cause of disarmament and arms control at all levels.

As I said at the opening of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, we have an important year ahead of us on the issue of disarmament. Nuclear disarmament, in particular, remains a prominent and ever-more pressing priority for the United Nations.

Next year has a notably busy agenda of disarmament and arms control meetings, including the arms trade treaty conference, the Review Conference of the Programme of Action against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There are several other meetings of similar importance.

I assure the Committee that I will hold relevant consultations with all interested parties, and make every effort for the realization of the long-awaited, tangible progress in these areas.

Revitalizing the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, will be a vital issue on our agenda. Since many experts from Geneva traditionally take part in the First Committee's

work, I hope that their participation can contribute to a better mutual understanding of the complementary nature of the work in Geneva and New York, and help to improve the overall functioning of the disarmament machinery.

I therefore call upon all members of the Committee to continue working constructively, looking to the future, in the remaining phases of the Committee's work. I hope that you will aim at consensus-building to the maximum possible extent. I look forward to seeing progress in your work and wish you every success in your deliberations.

Finally, as President of the General Assembly, I am fully committed, as is my entire team, to working with all members of the Committee to move forward the Assembly's agenda. I acknowledge the Committee's important role, and express my thanks for its contribution to the overall success of the General Assembly's work.

**The Chair:** On behalf of the Committee, I again thank the President of the General Assembly for being with us today and for his insightful statement. I know that you are very busy, Sir, as the General Assembly is now electing new members to the Security Council and you have to return to that meeting. We appreciate very much your taking time to address us, which is very valuable for us.

#### **Agenda items 87 to 106 (*continued*)**

#### **Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items**

**The Chair:** We shall now continue with the panel on regional disarmament issues, in an informal setting.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.*

*Ms. Borland (Belize), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

**The Acting Chair:** In accordance with the decision we took earlier this morning, we shall now take up cluster 7, disarmament machinery, beginning with the panel discussion with the President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, the Chairman of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

I first give the floor to the President of the Conference on Disarmament.

**Mr. Reyes Rodriguez**, President of the Conference on Disarmament (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I commend you, Madam Vice-Chair, and the Ambassador of Finland, the Committee's Chair, whom we are pleased to see carrying out very important functions. I was able to meet with the Ambassador in Geneva, and I reiterate our support for his conduct of the Committee's work and our support for the whole Bureau.

In introducing this topic, I should like to mention some background as well as to give some brief thoughts on the current state of affairs in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference is the only multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in the United Nations disarmament machinery. It was established by the General Assembly in its first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Since then we have seen the negotiation of international disarmament and arms control agreements, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques; the seabed Treaties; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Conference has particularly important ties with the United Nations. It sets its own agenda and rules of procedure, bearing in mind recommendations by the General Assembly, proposals made by the member States of the Conference, and, of course, decisions of the Conference itself. It reports to the General Assembly annually, or more frequently as appropriate, as we are doing today.

The Conference's meetings are held at the United Nations facilities and serviced by staff members from the Geneva branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Its Secretary-General is directly appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General, in consultation with the members of the Conference, and acts as his personal representative. I would like to make special mention of Mr. Tokayev and Mr. Jarmo Sareva, who are with us today.

Since its establishment the Conference on Disarmament has carried out several tasks. When it has agreement on a mandate for negotiations, the Conference has engaged in negotiating processes, attaining in the past, as I have already indicated, satisfactory results.

In the absence of a negotiating mandate, the Conference holds exploratory discussions preceding negotiations, including dialogue on possible mandates and their scope, clarifying objectives and reviewing legal and security aspects on a range of disarmament issues. At present they include matters such as nuclear disarmament in general, fissile material, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. These matters were finally identified after great efforts.

Because of a lack of agreement on how to address those issues, the Conference had to reconsider, but it has not been able to make substantive progress beyond that level of commitment, since the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty ended. As a result, in recent informal consultations a group of States indicated their disagreement over the impasse that has characterized the Conference's work in recent years; certain States have hinted that the time has come to set aside the Conference on Disarmament and turn to other negotiating processes.

In our view, replacing the Conference by selective, improvised ad hoc arrangements outside the United Nations framework, managed by a smaller number of countries, would be a dangerous step backwards. We firmly believe that the Conference on Disarmament is in a position to negotiate simultaneously a treaty eliminating and prohibiting nuclear weapons, a treaty banning an arms race in outer space, a treaty providing effective negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, such as Cuba, and a treaty banning the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

During its 2011 session the Conference held a series of plenary and informal meetings to discuss all substantive agenda items, in accordance with the schedule adopted during China's presidency, in this case Ambassador Wang. In addition, the Conference this year held various sessions attended by Foreign Ministers of several countries and regions, most of whom conveyed their support for this forum. Many expressed their concern over the current situation.

Various Conference meetings were likewise attended by senior officials of the United Nations system, such as the Secretary-General, and other senior officials of the international disarmament system, including the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In general, in the debates resulting from those visits and in the succeeding sessions, there was a self-critical analysis focused on the Conference's current situation and its root causes.

During the Conference's general debate, delegations affirmed or further elaborated their positions on the main agenda items, which were duly recorded in the official documents of the session, and are available in the Conference's official records. On 1 September, the President of the Conference addressed a letter to the Conference on those items, transmitting the oral reports of the five coordinators, prepared in their personal capacity and finalized by the President, on their work in the informal meetings on the items.

Also during the 2011 sessions comprehensive discussions were held on what we considered to be a clear question of international disarmament. Delegations reaffirmed or further elaborated their positions on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and on nuclear disarmament, as well as on the prevention of nuclear war. In this regard, 12 papers were submitted to the Conference, testifying to the priority given to this topic in the international disarmament agenda.

Two papers on preventing an arms race in outer space were submitted. The first related to the summary report on the tenth annual conference on space security, organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in April. The second, presented by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 21, addressed the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Group referred to effective international arrangements to guarantee non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons. The Conference considered agenda items on weapons of mass destruction, including radiological weapons, a comprehensive disarmament programme and transparency in armaments.

With regard to improving and making more effective the Conference's functioning, member States expressed their views on the 24 September 2010 High-level

meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, and on its follow-up debates. They also discussed, in informal meetings on 9 and 14 June, the situation of the Conference and ways to strengthen it.

On 30 June, in an informal plenary meeting with the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, members of the Conference discussed revitalizing its work and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. On this topic, at the plenary meeting on 4 August, under the presidency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, member and observer delegations of the Conference expressed their views on the debate in the General Assembly held on from 27 to 29 July, as a follow-up to the 2010 High-level Meeting.

Aware of the growing importance of multilateral disarmament and of building on the Conference's focused efforts to establish a programme of work for the 2011 sessions, and with a view to early commencement of substantive work during its 2012 session, the Conference requested the current President, Cuba, and the incoming President, Ecuador, to conduct consultations during the intersessional period and, if possible, make recommendations, taking into account all relevant proposals, including those submitted as documents of the Conference, views presented and discussions held, and to endeavour to keep the membership of the Conference informed, as appropriate, of their consultations.

In summary, in 2011 the Conference followed two major tracks of particular importance. First, it continued to review its agenda items, on which a comprehensive discussion took place, without agreeing on a mandate to negotiate any of the main agenda items. I reiterate: there is no mandate for negotiating any substantive matter on the agenda. Secondly, it thoroughly discussed the Conference's current situation, which clearly showed different political views concerning its root causes as well as ways to solve the current situation.

We believe that members and observers are convinced that we must find a formula that allows us to resolve the current situation. This is only possible if all members show flexibility — we are not seeking to cast blame on any State in particular — and we all make concessions. This is essential if we are to move forward.



**The Acting Chair:** I give the floor to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission.

**Mr. Al-Bayati,** Chairman of the Disarmament Commission: There is no doubt that the United Nations Disarmament Commission plays an extremely important role in the disarmament triad, along with the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee, as a specialized body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of common recommendations on those issues.

I would like to highlight the fact that there have been positive steps on the international scene recently in the field of nuclear arms reductions. However, the continued retention of the bulk of the nuclear arsenal and of the means of delivery still causes concern. Therefore, there is a need to have a binding international instrument offering non-nuclear-weapon countries assurances against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons, and to identify mechanisms to achieve that goal.

Negative security assurances, considered a key element in achieving security, are a legitimate demand by non-nuclear-weapon States, as the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons will lead to more confidence between States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Such assurances also provide incentives for States outside the Treaty to work to become parties, as confirmed by the International Court of Justice advisory opinion issued on 8 July 1996.

We support the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, adopted in 2009, as a way to move forward with the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. That requires a redoubling of efforts to promote the Conference's work regarding the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

I welcome the significant progress represented by the appointment of Mr. Jaakko Laajava, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, as facilitator of the 2012 Conference to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and the selection of Finland as the host country, an important step towards

the implementation of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), Annex).

I will limit my remarks about the current situation of the Disarmament Commission to my tenure as Chairman during 2011.

The 2011 session was unique in terms of substantive items discussed and the span of discussion. The Commission's substantive agenda for the cycle 2009-2011 was the product of a carefully negotiated compromise, involving a number of regional groups, which was reached in 2009.

As the Committee is aware, it was decided that the Commission would have before it two substantive items: first, recommendation for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; and, secondly, elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. The item on those elements was mandated by resolution 61/67, which specifically directed the Disarmament Commission, at its 2009 substantive session, to prepare elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade and to submit them for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

Therefore, a third item, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", was supposed to be taken up after the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade had been prepared, preferably in 2010, and in any case no later than 2011. Unfortunately, the work on elements of a draft declaration was not finished before the sixty-fourth session, as originally envisaged by resolution 61/67.

Working Group II tried very hard to reach common ground in 2009 and 2010. However, consensus was elusive, and by the start of this year, when I assumed the chairmanship, we were faced with a situation in which having three substantive agenda items in the last year of the Commission's cycle was unavoidable.

It is not difficult to imagine that in practical terms such a situation resulted in conflict between the work schedules of the three Working Groups. Naturally, each faced diminished resources and had less time available to complete substantive debates and achieve meaningful results.

That unique situation in 2011 was aggravated by late selection of the Chair of one of the Working Groups and change of the Chairs of another two Working Groups. Despite the noble and persistent efforts of the Chairs of the three Working Groups, the Commission was unable to reach a consensus on each of the substantive items at the end of the cycle. Despite all of that, the Working Groups held useful discussions that opened horizons to a consensus in the Disarmament Commission's future work.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all members of the Commission's Bureau, and particularly the Chairs of the Working Groups, Mr. Knut Langeland of Norway, Mr. Kayode Laro of Nigeria, and Ms. Liseth Ancidey of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for their hard work in those difficult circumstances.

The Commission produced no outcome at the end of the cycle in 2011. However, it would be wrong to assume that all that time was wasted. Despite the inability to reach a consensus on all the agenda items, the Commission accumulated very useful material, which could form the basis for any future discussions. In some of the Working Groups the members of the Commission were very close to bridging their differences. However, there was no time left to conduct a final round of negotiations to achieve meaningful results.

Analysis of the situation in the final year of the Commission's three-year cycle gives us enough material to learn lessons and make some basic recommendations.

First, the late selection of the Commission's Bureau by the regional groups deprived the Chair and the Bureau of valuable time to conduct preliminary pre-session consultations on methods of work and approaches to discussing substantive items. The first recommendation is to have organizational meetings to select the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups at least four months before the substantive session, to give them time to conduct pre-session work. Incidentally, that option is based on decision 52/492, which states, *inter alia*, that the regional groups should be urged to make possible the early election of the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies, preferably at the organizational session of the Commission in the autumn, so as to allow them to conduct intersessional consultation on their respective subjects.

Secondly, as experience of 2011 has demonstrated, the Commission cannot afford to have three substantive items simultaneously. Although the procedures of

the Commission, specifically decision 52/492, do not prevent having three items on the agenda, there is a consensus among members that such an arrangement proved impractical in a real-life situation. Three items require the three Working Groups to share diminished resources and reduced time allocated to them to conduct meaningful work. Therefore, my second recommendation is to have just two traditional items, on nuclear and conventional disarmament, on the Commission's agenda. If having a third item is unavoidable, its consideration should be strictly limited to one year.

Thirdly, a changing of the guard in the Working Groups, especially in the last year of the cycle, did not contribute to continuity of the discussion. Despite the best efforts of past Chairs and the three current Chairs of the Working Groups, there was some unavoidable lag in bringing the Groups' work to the required intensity and speed. Therefore, my last recommendation is to secure a full three-year commitment on the part of the Chairs of the Working Groups.

As the Committee is aware, the Chairs of the Working Groups are selected for a three-year cycle. Such a long-term commitment will ensure the smooth operation of the Working Groups throughout the cycle. Decision 52/492 says, *inter alia*, that it is desirable that continuity of chairmanship of the subsidiary bodies be maintained throughout the consideration of substantive items.

Finally, in the light of what I have said, I take this opportunity to formally introduce the draft resolution (A/C.1/66/L.20) on the report of the Disarmament Commission. I commend all members of the extended Bureau of the 2011 Disarmament Commission for giving me all the necessary support and their blessing for the draft resolution.

While the draft resolution closely follows previous years' text, in paragraph 7 it

"Recommends that the Disarmament Commission intensify consultations with a view to reaching agreement on the items on its agenda, in accordance with decision 52/492, before the start of its substantive session of 2012".

As in previous years, we expect the draft resolution to be adopted by consensus.

With this short introduction, I conclude my presentation on the Disarmament Commission.

**The Acting Chair:** I now call on the Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

**Ms. Pellicer,** Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I congratulate the Chair on his election to preside over the Committee.

Allow me to express my greetings on behalf of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, which I had the honour of chairing during its fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions this year.

As the Committee knows, in the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, held in September 2010, the Secretary-General said that he would ask the Advisory Board to conduct a comprehensive review of the issues raised at the Meeting, including the possible establishment of a high-level group of eminent persons to conduct a special examination of the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. In keeping with its policy, the Board considered this matter as a substantive item in its programme of work during its two sessions.

The Board is an independent body, composed of specialists in international issues with special attention to problems of disarmament and international security. Academics, diplomats and members of non-governmental organizations, acting in their personal capacity, participate in its work. It is a varied group of participants whose views do not always coincide. On the contrary, they reflect the diversity of views and interests that dominate debates on the issue of disarmament.

The work this year, trying to identify the reasons for the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament, led to very different views and approaches. For some, the situation is not exceptional, because it depends on an international environment that at present is not favourable. For others, though there is some truth in the earlier assessment, the time that the Conference has been unable to fulfil its functions as a negotiating body is very long, and they seek ways to ensure the resumption of negotiations on the four core issues on the agenda.

At its fifty-sixth session, held in Geneva, the Board had the opportunity to participate in an informal meeting convened by the Conference on Disarmament to have a dialogue with the Board. Thus, it was possible

to see up close some of the problems afflicting that body. The experience was very useful, enabling members of the Board to reorient their views. This can be seen in the circulated report, in which there are noticeable differences of emphasis between the opinions expressed at the February meeting and those expressed at the June meeting.

It is not possible here to summarize all the opinions expressed, most of which are in the Board's report already circulated, but I would like to highlight three issues frequently raised in discussions.

The first is the widespread sense of frustration over the stalemate in the work of the Conference. Fifteen years is a long time, and that paralysis is contributing to the loss of credibility of, and trust in, the United Nations disarmament machinery. If no action is taken in the immediate future there will be an increased danger of the United Nations becoming an actor that has lost legitimacy in the disarmament processes.

Members of the Board believe that the current paralysis can be attributed to both political and procedural problems. From the political standpoint, the main obstacle is existing problems in those areas which are currently the most significant threats to international security, whose solution requires greater political will on the part of the various States concerned.

On the other hand, the working methods of the Conference — including the need for consensus on procedural issues, the practice of subordinating some issues to others, the annual adoption of a programme of work, and the short time given to the presidency — contribute to a paralysis that will continue if just one is altered.

Secondly, the members of the Board reflected extensively on the appropriate role of the General Assembly at this stage. They felt that the Assembly should act more decisively to push the Conference out of its lethargy. Given the difficulties of reforming the Conference from within, some Board members suggested that the Conference be reformed by external processes, but always within the United Nations framework — that is, the General Assembly.

Some members proposed the use of the General Assembly to facilitate the negotiations on a treaty banning production of fissile materials.

In addition, several Board members stressed that the decision of the Conference in document CD/1864 could be used as a basis for future negotiations. The

General Assembly could create a negotiating body. They warned, however, that obtaining results required, on the one hand, the strong adhesion of the Secretary-General to the negotiating process and, on the other, the broadest possible participation of all States committed to advancing disarmament, as well as of civil society organizations.

Thirdly, the Board members differed in their views on the establishment of a high-level group of eminent persons. For some it could be a valuable instrument, but for others it would duplicate efforts and not necessarily lead to the revitalization of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

However, all Board members expressed their willingness to fully support the work of the group if the Secretary-General decided to establish it. In this regard, there was an insistent call for the establishment of a close institutional link between the group of eminent persons and the Board.

After finishing its deliberations, the Board unanimously decided to submit three recommendations to the Secretary-General.

The first concerns the importance of maintaining their commitment and their personal efforts to promote the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, advancing its work on all the issues on its agenda.

The second relates to the mandate of the group of eminent persons, if it is established. The Board recommends that the group urgently make recommendations on how to revitalize the whole of the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, the third recommendation is a request that the Secretary-General continue encouraging civil society to combine its efforts to overcome the prolonged stagnation of the Conference on Disarmament and thus contribute to progress towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I would not want to end without recalling that the Advisory Board, in its role as Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, has praised the Institute's research activities and urgently called for greater importance to be given to adequate funding of the Institute. Funding has been weakening in recent years. Disarmament research is a key piece of the puzzle if this process is to move ahead on a solid basis.

**The Acting Chair:** I give the floor to the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

**Ms. Hitchens,** Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research: In my statement this year, I plan to confine myself to two disarmament machinery matters: first, the Conference on Disarmament; and, secondly, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) itself, which I like to think of as oiling that machinery.

From where I sit in the Conference on Disarmament as the Director of a United Nations institute, one that enjoys the role of being an independent observer of the Conference's sessions, it is difficult not to be deeply affected on a number of levels by the paralysis of the Conference.

In institutional terms, the Conference on Disarmament has long enjoyed the role of flagship of the disarmament community in Geneva. It has provided the *raison d'être* for Member States to locate their disarmament experts in Geneva, to negotiate in the Conference as well as to serve the annual needs of the Biological Weapons Convention, along with a steadily increasing range of treaties on international humanitarian law and, once in its five-yearly review cycle, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

If the presence of a fully functioning Conference on Disarmament in Geneva provides a hub for disarmament experts from Governments, so too does it for representatives of civil society. Any erosion of the standing of the Conference on Disarmament risks also eroding the knowledge and skills base that serves and supports disarmament writ large.

Incidentally, the treaties to which I have just referred all undergo regular review, generally every five years. The Conference on Disarmament, however, is subject to no review of any kind. The high-level meetings called by the United Nations Secretary-General partially redress that anomaly, but they are not regular events.

At another level, there are a number of aspects about the prolongation of the situation in the Conference on Disarmament that I find disquieting. Many of them have been the subject of consideration by UNIDIR's Board of Trustees — the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters — so I will be brief.

How do we confront the paradox that the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating body but for well over



a decade has not found any lasting way to negotiate the issues that divide its members? The breakthrough in 2009 was all too short-lived.

Why in this erstwhile successful forum are members unwilling even to enter into a process to negotiate on the questions of substance that divide them? Given that the adoption of the product of any negotiation would require consensus, why has it been necessary on several occasions in the Conference's current unproductive phase to block even the commencement of negotiations? Surely, the consensus rule offers reassurance that decisions of the Conference during or at the end of negotiations — for example, the adoption of a negotiated text — will require the absence of an objection by any member.

Is it a responsible use of multilateral diplomacy to deny so many States the opportunity to contest opposing views and assert their own national security interests? Not to participate in a negotiation unless its terms are framed in a certain way is one thing, but to prevent every other member from participating runs counter to international discourse, let alone multilateral diplomacy.

Without entering into the vexed question of "ripeness" for negotiation of the Conference on Disarmament core issues, I must say that the phenomenon of linkage and the absence of a process for setting the relative priority to be accorded to those four issues are troubling. For many members, fissile material negotiations are the priority. For many others, the preferred negotiations are on nuclear disarmament in general. These insistences serve only to cancel each other out.

The same is true in relation to negative security assurances and preventing an arms race in outer space. In the absence of an agreed order of priority, it may not be feasible, especially for small missions, to try to deal with all core issues simultaneously. But it is mystifying that even the allocation of time individually to each issue for the purposes of agreeing the necessary mandates, one by one, has not been thought worth trying by the Conference.

If the time is seen by a member or members as premature for the commencement of negotiations, what alternatives are acceptable to them that fall short of gridlock? What confidence-building measures, for example, could they propose? What pre-negotiation activities could they envisage? How can some form

of dialogue, short of unproductive repetition of diametrically-opposed views, be initiated? In short, in the absence of constructive engagement on ways forward, is there not a risk that the loss of standing of the Conference on Disarmament will also have broader consequences for the disarmament community in Geneva and for multilateral diplomacy in general?

Considering that, I feel that it is time to start looking at creative solutions, and I am happy that in that respect during the current session several draft resolutions — such as those proposed by Austria, Mexico and Norway, by the Netherlands, South Africa and Switzerland, and by Canada — could be considered.

UNIDIR has been pleased, with the support of a number of Conference on Disarmament members and observers, to hold seminars and publish papers on problems and possible solutions for the Conference, and I draw attention to our website: [www.unidir.org](http://www.unidir.org).

This leads me to the second and final segment of my statement — some insights into UNIDIR's mandate and activities, and its pressures.

Let me remind the Committee of UNIDIR's mission. The Institute's purpose is to propose new ideas for security thinking, in support of a key rationale of the United Nations: the belief that peace and security for all peoples is possible only through disarmament. Relevant to my earlier comments about the Conference on Disarmament, part of the Institute's mandate is

"Assisting ongoing negotiations on disarmament and continuing efforts to ensure greater international security at a progressively lower level of armaments, particularly nuclear armaments, by means of objective and factual studies and analyses". (*UNIDIR Statute, article II, para 2 (c)*)

UNIDIR's action-oriented research programme works to bring together perspectives on national, regional and international security, disarmament and development, with a fundamental focus on human security. Putting people first in global security debates is at the core of all UNIDIR efforts to contribute to the establishment of lasting peace.

The Institute's work programme is reviewed annually and is subject to approval by the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, which also functions as UNIDIR's Board of Trustees.

How is UNIDIR supported? As an autonomous research body whose independence is a fundamental aspect of its *raison d'être*, the Institute is entirely separate from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. To discharge its mandate, the Institute is instead dependent almost exclusively on voluntary contributions from Governments and international organizations and foundations. A subvention contributed from the regular budget of the United Nations is only sufficient to secure the post of the Director of the Institute.

Therefore, the infrastructure of UNIDIR is highly streamlined. The Institute comprises only eight full-time equivalent core staff, including editorial personnel, who produce the quarterly journal *Disarmament Forum*, in English and in French, and UNIDIR books and publications. The number of research staff is dependent on the needs of projects for which UNIDIR has been funded by donors; that is, researchers are recruited as experts on contract for the purposes of projects in hand, and are not permanent staff members of the Institute.

The Advisory Board has recommended to the United Nations Secretary-General that the subvention to UNIDIR be increased to cover a larger portion of institutional costs. Meanwhile, however, the Institute remains very heavily dependent on voluntary contributions. Despite the tenuous funding base on which it operates, the Institute has established a high level of productivity and a strong reputation. As I think Geneva-based representatives here will attest, the Institute is not an ivory tower body.

In adverse global economic circumstances, it is natural that the highest standards of efficiency will be expected of voluntarily funded organizations. UNIDIR strives constantly to meet those standards. It does not expect to be entirely funded from the United Nations regular budget. Indeed, its Statute envisages that voluntary contributions from States and private organizations will form its principal source of financing. And, subject to protecting the independence of the Institute and its research, a certain reliance on ad hoc funding is healthy in engendering high standards of all outputs.

Deeper, wider and longer-term bases for funding the Institute are, however, crucial for its sustainability and for underpinning the quality of its research and publications.

Let me make the following point. The Institute's subvention — the contribution from the United Nations

regular budget towards the costs of maintaining the Institute — for the past few years has barely covered the costs of the Director. Despite Member States' political willingness to support an increase in the subvention towards meeting the costs of the Director and the staff of the Institute — most recently in 2010 through resolution 65/87 — increased regular budget support has not been forthcoming. Therefore, I return to Member States with a request for core support for the work of the Institute. Without voluntary contributions from Member States and others, the Institute would be unable to carry out its mandated functions. Indeed, it would not be able to exist.

In this regard, I draw attention to the last page of the statement being circulated, which explains in more detail the funding mechanisms for UNIDIR.

From a disarmament perspective, and from a Geneva perspective to say the least, given an ailing Conference on Disarmament, the need for UNIDIR to continue fulfilling its mandate has perhaps never been greater. I know that the average taxpayer in many countries is in difficult circumstances, and the Institute is immensely grateful to Member States that have so generously supported UNIDIR over the years, funding our research projects and supporting our very existence. I can only urge that this support be sustained, and indeed supplemented, through an increase, however modest, in the United Nations regular budget subvention. In addition, I would also ask all those benefiting from United Nations products — that is, all United Nations Member States — to consider increased support to the Institution.

I conclude by drawing attention to an objective that I believe we all share: that UNIDIR should be resourced to continue to facilitate progress, particularly in the nuclear field, "through negotiations ... towards greater security for all States and towards the economic and social development of all peoples". (*ibid.*, para 2 (a))

**The Acting Chair:** I thank all the panellists for their comprehensive presentations.

I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements or to introduce draft resolutions on cluster 6, "Regional disarmament and security".

**Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): With regard to the issue of regional disarmament and security, Algeria has made its commitment to promoting peace and international security a permanent feature of its

foreign policy and a cardinal principle guiding its action on the international stage. Therefore, Algeria continues resolutely to support and contribute to actions to promote and encourage dialogue and cooperation and strengthen security within its traditional membership and solidarity frameworks, particularly in the Mediterranean region, which is the crossroads of several regional groupings.

Thus, Algeria welcomes the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, a legal instrument that is a major contribution to denuclearization and security in Africa, and therefore a key factor in strengthening peace and security in the Mediterranean.

My delegation welcomes the role assumed by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, within the Office for Disarmament Affairs, with headquarters in Lomé. The Centre is known for its continental activities covering an increased number of issues related to peace and disarmament. As such, it has become a centre of expertise in Africa. In addition, due to the continental character of its programmes, the Centre at Lomé has been able to strengthen its partnership with the African Union, as well as the subregional organizations, which are now working closely with it. Given these achievements, Algeria expresses its full support for the Regional Centre.

In the Sahel subregion, on the initiative of the Government of Algeria, genuine regional cooperation has been established to prevent and fight terrorism. It was right to take steps to fight that threat. The situation in the subregion remains worrying, and it undeniably can have negative repercussions for security and stability throughout the African continent.

The situation, compounded by the scale of the illegal trade in and transfer of small arms, is likely to deteriorate, and so there is a need for greater efforts by the States of the subregion and strengthened cooperation between them in their fight against terrorism. It also requires consistent assistance and support from the international community to strengthen the capacity of the Sahel countries to deal with this scourge. It is clear, therefore, that the challenges and dangers threatening the stability of the African continent may be reflected in the Mediterranean region.

At the Middle East level, Algeria welcomes the launch — with the appointment of Mr. Jaakko Laajava as facilitator and of Finland as the host country — of

the preparatory process for a conference in 2012 on establishing in the region a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. That is in implementation of the action plan of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, held in May 2010, and the resolution on the Middle East of three co-sponsors, adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Algeria very much hopes that next year's Conference, with the participation of all the States of the region, will achieve concrete and substantial results.

In line with its active Mediterranean policy, based on principles of cooperation, friendship, good-neighbourliness and mutual respect, Algeria deems it an honour to submit, as has been traditional in recent years, under agenda item 103, draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.22, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region".

Except for technical updates, the draft resolution's text is exactly the same as the draft that became resolution 65/90. It commends the Mediterranean countries for their efforts in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses. The overall objective is to make the Mediterranean an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity.

The draft resolution also calls upon all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Essentially, it encourages all States of the region to favour the conditions necessary for strengthening mutual confidence-building measures.

The draft resolution encourages the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the possible resort by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction. Cooperation is also encouraged in combating organized crime and illicit arms transfers.

Finally, the draft reaffirms that security in the Mediterranean is closely linked to European security as well as to international peace and security.

The Algerian delegation and the 46 sponsors count on the support of all Member States for the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution, which is all the more important and relevant in the light of developments in the Mediterranean region.

**Mr. Cassidy** (Indonesia): On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.5, "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace", under agenda item 89.

NAM reiterates its conviction that the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council and of the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean is important, and that it would greatly facilitate the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to advance peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

NAM stresses the need to foster consensual approaches conducive to the pursuit of peace in the region. The Movement hopes that the First Committee will give its support to the draft resolution.

Welcoming the adoption by consensus of the detailed action plan on the Middle East, particularly implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-up action of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, NAM States parties to the NPT strongly urge the Secretary-General and co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in close consultation and coordination with the States of the region, to take the necessary measures to convene a conference in 2012.

In this context, NAM States parties to the NPT welcome the appointment of Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava as facilitator and the designation of Finland as the host Government for the conference on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

NAM reaffirms its support for the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus.

Pending the establishment of such a zone, NAM demands that Israel accede to the NPT without delay, and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. The Movement also calls for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer to Israel of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material and

facilities, resources or devices, and of the extension to it of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields.

**Ms. Smolcic** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and Associated States: Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and my own country, Uruguay.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC), with headquarters in Lima, Peru, was created by the General Assembly in 1986, through resolution 41/60 J.

UN-LiREC differs from other centres of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs because its mandate includes not only the implementation of peace and disarmament measures, but also the promotion of economic and social development. Based on this reinforced mandate, the Centre has succeeded in implementing programmes of work characterized by their interdisciplinary approach and broad dialogue with different actors in the region, including other United Nations bodies, national Governments, provincial and municipal authorities and civil society representatives.

The Centre's programmes include the promotion of confidence-building measures; the prevention and resolution of conflicts; support for States of the region in complying with arms control commitments; and education and awareness-raising on problems affecting peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Assisting States to reduce and prevent armed violence by increasing arms control has been one of the Regional Centre's important areas of work in recent years. In keeping with its mandate, the Centre has undertaken a range of activities at national, regional and subregional levels, among which we underline the following: training courses for combating illicit arms traffic, which have prepared more than 2,700 law enforcement officers since 2002; technical assistance on stockpile management and destruction of firearms; review of the compatibility of national legislation with international commitments in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation; fostering coordination between national agencies in the security area, which is one of the main challenges to



our region; and education on international instruments in the field of small arms and light weapons.

We particularly welcome the Centre's initiative to carry out the first course specifically for women working in firearms control in the Andean region, held in Lima from 22 November to 3 December 2010. We understand that gender perspective has a cross-cutting dimension, and therefore the role of women in disarmament must be promoted and encouraged.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/66/140), the number of requests for assistance from Member States and regional organizations has grown, demonstrating increasing confidence in the Centre's effectiveness and its recognized role in this area.

MERCOSUR and Associated States thank Governments, within and outside the region, for the financial support they have offered to develop the Regional Centre's activities. We call upon the international community to continue providing support for the Centre's activities.

Taking into account the Centre's important role in promoting an agenda for peace, security and development in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the gender perspective, MERCOSUR and Associated States support the draft resolution (A/C.1/66/L.16) presented by Peru on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean". We expect it to be adopted by consensus, as similar draft resolutions have been in previous sessions.

The South American Defense Council of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was created in December 2008 as a forum for consultation, cooperation and coordination on defence matters, with the objectives of consolidating South America as a zone of peace, forging an identity on defence matters and promoting consensus for strengthening regional cooperation.

In particular, the Council promotes the analysis and discussion of common elements of a collective perspective on defence matters; the exchange of information; the formulation of regional joint positions at multilateral defence forums; the adoption of confidence-building measures; and cooperation on military education and training.

Since its creation, the Council has adopted its Statute and biennial action plans, which promote

actions on defence policies; military cooperation; humanitarian actions and peace operations; defence industry and technology; and education and training.

The Defense Council has achieved agreements on the establishment of a mechanism for confidence-building measures and regional security. In addition, discussions have been held on the methodology for measuring military expenditure in order to increase transparency, and activities have been promoted on matters such as the development of the defence industry and technology, participation in peace operations and the modernization of the region's defence ministries.

A decision was also taken to establish the Center for Strategic Defense Studies, as an institution for generating knowledge and disseminating South American strategic thinking on defence and security matters.

MERCOSUR and Associated States welcome the important achievements of the South American Defense Council since its creation, and express their determination to support this forum, which contributes to strengthening regional unity, peace and security.

MERCOSUR and Associated States recognize the urgent need to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons because of their harmful effects on the security of all States, subregions, regions and the world. Among other factors, they endanger the well-being of peoples and economic and social development. MERCOSUR and Associated States reiterate the importance of continuing bilateral, subregional and regional efforts to further advance cooperation on security matters and implement the agreements, declarations and understandings adopted over the years with respect to peace, stability, confidence and security.

We also reiterate our decision to continue fostering a culture of peace and promoting education for peace among the countries of the region, reaffirming our goal of continuing to devote more resources to the well-being of our peoples.

**Ms. Comfort** (Jamaica): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on the regional disarmament cluster, on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Continued cooperation at the regional and subregional levels has proved integral to enabling CARICOM member States to tackle the various

security threats posed to the region. At the CARICOM level, much has been previously outlined with respect to the region's efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition, and related transnational organized crime, including, most recently, the adoption by the CARICOM Heads of State of a Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

At the technical level, CARICOM's efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including through implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, are being enhanced through the region's participation in the Organization of American States project Promoting Firearms Marking in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project, which is being implemented with the assistance of the United States Government, which provides both funding and equipment, saw the delivery of firearms marking equipment to the Bahamas, Belize and the Republic of Guyana this year.

The project also supports the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, and seeks to strengthen national capabilities in matters of firearms marking.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC) continues to be an important partner for CARICOM in its efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition.

CARICOM welcomes the appointment of Ms. Mélanie Régimbal as the new Director of UN-LiREC, and we pledge our support to her throughout her term in office.

The Regional Centre has assisted CARICOM member States in enhancing the capacity of our law enforcement and judicial personnel; improving our stockpile management capabilities; and aligning our national legislation with global and regional instruments.

Currently, UN-LiREC is conducting Phase II of the Firearms Destruction and Stockpile Management Assistance Package for Caribbean States. The major objectives of this project include enhancing the management and security of national stockpile facilities, as a means of preventing diversion or leakage into the illicit market, and facilitating inter-institutional coordination and cooperation among national entities

responsible for combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

CARICOM also commends UN-LiREC for its efforts in the areas of armed violence prevention and mainstreaming gender perspectives in the various disarmament projects being carried out throughout the region. We commend UN-LiREC in particular for the conduct of the specialized female-only inter-institutional course on combating illicit trafficking in small arms.

As a region where the allocation of limited resources can prove challenging, CARICOM recognizes the value of a collective approach to tackling complex issues, particularly those with cross-border implications, such as disarmament. In this spirit, CARICOM's efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring, trafficking and using weapons of mass destruction have been coordinated through the CARICOM United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Implementation Programme. Currently, our focus is on the issue of non-proliferation and the need to build capacity with respect to the prevention and mitigation of a possible chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attack, including awareness-raising and capacity-building among various stakeholders throughout the region.

In addressing the challenges faced by CARICOM member States in the administrative, legal and technical areas in the disarmament field, CARICOM has forged a cooperative approach, facilitated by its United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Implementation Initiative Committee. The Committee is seeking to develop a reference legal framework that will assist States in the region to institute controls targeting potential illicit transfers and enable the eventual interdiction, investigation and prosecution of such activities.

To that end, a regional gap analysis, which will inform the development of the reference legal framework, commenced in February 2011. It will be coordinated with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, among others.

The CARICOM United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Implementation Programme should, in the long run, contribute significantly to enhancing the region's security architecture as a whole. Implementation will also involve providing training and resources necessary to detect, identify,

and prevent transfers that violate export control laws and regulations. It will include training in effective risk analysis and in targeting strategies to prevent the export, re-export, import, transit or trans-shipment of strategic goods; training in the utilization of trade information and intelligence to detect suspect transfers and to minimize impediments to legitimate trade; and the implementation of measures to account for, as well as to secure and maintain, the appropriate physical protection of strategic goods.

With the assistance of the UNODC, the region has also been increasing its efforts to improve cooperation in mutual legal assistance in combating terrorism, terrorist financing and money-laundering, including most recently through the convening of a UNODC workshop on terrorist financing, which was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 11 to 13 October. It involved representatives from Latin American and Caribbean countries.

As a region with limited resources and porous borders, we have many security challenges. With the assistance of regional and subregional organizations, we continue to make our best efforts to combat those threats, and to build a safe and secure environment for our people.

**Mr. Obisakin** (Nigeria): On behalf of the 53 States members of the African Group, Nigeria wishes to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.52, "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa", under agenda item 99 (a). A similar draft resolution was considered during the sixty-fourth session, and was adopted as resolution 64/62.

Established in Lomé, Togo, in 1986, pursuant to resolution 40/151 G, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) resulted from a formal request by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the then Organization of African Unity, now the African Union (AU), by its resolution AHG/Res.138 XXI.

Since its establishment, UNREC has been in the forefront of disarmament, arms control and security programmes and activities on the continent. It has reinforced partnerships and working relations with the African Union Commission, African regional economic commissions, civil society organizations and several research institutions in the field of disarmament, peace and security.

More recently, the Centre has collaborated actively with the AU, and worked assiduously to assist it, in the elaboration and adoption of the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was recently adopted by AU governmental experts in Lomé. This also involves assistance to the AU experts in the elaboration and understanding of a potential AU common position on an arms trade treaty. In addition, the Centre has provided for the African Union a draft code of conduct for armed and security forces in Africa.

Furthermore, the Centre assisted the 11 member States of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa — Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe — in the elaboration and adoption of the Kinshasa Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Other efforts of the Centre can be seen in the support provided for the 11 member States of the Standing Advisory Committee in the elaboration and adoption of the Code of Conduct for Armed and Security Forces in Central Africa.

Furthermore, assistance was extended to the Standing Advisory Committee in the adoption of the Central African Common Position on the Arms Trade Treaty. This included assistance to Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda for regulating small arms and light weapons-brokering activities in their countries and installing electronic software for brokering licences and registers.

Assistance was also extended to Mozambique, for the elaboration of training modules and training of trainers on small arms and light weapons at its Police Academy, and to the Economic Community of West African States, for the elaboration and adoption of a guide for harmonizing legislation on small arms and light weapons in West Africa and for the design and establishment of a database on small arms and light weapons legislation. Lastly, the Centre has also assisted in the amplification of training materials and training of civil society organizations in West and Central Africa on practical disarmament and peacebuilding.

The African Group seeks support and understanding for this annual draft resolution, in view of the enormous work engagements by the Centre to mitigate the

challenges associated with conflicts, arms proliferation and sundry problems associated with illicit trafficking and use of conventional weapons in Africa. Africa believes in preventive measures.

The African Group also calls for appropriate funding to address the problems of the Centre's low-level financial support. Increased funding, especially from African States, will undoubtedly enhance its operational and institutional growth.

The African Group appeals to all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to peace and disarmament in Africa by supporting the draft resolution. The Group appreciates support for the Centre and for the draft resolution from current and future sponsors. We thank all the sponsors, both past and future.

We call for the draft resolution to be adopted by consensus as usual.

**Mr. Borg** (Malta): As this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor, I extend our congratulations to the Chair on his election to preside over this important Committee, and commend the exemplary way in which he is conducting our proceedings.

Malta is pleased to participate once again in this important annual general debate on regional disarmament and security. As in previous years, my intervention will focus primarily on the efforts of Malta and neighbouring States to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

As a European country at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Malta finds it only natural to make Euro-Mediterranean affairs a central pillar of its foreign policy. Malta's geostrategic location makes us intimately aware of the intrinsic relationship between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. Malta has been an active member in all regional forums concerning the Mediterranean, and has remained unfailingly dedicated to the Mediterranean region.

All along, we have been driven by the overriding objective of permeating deeper into the grassroots level and ensuring that the benefits of such an endeavour touch the daily lives of our citizens.

Malta's major strategic objective is to continue to play a proactive role in the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean through different

confidence and security-building initiatives that advance dialogue and understanding in our region.

In November last year, Malta hosted the First Regional Conference for the Mediterranean of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. The priorities identified in the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean, adopted during the Malta Conference, addressed precisely those issues that only a few months later were to lie at the heart of an unprecedented turn of events in North Africa and the Middle East.

The priorities identified by the Conference outlined a clear vision aimed at improving the political and socio-economic situation in the region. The adoption of the Strategy for the Mediterranean laid the grounds for what Malta believes should now be translated into a tangible response to a revived spirit of democracy and good governance that has engulfed the region.

The Strategy's intrinsic value lies in that it was devised in a meeting where civilizations converged, and in defiance of the tensions that still prevail in the Mediterranean region. The reverberations of the Arab Spring and the hopes that we all share for prosperity and mutual understanding in our region will no doubt continue to guide the determination and aspirations of the peoples to follow up on the Strategy in a unified and dignified way.

The Arab Spring, especially the developments in Libya, saw Malta taking a strategic role as a logistical and transit base for evacuation operations, with over 17,000 persons being repatriated through Malta. The humanitarian hub set up in Malta during the first days of the crisis continues today to assist, streamline, facilitate and simplify procedures for intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in coordinating humanitarian aid to Libya through Malta.

Malta is pivotal in supporting the relief efforts, which include the operation of flights by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, as well as, among others, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme, besides individual States.

In July 2011, Malta joined 51 countries in an EU-sponsored seminar to promote confidence-building and support the process aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Malta expects that successful event to be part of a



step-by-step approach to achieving that objective, which would in turn contribute to enhancing the security of every country in the region, with the focus on nuclear weapons, biological weapons, chemical weapons and missiles.

Another important event in the past 12 months was the annual Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mediterranean Conference, held in Montenegro on 10-11 October, which brought together OSCE participating States and the Partners for Cooperation, with special focus on ways to support the OSCE partner countries in the Southern Mediterranean. The main matters discussed were policing and the role of the armed forces in democratic societies; promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law; electoral reform; and good governance. The OSCE offered to share with interested partners the experience it has gained by supporting democratic processes in its own participating States.

The European Commission-League of Arab States Liaison Office, established in Malta exactly two years ago, has among its priorities the identification of projects that contribute to ongoing confidence-building measures, crisis response and early warning systems, as well as others that address economic and environmental security concerns. Malta's hope is that all parties will be able to recognize the importance of this platform for interregional engagement and dialogue on strategic issues of interest to both organizations in strengthening understanding and cooperation among their member States.

Malta actively supports the role of parliamentarians in advancing the aspirations of the people in the Mediterranean and even beyond. In this respect, Malta is honoured to be the host of the headquarters of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, which brings together Members of Parliament from all countries bordering the Mediterranean on an equal footing in a unique forum of their own, to examine questions and take decisions on issues of direct interest to the countries of the region.

The Assembly's sixth plenary session, to be held in Palermo, Italy, at the end of this month, will be yet another opportunity for parliamentarians from the Mediterranean littoral to engage in injecting initiatives, ideas, proposals and possible solutions aimed at using parliamentary diplomacy to enhance peace and security in the Mediterranean region.

The Union for the Mediterranean and the European Neighbourhood Policy are two more processes which continue to generate much-needed political dialogue, with a direct bearing on strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. Malta supports efforts by the Union for the Mediterranean in its focus on the implementation of feasible projects which will achieve concrete results in the broader context of North-South co-ownership of the Union. The organization next month, by the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies of the University of Malta, of the Euro-Med Information and Training Seminar is yet another example of the shaping of a culture of dialogue and cooperation among the EU member States and their Mediterranean partners.

The launching in June 2011 of the Malta-based European Asylum Support Office is yet another important initiative which will streamline asylum policies in EU member States and improve cooperation between authorities. Indeed, it is recognized that the increasing phenomenon of illegal immigration requires a coordinated effort by all Mediterranean countries.

Over the last decade Malta has become a country of destination, attracting an influx of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers. Malta provides international protection and asylum recognition to over 50 per cent of applicants, a disproportionately high number in view of Malta's geographic and demographic characteristics. While Malta affirms its commitment to abide by its international obligations, we reiterate our calls on the international community to continue to assist us in the resettlement process of these unfortunate people.

In its continuing vocation of seeking further initiatives to strengthen cooperation in the Mediterranean and at the subregional level, the Government of Malta intends to host in the first half of next year the second summit of the Western Mediterranean Forum, also known as the 5+5 Dialogue. Malta strongly feels that this Dialogue is another building block as well as a valid contribution to the new realities emerging in the Mediterranean region, which have a direct impact on the lives of all the peoples in the Mediterranean.

The strengthening of the interlinkage between security in Europe and security in the Mediterranean is the primordial motive behind Malta's support for and endorsement of initiatives that provide the

necessary impetus to the political, economic and social development dimensions in the Mediterranean.

It is widely recognized that the political and security implications of the situation in the Middle East have a direct impact on developments in the Mediterranean region and beyond. It is Malta's hope that direct negotiations will resume between the Israelis and Palestinians to build confidence and trust on both sides. At the same time, we continue to support efforts for the realization of a two-State solution, with an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

Malta intends to continue to build, together with other United Nations Member States, especially those of the Mediterranean littoral, on what has been achieved so far by enhancing dialogue between and among countries in the Mediterranean region. Malta will also continue to participate actively in efforts by all stakeholders to strengthen the various Mediterranean and Euro-Mediterranean intergovernmental and parliamentary forums.

By once again sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.22, "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", and urging all Member States to approve it without a vote, Malta reiterates its conviction that security in the Mediterranean is closely linked to European security as well as to international peace and security. My delegation expresses its appreciation to the delegation of Algeria for drafting it, and fervently hopes that its provisions will be fully implemented.

**The Acting Chair:** I still have 11 speakers on my list for this cluster. We shall continue with them on Monday.

There are 27 speakers on the list for cluster 7, disarmament machinery. With the Committee's consent, I propose to close the list now.

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m*