



# General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

## First Committee

5<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 5 October 2011, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

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

### Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

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

**The Chair:** I would like to appeal once more to all delegations to limit their statements to 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacities and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. That will enable us to make the most efficient use of the time and resources available to us throughout this session. We have a long list of speakers, but if we all adhere to our common rules we will overcome any difficulties with time.

**Mr. Gerasimovich** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Since this is the first time the Republic of Belarus is taking the floor in its national capacity in the First Committee, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the important position of Chair of the First Committee.

The following statement of the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was adopted during an informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the CSTO States on 26 September 2011. The Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan endorsed the statement.

Allow me to now read out the text of the statement of the members of the CSTO on international security and disarmament issues to the First Committee

of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. The text of the statement reads as follows:

“The member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are fully committed to strengthening multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control mechanisms. In that regard, the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly is one of the key universal international forums on international security and disarmament issues.

“We welcome the increased attention of the international community to the problems of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation, and note with satisfaction the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in that regard.

“Our priorities include the provision of equal and indivisible security for all States as a condition for further progressing towards nuclear disarmament, strengthening non-proliferation regimes, supporting the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in various regions of the world, as well as the provision and enforcement of security assurances.

“We consider a number of other issues to be equally important for making progress in the relevant international forums. Those include efforts to counteract challenges and threats of a political-military, terrorist and criminal nature that have been emerging on the Internet,

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including the development of a code of conduct for such media; to adopt effective measures to prevent the creation of new weapons of mass destruction and new such systems; and to develop international transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activities and prevent the placement of weapons of any type in outer space.

“We intend to promote the early signing by nuclear-weapon States of the Protocol on Security Assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the States parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

“The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will become a guarantee for the further strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are convinced that voluntary moratorium on nuclear tests observed by the world’s nuclear Powers is a very important step, but it cannot serve as an alternative to such a legally binding document as the CTBT.

“In order to implement the General Assembly resolution (resolution 64/35) declaring 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, CSTO member States conduct annual activities to remind the world of the terrible consequences of nuclear tests and the need to prevent their recurrence in the future, and call other United Nations Member States to do the same.

“We are convinced of the need for an early start to negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. That Treaty, along with CTBT, will become one of the main supports of NPT.

“We are convinced that multilateral agreements on disarmament can be negotiated only under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of the consensus principle.

“We call for the strengthening of the role of existing multilateral forums on international security and disarmament. Only within that framework will it be possible to reach universal

and viable solutions that are adapted to modern challenges and threats to security.”

**Mr. Apakan** (Turkey): Let me begin by joining the previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, and other members of the Bureau on your election. We are confident that the First Committee will successfully complete its deliberations under your able and effective leadership.

In order to remain within the allocated time limits, I will deliver a concise version of my statement, the full text of which will be distributed shortly.

Turkey is a party to all major international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes. We wish to see the universalization, effective and coordinated implementation and further strengthening of those measures. We therefore lend our full support to coordinated efforts undertaken to revitalize the international disarmament agenda. We would also like the United Nations to play a more effective and influential role in this field.

Turkey wholeheartedly shares the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and supports working towards that goal within the framework established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Treaty provides a well-balanced framework consisting of three complementary and mutually reinforcing pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Turkey believes that the equal and balanced treatment of those three pillars will reinforce the integrity and credibility of the NPT regime.

We are pleased that the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was able to adopt, by consensus, a comprehensive Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) that contains far-reaching recommendations for concrete action aimed at progressing towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Pursuant to the conclusions of the NPT Review Conference, a conference will be held on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The NPT Preparatory Committee will also reconvene next year. Now is the time to follow through on our joint commitments. To that end, Turkey, together with nine like-minded countries, has joined the multi-country non-proliferation and disarmament initiative, which works to implement the consensus outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference. Turkey also participates in

the work of the nuclear discussion group, an informal group established under the leadership of Kazakhstan, which provides a forum for frank and open discussions on how to achieve progress towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Turkey attaches great significance to and endorses all meaningful steps towards the establishment of effectively verifiable zones free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, particularly in the Middle East. We therefore look forward to the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to the decision taken at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

We also look forward to the peaceful resolution of the current non-proliferation issues that are of common concern to the international community. In that vein, we attach importance to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Six-Party Talks immediately and without conditions. Turkey expects the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and other related activities in a complete and irreversible manner and to return to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

As regards the Conference on Disarmament, we support revitalizing the work of the Conference so that it can resume its role as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. For that reason, we became a co-signatory to a letter, together with 40 other like-minded countries, requesting the convening of a General Assembly meeting on that issue. We are pleased that the General Assembly was able to take up the issue in a high-level meeting from 27 to 29 July (see A/65/PV.113). While there are many different views as to how the Conference should be revitalized, our preference is for the revitalization process to take place within the Conference itself.

Having said that, other efforts, such as the General Assembly meetings that took place in September 2010 and July 2011, could be useful in building momentum and conveying the strong expectation of the international community for the resumption of the substantive work of the Conference.

We hope that the deliberations of the First Committee will contribute to revitalizing the United Nations disarmament machinery and will help us to

eliminate the obstacles standing in the way of a safer and more secure world. I wish to conclude by assuring you, Sir, of our delegation's full support and cooperation in bringing this session to a successful conclusion.

**Mr. Bodini** (San Marino): First of all, Sir, let me say that I am glad to see you as Chair of this important Committee. I am sure that you will successfully guide the Committee's work.

We commend those countries, such as Kazakhstan and Ukraine, that have renounced their nuclear arsenals, and we praise those countries that, despite having nuclear capability, do not pursue a nuclear military policy. San Marino believes, like so many other countries, in a world free of nuclear weapons.

We strongly support the multi-country non-proliferation and disarmament initiative, and we appreciate the draft resolution sponsored by Japan on nuclear disarmament entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/66/L.41). We are also very grateful to the United States of America and the Russian Federation for bringing the New START Treaty into force this year.

As you know, Sir, the risk that some nuclear fissile material will fall into the hands of terrorist groups still looms large — very large. We must redouble our efforts to prevent such a terrible scenario through renewed intelligence and cooperation among our countries.

Moreover, we encourage non-nuclear countries to not embrace the atomic military race. We hope that those States that have nuclear arsenals will take upon themselves the responsibility to diminish the number of — and eventually eliminate — their deadly weapons.

Every day, people around the world question why the United Nations is so slow and ineffective in eliminating the threats of nuclear weapons and of weapons of mass destruction. We show good intentions during our meetings with our speeches and our commitments, but once we are far from this Hall, it seems that our determination fades. If we want to eliminate the risk of a catastrophic nuclear event, we and our capitals must maintain and reinforce the commitments that we are taking today.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): I also would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, and the Bureau on assuming the chairmanship of this body and to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Weapons that cause unnecessary suffering and unacceptable harm have no place in today's international security environment. We have a responsibility to the world's citizens to explore effective ways to work together to eliminate such existential threats to the security of our world and the societies we live in. We cannot continue to allow these important issues to be continually deferred by deadlocks and procedural snags. Our credibility is at stake.

Forty years after the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, we are still living in a world with nuclear weapons. The NPT Review Conference held last year achieved concrete results in the form of the Action Plan that was adopted. But only implementation can bring us from diplomatic achievement to genuine results. In the light of that, we are pleased to note that the five permanent members of the Security Council have decided to come together on a regular basis in order to meet their obligations under the NPT Action Plan. We look forward to seeing concrete and bold steps by the nuclear-weapon States to that end.

An important item in the NPT Action Plan is the 2012 Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. More than half of the world's countries have freely joined such zones, which underpins the simple fact that security is strengthened by not maintaining a category of devastating weapons that must never be used again. Norway will do its utmost to ensure that the Conference on a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East becomes a reality.

We must all do our part to implement and further strengthen non-proliferation obligations, which includes implementing the comprehensive safeguards set forth by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the IAEA additional protocol. The IAEA must be fully equipped to carry out its crucial non-proliferation task.

Norway has on a number of occasions expressed deep concern over the outstanding proliferation challenges, such as those posed by Iran, Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. A political

solution to those issues would greatly strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

Norway fully supports the action plan adopted at the Nuclear Security Summit last year and looks forward to fulfilling our commitments to that end in Seoul next year. We must secure all nuclear material. We must continue our efforts to develop cooperative arrangements for producing nuclear fuel for civilian reactors and significantly reduce the use of highly enriched uranium in civilian nuclear research reactors. All such tasks are doable, and they will enhance the security of us all.

There is also a need to ensure that our verification systems are robust enough to provide the necessary confidence in the integrity of both the non-proliferation and the disarmament processes, based on the principles of verifiability, irreversibility and transparency. The United Kingdom and Norway have cooperated at the expert level for a number of years on exploring technical and procedural challenges associated with a possible future nuclear disarmament verification regime.

I am very pleased that the United Kingdom will, in partnership with Norway, host a workshop in London in early December to consider lessons learned so far from the United Kingdom-Norway initiative. The purpose of the workshop is to demonstrate that collaboration between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States in nuclear disarmament verification is both possible and necessary.

The Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions demonstrate that it is possible to negotiate multilateral disarmament instruments that have an immediate humanitarian effect on the ground and strengthen the protection of civilians. Such action is possible when there is a common sense of purpose across traditional groupings, when our work builds on the facts and realities on the ground, and when the representatives of States recognize, acknowledge and make use of the undisputed expertise and competence of humanitarian organizations.

It is not acceptable that disarmament forums and existing instruments of international humanitarian law are used to take steps in the wrong direction, diminish the protection of civilians or attempt to relegitimize weapons banned by a majority of States because of their documented detrimental humanitarian effects. Through the current negotiations on cluster munitions

under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), States are in danger of doing exactly that. Let me make it very clear: Norway cannot accept a result in the CCW that contradicts our obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions and which will not have added humanitarian value.

In our view, the approach taken by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts has not brought us any closer to an acceptable outcome. Consequently, during the last meeting of the Group, in August, Austria, Mexico and Norway presented an alternative draft protocol, which was met with a high degree of interest from many delegations. We stand ready to discuss our proposal further with all States and other partners. However, the Group concluded that there was no consensus on the topic in the group. In accordance with the mandate of the Review Conference, it may be time to decide that the work of the Group has been concluded.

Two thousand people are killed every day owing to armed violence. The irresponsible proliferation of conventional weapons continues to fuel conflicts and contribute to an ongoing humanitarian disaster. The human costs and the long-term development consequences of this situation are unacceptable. It is therefore urgent and necessary that we approach the ongoing work on an arms trade treaty with the clear ambition of making a real difference for civilians. Our multilateral response to the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of weapons should be based on the principles and perspective that weapons control and disarmament are also essential humanitarian actions.

Let me also take this opportunity to emphasize that 2011 is a critical year for the Biological Weapons Convention. The upcoming Review Conference must build on the positive momentum created five years ago and consider ways to further strengthen national implementation of the Convention. One way would be to further strengthen confidence-building measures. National reporting should be considered to be an obligation, not a matter of choice. More efforts are needed in the field of biological security and safety. Norway values the supporting role of the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and expects that the Unit will be given a strengthened mandate. The Review Conference should also facilitate closer international

cooperation on the peaceful use of biological science and technologies.

Norway fully subscribes to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and we would like to see even more ambitious steps taken towards nuclear disarmament. There have long been calls for negotiations on a legally binding convention, in line with the provisions of article VI of the NPT.

Norway acknowledges the need and obligation to negotiate such an instrument, in good faith and in accordance with the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in 1996. However, Norway has questioned the call by many States for the negotiation of such an instrument to be conducted in the Conference on Disarmament. We do not believe that such an important issue should be left to a body that has been unable to deliver anything of substance in a decade and a half, that cannot even agree on a programme of work, and whose membership is limited to one third of the States Members of the United Nations.

As an alternative, we should look at ways to use the General Assembly to ensure progress. Norway joins other Member States in calling for a resolution at this year's session of the First Committee that will enable us to move multilateral disarmament negotiations forward. It is high time to give the Conference on Disarmament a definite deadline and indicate a clear alternative to another year of inaction.

Finally, effective multilateralism in disarmament and non-proliferation is needed now more than ever. States Members of the United Nations have an obligation to ensure that our multilateral institutions are equipped to deliver what is expected of them. That is the reality we should bring with us to the First Committee.

**Mrs. Ledesma Hernández** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Cuban delegation, I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the rest of the Bureau, on your election to lead the work of this Committee.

We fully endorse the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Over the past years, we have witnessed the ever-worsening consequences of the deep economic and financial crisis the world is facing. Nevertheless, global military expenditures continue to increase. In

the past 10 years they have increased by 49 per cent, reaching the astronomical figure of \$1.5 trillion.

That circumstance is simply unjustifiable and unacceptable, in particular in the light of the facts that one country alone accounts for over half of total global military expenditures and that just 10 per cent of the funds currently devoted to the war industry would be enough to achieve the Millennium Development Goals — making a start at alleviating the extreme poverty suffered by 1.4 billion people on the planet, feeding the more than 1 billion hungry people and preventing the deaths of the 11 million children who die each year from hunger and preventable diseases. Cuba therefore reiterates its proposal that at least half of current military expenditures be devoted to meeting economic and social development needs through a United Nations-managed fund.

In the past year, many public squares in various parts of the world have been the scenes of people's protests and demands of all kinds — some genuine and others staged by the mass media. It is alarming to see how some Governments disregard their citizens' demands and distort the concepts of democracy and of their duty to ensure the fundamental rights enshrined in international instruments. It is also outrageous to see how, under the pretext of the protection of civilians, NATO is engaged in genocide in Libya, violating arms control measures and using highly lethal sophisticated weapons.

The first resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)), adopted on 24 January 1946, called for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction". (*resolution 1 (I), para. 5 (c)*)

Regrettably, 65 years after that demand, nuclear disarmament is still an unresolved issue and remains an urgent task. International peace and security continue to be threatened by the existence of over 23,000 nuclear warheads, half of which are ready for immediate use. The use of only a minuscule part of that arsenal would be enough to cause a nuclear winter — and the end of the human race.

It is unacceptable that so-called nuclear deterrence continues to be the basis of military doctrines prescribing the possession and use of nuclear arsenals. The only guarantee for nuclear weapons not to be used by States or anyone else is their elimination and total prohibition. That prohibition should also

include similarly lethal advanced conventional weapons. Both types of weapons should be under strict international control.

Political manipulation of non-proliferation must come to an end. It is based on double standards and the political interests of a privileged few that continue to upgrade their nuclear weapons, while trying to violate the inalienable right of the countries of the South to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The entry into force of the agreement among the major nuclear Powers — the New START Treaty — to reduce their offensive strategic nuclear weapons is a positive but insufficient development.

The nuclear Powers have failed to meet their commitment under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to negotiate an international treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons. Concrete steps must be taken to fully eliminate nuclear weapons in a binding, non-discriminatory, transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a necessary and important contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We support the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East without delay.

The Non-Aligned Movement submitted a proposal that deserves consideration and contains a plan of action calling for a well-defined schedule for the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons until their total elimination and prohibition by no later than 2025. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement, a statement on the total elimination of nuclear weapons was adopted that reaffirms nuclear disarmament as the highest priority of the Movement in the field of disarmament and declares its firm commitment to work for convening a high-level international conference to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date.

Within the disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament plays a crucial role as the only multilateral forum for the negotiation of disarmament treaties. If the Conference did not exist, it would have to be created without delay. We regret that the Conference has been unable to carry out substantive work for more than a decade.

Some insist that the causes lie in its working methods and rules of procedure. Cuba does not share that interpretation. What happens in the Conference does not constitute an isolated exception within the disarmament machinery. It is no coincidence that the Disarmament Commission concluded its work this year, for the twelfth consecutive time, without adopting substantive recommendations. In addition, every year the First Committee adopts dozens of resolutions that are simply not implemented.

Cuba supports the efforts to optimize the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament, but it also believes that the paralysis currently affecting most of the disarmament machinery is caused first and foremost by the lack of political will by some States to achieve actual progress, especially on the issue of disarmament.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established the disarmament machinery of the United Nations system (resolution S-10/2). In that structure each body plays an essential role. We therefore believe that the nature and functions of each body must be preserved. If the disarmament machinery of the United Nations system needs to be revitalized, then let us welcome the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, instead of hindering its convening.

We are concerned about the insinuations by some delegations that the time has come to set aside the Conference on Disarmament and turn to alternative negotiation processes. Cuba opposes the replacement of the Conference with improvised, selective ad hoc arrangements outside the framework of the United Nations. If such criteria are imposed, we will be taking a dangerous step backwards. The solution does not lie in disregarding the Conference on Disarmament or minimizing its importance. On the contrary, today more than ever, it falls to all of us to preserve and strengthen it.

The Conference on Disarmament must adopt, as soon as possible, a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes actual disarmament priorities into account. The Conference must urgently commence negotiations on a convention banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons, prescribing their destruction, and leading to the non-discriminatory and verifiable global

elimination of nuclear weapons, according to a well-defined schedule.

While the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty on the manufacture of nuclear weapons would be a positive step, it would still be insufficient in itself if subsequent steps to achieve nuclear disarmament were not defined. As Cuba advocated during its concluded chairmanship of the Conference on Disarmament, that body is ready to negotiate simultaneously a treaty that eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons, a treaty that bans the arms race in outer space, a treaty that provides effective security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and a treaty that prohibits the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Cuba stresses its commitment to the strict implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. The total destruction of chemical arsenals is the most important task of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Cuba reiterates that the only way to strengthen and improve the Biological Weapons Convention is by negotiating and adopting a legally binding protocol that closes the loopholes that instrument still has.

Cuba fully supports and implements the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Likewise, we firmly uphold the legitimate right of States to manufacture, import and possess small arms and light weapons to meet their needs for security and self-defence. In that context, our country has participated in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. In that regard, we emphasize the need for this process to be carried out in a balanced, transparent and inclusive manner, on the basis of consensus.

The question of the transfer of conventional weapons is complex and has important political, economic, legal and security implications for all States, and is therefore incompatible with preconceived, discriminatory or selective formulas, or with hasty or forced decisions. Such an instrument should include general rules that permit all countries to import, export and transfer conventional weapons in an organized manner and without affecting their national security interests. Proposals on elements for a future treaty

must identify attainable and universally accepted goals that do not divert us from our goal of strengthening mechanisms to prevent and combat the illicit arms trade. The views of all States must be duly taken into consideration in that process.

Allow me to conclude, Sir, by renewing to you the full support of the Cuban delegation for your work and the success of this Committee's work.

**Mr. Osman** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like, first of all, to congratulate you sincerely, Sir, on your election as Chair of this important Committee, especially as you are from a country that has made an important contribution to disarmament. I wish you and members of the Committee every success in your work. I also thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement during the opening of our work. I would like to say how much we appreciate the Disarmament Office's efforts to improve the effectiveness of international cooperation and multilateral mechanisms in the field of disarmament in order to safeguard international peace and security.

We fully endorse the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group.

We meet today to debate disarmament and international security at a time when the world is witnessing many changes and upheavals at the regional and international levels, all closely linked to issues of disarmament. The best way to consolidate international security is to enhance the effectiveness of multilateral mechanisms to counter the risk of the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, while avoiding imbalances, discrimination or superiority by powerful nations. Unfortunately, the disarmament mechanisms of the United Nations have suffered a number of setbacks in recent years owing to the fact that the major Powers insist on developing biological, chemical and nuclear weapons technology and on testing to develop more advanced technology. It goes without saying that all treaties, agreements and protocols that denounce the dangers of such practices have gone unheeded, which increases suspicion regarding the feasibility of implementing those instruments.

We welcome the adoption by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at its fifty-third regular

session of two resolutions regarding Israel's nuclear capacity and the implementation of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards regime in the Middle East. We reiterate the importance of holding a conference on disarmament; this would be an extremely valuable advisory forum. We also voice our thanks for the efforts that led to the adoption of a plan of action at the Non-Aligned Movement Conference last May. We particularly thank Algeria for the role it played in building consensus at the conference.

We hope that the planned conference will offer an opportunity to debate disarmament issues in the light of the current global financial crisis and its impact on the developing countries, particularly in terms of cuts in State defence budgets, giving priority to the implementation of recommendations from the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) on the most urgent humanitarian issues such as poverty, environmental disasters and sustainable development.

As a report has shown, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide is a necessity that could help promote international and regional peace and security. As we know, security is an indivisible whole. Many countries, it is true, have signed treaties on the creation of such zones, about 50 per cent of the world; however, there are many potential hot spots around the world that have yet to be so designated, particularly in the Middle East, where such a zone could have been established were it not for Israel's declared refusal to submit its nuclear programmes and facilities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime. That refusal constitutes a major threat to peace and security, not only in the Middle East but also throughout the world.

I take this opportunity to urge all Member States to sign the convention on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, in order for that convention to achieve universality and be implemented.

The Sudan is a full-fledged and active partner in international disarmament efforts. It was among the first to sign relevant international conventions and instruments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the declaration of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone approved in the Pelindaba Treaty, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We also participated in the 2009 Vienna seminar on disarmament, and in our own

capital, Khartoum, we hosted the first conference of national African organizations tasked with implementing the convention to ban chemical weapons. That conference also stressed the need and the right of countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. All of this is in addition to Sudan's contribution to, and effective role in, the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms. Sudan has also participated in all the regional workshops held in Jordan, Cairo, Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Algiers, as well as in conferences held here in New York.

The small arms and light weapons issue is a priority for the Sudan when it comes to disarmament. Many countries face the same problem, as extremely complex economic reasons are often linked to other factors such as climate change, drought, desertification and the scarcity of water resources and pastures. Such factors have led to a tradition of acquiring such weapons. The Sudan is more aware than other countries of the danger of this phenomenon, and of the need to eliminate such weapons. We work through our national office for combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the basis of our belief in the close mutual link that exists between the proliferation of such weapons and the spread of transnational organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.

In that regard, the Sudan is pursuing multiple efforts within the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in addition to bilateral initiatives with neighbouring countries, with a view to improving control in border areas and customs measures. We wish to reiterate the need for producer countries to commit to not exporting weapons to non-State actors or groups, so that such weapons do not fall into the hands of uncontrolled groups. We also reiterate the importance of providing technical assistance to countries affected by this phenomenon, consistent with chapter II 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.

**Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, let me congratulate you and your country, Finland, on behalf of the Algerian delegation on your election to chair of the First Committee and assure you and the members of the Bureau of our support.

Algeria fully associates itself with the statements by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Today Algeria reiterates its commitment to the multilateral effort to achieve general and complete disarmament, and considers that 2011 has maintained the positive momentum of 2010. This favourable atmosphere affords opportunities that the international community should take advantage of in its efforts to move forward and make concrete progress in this vital area for humankind. Algeria, which is a party to the main treaties on weapons of mass destruction, would like to recall that the ultimate aim of those international instruments is to permanently ban this category of weapons, whether nuclear, chemical or biological.

The goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons hinges, inevitably, on nuclear disarmament, as set forth in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this regard, the States parties to the NPT must, according to their individual obligations, work towards the implementation of the action plan adopted by consensus at the Eighth NPT Review Conference in May 2010. According to the terms of the NPT, nuclear-weapon States have specific obligations that must be observed. In that regard, we should recall the 1996 advisory opinion in which the International Court of Justice reaffirmed the continuing obligation of such States to work towards the reduction and eventual elimination of their nuclear arsenals, as well as the illicit nature of recourse to or use of nuclear arms.

Algeria is part of the large majority of States that have chosen to put atomic energy to work in the service of civilian uses exclusively, including in the area of research and development, in compliance with article IV of the NPT. There can be no doubt that, given the ongoing demands of economic development and technological progress, the legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in the framework of the non-proliferation regime is particularly relevant. In fact, for many countries nuclear power is an essential strategic choice for their energy needs and security.

The entry into force, on 15 July 2009, of the Pelindaba Treaty, creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, is a key contribution on the part of Africa to enforcement of the non-proliferation regime and world

peace, as well as to regional and international security. Algeria, which was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Treaty, calls in particular on those nuclear-weapon States that have not yet signed and ratified the relevant annexes of the Treaty to do so.

The example of the Pelindaba Treaty leads us to bring up the international community's request for establishment of a zone free of nuclear arms and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That is why Algeria sees as a positive step the agreement concluded within the framework of the 2010 NPT Review Conference's plan of action for implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. However, this is also an opportunity to express our concerns about the delay in designating the facilitator and host country for the conference, which is supposed to be held in 2012, on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Algeria therefore calls on the Secretary-General and the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in consultation with the countries of the region, to take the measures necessary for organizing this conference.

Algeria remains committed to an effective relaunch of the Conference on Disarmament with the aim of restoring its role as the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. In that context Algeria welcomes the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to hold high-level meetings in September 2010 and July 2011 on revitalizing the work of the Conference. My delegation continues to believe that decision CD/1864 adopted by consensus in May 2009, during Algeria's presidency, is still valid in its establishment of a complete and balanced programme of work. That decision was the result of a commitment arrived at through a logical sequence of events.

On the substance, Algeria believes that no other United Nations forum could replace the Conference, wrest from it any of its prerogatives, or legitimize any subtraction from it of any of the fundamental themes of its mandate. Besides setting an ominous precedent, this would call into question the global nature and balance needed among the central and complementary topics on the Conference's agenda.

The illicit trade and transfer of light weapons also continue to threaten peace and stability in many countries, particularly insofar as they represent a source of supply for terrorist groups and organized crime, and are an ongoing concern for my delegation.

In that regard, we reiterate our insistence on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001. This important instrument has undoubtedly contributed to a genuine raising of awareness of the damaging humanitarian and security consequences of this scourge. Algeria is committed to the Programme of Action; Algerian representatives also participated actively in the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in New York in May, at which we gave a briefing on Algeria's experience and cooperation in this area with neighbouring countries in the Sahel.

Regarding the initiative for an arms trade treaty, Algeria has supported this process since its beginning, convinced that an international instrument concluded under the aegis of the United Nations and designed to establish standards for importing, exporting and transferring weapons would contribute to strengthening global peace and security. The discussions held within the framework of the third Preparatory Committee session for the Conference on an arms trade treaty, held in New York in July, led to the identification of various elements that could be included in the draft treaty. There can be no doubt that the arms trade treaty Conference will culminate in the adoption in 2012 of this new international instrument, which will strengthen the institutional architecture of disarmament.

More globally, given the continuing paralysis of various elements of the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly the deadlocked Conference on Disarmament, the absence of recommendations from the Disarmament Commission, and the absence of the universality required for the full entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, it would seem to be the right time to convene a fourth extraordinary session of the General Assembly. By virtue of its political authority, its universal make-up and the mandates given to it by the Charter of the United Nations, such a special session would make it an appropriate forum for bringing together the various initiatives and undertaking global consideration leading to a new consensus on disarmament priorities and the role of the various mechanisms of the disarmament machinery.

On a regional level, Algeria is committed to peace and security as a permanent feature of its foreign policy and a cardinal principle on which to base its international actions. It therefore supports and contributes to actions that promote and prioritize dialogue and agreement in the areas of influence, particularly the Mediterranean. To that end, every year the Algerian delegation proposes for the First Committee's consideration a draft resolution on strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. My delegation relies on the support of the traditional co-sponsors for this draft text as well as on that of Member States as a whole.

**Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt):** I would like to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee and to express our confidence in your work and that of the other members of the Bureau and to assure you of our full support.

My delegation would like also to associate itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group and the New Agenda Coalition.

Our meeting today offers a timely opportunity to take stock of the achievements that we have realized and to identify the tasks that remain ahead. It is a particularly important juncture, as the upcoming year will be marked by a set of salient events in the field of disarmament and international security.

The success of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was a major cause for optimism and spurred an encouraging momentum. The ratification of the new Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms was a first step in the right direction towards realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that context, the success of our efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament remains Egypt's top priority and rests on the full implementation of the follow-on actions, in particular the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, to advance the ambitious agenda of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime worldwide.

That would open the door for other actions towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, including the full ratification and implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and

furthering negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on a treaty for the prohibition of the production of fissile materials, including stockpiles for military uses, along with initiating negotiations on a draft treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, which has long been advocated by the Non-Aligned Movement — chaired currently by Egypt — in addition to establishing negative security assurances that are universal, unconditional and legally binding, until we achieve our objective of the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Such a comprehensive approach, based on the integrated linkages that would result from full implementation of the 2010 action plan, including achieving the universality of the Treaty, would require that the five nuclear-weapon States redouble their efforts far beyond the general follow-up meeting held in Paris in July, which produced the limited results reflected in its final statement. It would require that the nuclear-weapon States fully implement their obligations under the 2010 action plan, particularly actions 5 to 22, and present transparent unified reporting based on qualifiable and quantifiable indicators that can be easily evaluated to measure progress in implementation.

Within the framework of the implementation of the commitments contained in the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Secretary-General has been entrusted with convening a regional conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. States of our region agreed, for the first time, to extend the scope of the zone to include other weapons of mass destruction with a view to overcoming unsubstantiated claims that the existence of ambiguous Israeli nuclear capabilities is justified by a potential regional threat from other types of weapons of mass destruction. In the meantime, the Arab States ensured that part IV of the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference addressed the importance of achieving parallel progress on the two tracks — nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Despite intensive consultations carried out by the Arab States towards the full implementation of action 4, through contacts with the Secretary-General and the three depository States, no concrete results have as yet been achieved. Egypt therefore stresses once again the importance of promptly appointing a consensual high-profile facilitator and determining a host country, so as

to facilitate the earliest possible commencement of preparations for the conference.

In that regard, Egypt appreciates the efforts of the European Union to convene a seminar in Brussels under part IV, paragraph 7 (e), of volume I of the outcome document, and appreciates the participation of both Iran and Israel in those deliberations. Although the scope of the seminar was focused more on confidence-building rather than the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which remains the core term of reference for the 2012 conference, it still opened the door to frank discussions on all issues surrounding the establishment of the zone.

While some claimed that the Arab Spring would divert the attention of Arab States away from the subject, I would like to underscore that the democratic trend prevailing in our region today has further enhanced interest and strengthened the will to establish the zone and to have Israel ratify the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That would, in turn, ensure that the rest of the countries in the region refrain from developing or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons and would guarantee the accession of countries of the region to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, in addition to their ratification of the CTBT.

The Arab countries have taken an extra step through their initiative not to introduce the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities at the annual session of the IAEA General Conference this year. That step was meant to create a positive atmosphere in order to facilitate the achievement of the desired results at the 2012 conference. Therefore, the Arab countries demand that all of the parties concerned stick to the letter and spirit of the action plan, with respect to that important matter and commit to its full and speedy implementation.

Egypt has introduced two draft resolutions on this issue to the current session of the First Committee. The first, contained in document A/C.1/66/L.1, is entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", and the second, contained in document A/C.1/66/L.2, is entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". I would like here to stress that the latter does not aim at the alienation or isolation of any country in our region,

exactly as action 4 of the 2010 NPT Review Conference outcome document does not try to impose any substantive or procedural decision on any State in our region. The resolutions are meant to contribute significantly to both regional and world security — a goal that is as worthy as ever of the support of all Member States. We hope that the current session will witness increasing support for those draft resolutions, in a manner that positively corresponds to the international drive to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons from the Middle East.

Since the conclusion of the previous session of the First Committee, the United Nations has played its part in seeking a means to advance the multilateral disarmament agenda, most recently in the 113th plenary meeting of the General Assembly at its previous session to follow up the high-level meeting convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September 2010 to focus on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament. That debate has clearly shown, in our view, that the absence of political will to reach a balanced outcome that reflects the interests of all countries remains the main obstacle impeding the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the Disarmament Commission in New York and that the rules of procedure are not the problem.

That conclusion has come as no surprise, since the solution was always based on addressing all of the issues on the agenda of the CD through an integrated approach that includes, most importantly, negotiations on nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances, as well as on a possible treaty on fissile material including stockpiles for military purposes.

While we salute the efforts of the Secretary-General to revitalize the work of the CD, all such initiatives must be geared towards reinforcing the capability of the CD to deal effectively with disarmament issues within its substantive and procedural frameworks. We are therefore deeply concerned about the calls made by some to bypass the Conference on Disarmament by transferring the negotiations on topics that fall exclusively within its agenda to other forums. That would sharply erode the credibility of the CD, even if the negotiating forum would be the General Assembly.

The historical fact must be recalled that the consensus rule, which governs the Conference on Disarmament, was neither proposed nor claimed by the

non-aligned countries. Rather, it was used by other members aiming at taking control of CD activities. We must therefore make every possible effort to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament through strong political will in order to ensure that it remains the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, in accordance with its own rules.

Since the First Committee concluded its work in the past year, several events were held to discuss issues related to the agenda of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The most recent was the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security, convened on 22 September by the Secretary-General. It was a commendable initiative as well, as it shed light and attracted attention to these important technical issues, especially in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear-power-plant accident. Egypt expresses once again its sincere condolences and extends its solidarity and support to the people and the Government of Japan in the aftermath of that accident. We reiterate our readiness to provide assistance to any country that faces a similar challenge, as we are all exposed to that risk, regardless of our level of development. The IAEA should assist Member States in the context of emergency preparedness and response to nuclear accidents, through capacity-building in the field of crisis management and the promotion of the transfer of technologies related to making nuclear stations resilient to natural disasters. This should take place within the broader framework of support by the IAEA for States that establish nuclear reactors for energy purposes to meet their development needs. It also requires that developed countries and companies commit to the transfer of technology.

Next year will be of particular importance in the field of conventional weapons, which, naturally, follow weapons of mass destruction on the list of disarmament priorities, as determined at the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, have a direct impact on inter- and intra-State conflicts. Africa in particular faces a challenge in this regard. Any effort to tackle this challenge must recognize the relevant principles of the Charter, in particular the right of States to manufacture, import and possess conventional weapons for legitimate self-defence. Against this background, Egypt will participate actively in the review of 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, to be held in August 2012.

While the responsibility to fully implement the Programme of Action lies at the national level, the international community also has the responsibility to provide financial and technical support, particularly to developing countries. In this regard, Egypt stresses that the selective application of the guidelines of the Programme of Action would only undermine efforts to achieve progress in this regard. We must also emphasize here that the main producers of small arms and light weapons bear primary responsibility in the promotion of their national legislation to regulate the illicit production, trade and brokering in small arms and light weapons, so as to prevent the leakage of such weapons into conflict zones.

As the final Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty will take place in February, to be followed by the Conference in July 2012, Egypt still believes that the feasibility of a potential treaty will depend on the objectives that are collectively agreed upon and practical implementation mechanisms that would avert any political abuse of the treaty, thus ensuring its universality. Egypt stresses that any consideration of the feasibility of a potential arms trade treaty depends on its scope. Any potential treaty must therefore comply fully with the letter and the spirit of all the principles of the Charter, including the legitimate right of States to acquire conventional arms for legitimate self-defence. The potential of the treaty rests in its ability to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade, production and brokering of conventional weapons, along with the promotion of transparency and accountability in the production, import, transit and export of conventional weapons.

The agenda before us is daunting. This should not, however, curb our ambitions. It should, rather, give us further incentive to exert every effort and uphold the principles of justice, fairness and non-selectivity. These principles are essential for generating the political will necessary to achieve an ambitious agenda. Let me reassure the Committee once again that Egypt is already on board to apply these principles and to work with all members to achieve success in disarmament and international security matters.

**Ms. Comfort** (Jamaica): On behalf of the Jamaican delegation, allow me to express my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during this session. Let me assure you of my delegation's full cooperation with you and with the other members of the Bureau.

Jamaica aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The general and complete disarmament of nuclear weapons remains one of humanity's highest priorities. Until that goal is accomplished, we cannot hope to realize the dream of living in a safe, secure and peaceful world. Nuclear weapons, rather than inspiring a sense of security, continue to contribute to instability and mistrust.

Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing goals. Progress in one area cannot be achieved at the expense of the progress in the other. While we continue to make slow progress in the non-proliferation agenda, we continue to be stymied in our efforts to achieve total and complete nuclear disarmament. Negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament are at a standstill, and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains outstanding.

The Conference on Disarmament remains one of the key pillars of the multilateral disarmament machinery. Over the past year, we have seen a number of attempts to achieve progress within the Conference, none of which has led to substantive discussions. As we have stated in the past, the continued neglect of the core mandate of the Conference on Disarmament, as the only multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament treaties as established by the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is no longer an option. We urge the membership of the Conference to summon the political will to commence substantive negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention; negative security assurances; a fissile material cut-off treaty; and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Less than two weeks ago, the States parties to the CTBT met here in New York, at the seventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. The non-entry into force of this key instrument

remains a source of worry for my delegation and a major hurdle in our global disarmament efforts. Jamaica therefore reaffirms the conclusions of the Final Declaration and measures to promote the entry into force of the CTBT emanating from that meeting, and continues to urge all annex 2 States to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. Until the Treaty enters into force, we urge States to maintain the existing moratorium and to refrain from the conduct of nuclear-weapons tests or other nuclear explosions.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we continue to maintain our support for all three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We call on all States engaged in the development of nuclear energy to fully comply with the IAEA verification, monitoring and safeguard provisions. Compliance with the relevant IAEA provisions is an absolute necessity to uphold the integrity of the NPT as well as to prevent nuclear accidents, which could have deleterious impacts on the environment and human health.

Nuclear safety and security have once again been brought into sharp focus following the incident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear-power plant in Japan earlier this year. We reiterate our solidarity with the people of Japan as they continue the rebuilding process. The role of the IAEA in enhancing the framework for nuclear safety is fundamental, and we pledge our support to the IAEA as it continues its work to further strengthen these rules. We take this opportunity to also call on all States to support the Agency in the implementation of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, which was agreed at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held earlier this year.

Nuclear safety and security is a fundamental issue for Jamaica and its CARICOM partners, given the use of our waterways for the transport of nuclear waste. The Caribbean Sea is the foundation of the economic viability and sustainability of the Caribbean region; as such, an accident or terrorist attack against any of such vessels would pose severe harm to the lives and livelihood of the Caribbean people. This continued threat to our existence is totally unacceptable, and we continue to advocate that a more viable alternative be found.

Jamaica continues to underscore the significance of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat

and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as the primary multilateral mechanism in the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and ammunition. We look forward to the convening of the Review Conference in 2012 to take stock of the implementation of the Programme of Action and devise new ways for its further implementation.

Jamaica has actively participated in the preparatory process for an arms trade treaty, as we believe that a legally binding treaty that establishes the highest international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and ammunition, will close a gaping loophole in international efforts to reduce the high levels of armed violence plaguing many countries across the world.

The 2012 Diplomatic Conference on an arms trade treaty provides us with an opportunity to correct the errors that we have made in the past that have contributed to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in many communities and conflict zones across the world. One headline in a leading newspaper in the host country read: "We regulate toys, why not guns?" I urge all of us to let that statement be our guide and engender a spirit of compromise as we work to conclude a legally binding, objective and strong arms trade treaty.

Jamaica has always maintained that one of the key building blocks for achieving peace and stability at the international level is the establishment of regional zones of peace. We believe that the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East would be an important building block towards achieving long-term peace and stability in a region that has been plagued by decades of unyielding violence, mayhem and death. We reiterate our full support for the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, as agreed in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We call on all States in the region and on the international community as a whole to work assiduously towards that objective.

In the last few years, we have witnessed some momentum in global efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Without concrete results in a number of key areas, that momentum could be lost for good. In an increasingly volatile

international environment, we cannot afford to rest until the goals of realizing a safe and secure world are achieved. The task before us is arduous, but failure is not an option.

**Mr. Danon** (France) (*spoke in French*): Last year at this time, we were pleased to note here recent major successes: the conclusion of the New START Treaty, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Nuclear Security Summit, the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for an arms trade treaty, and the entry into force of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions. All bodies involved in disarmament and non-proliferation made important strides, with the notable exception of the Conference on Disarmament.

Compared with that fruitful period, the past 12 months have been a transition period marked by efforts to implement the commitments undertaken, particularly the follow-up to the NPT Review Conference, with strong involvement on the part of the nuclear-weapon States and the entry into force of the New START Treaty. But this period was also marked by strong questions about the future, particularly the future of the Conference on Disarmament, and by a number of initiatives that reflect the international community's positive efforts to regain collective momentum despite a number of tensions. They must not, however, be allowed to lead to a dispersion of efforts, now that the Review Conference has established a collective road map for us based on the three pillars of the Treaty.

This year, with no Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, debates on the nuclear issue have tended to draw away from the action plan adopted in May 2010. We saw the re-emergence, no less than two days ago, right here at the opening of our session, of calls for an international convention to ban nuclear weapons, an idea that was not retained at the Review Conference or in debates at any other United Nations body. In addition, in order to launch negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty, some are proposing mechanisms outside the Conference on Disarmament, while the NPT action plan, in line with all resolutions adopted in the First Committee, calls for starting such talks in the Geneva framework.

France wants to see a return to greater consistency. For its part, it unambiguously reaffirms its

full respect for the commitments it undertook in the 2010 Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). It will be prepared to present its report to that end in 2014, as scheduled. Furthermore, given its dedication to working with other nuclear Powers that, like itself, share a special responsibility, it hosted in Paris on 30 June and 1 July of this year, the first Permanent Five follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference. The meeting's success underscored the commitment of the Five and helped establish a positive dynamic among them. Since then, there have been more and more meetings of the Five, and soon we should reap the fruit of this intense activity. I observe, for example, that this week, meetings between the Five and the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations should enable us to make considerable progress towards drafting a protocol to the Bangkok Treaty, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia.

Beyond that, the implementation of the 2010 action plan is the shared responsibility of all States parties, and it is with the involvement of all that we will collectively move towards the complete and balanced implementation of our commitments on the three pillars.

Our Committee's work must enable us to refocus concretely on what is essential. First, we must redouble our efforts to counter the biggest danger facing our planet today, namely, nuclear proliferation. I am thinking in particular of the lingering crises in Iran and North Korea, and of the Syrian nuclear issue, which has been transferred to the Security Council. We must be clear: nuclear proliferation is an obstacle to both disarmament and to the development of civilian nuclear energy. More disarmament will not suffice to stop proliferation. The ongoing development of nuclear and ballistic programmes in Iran and North Korea in recent years is proof of that.

On the national level, France is acting in all forums, including the Group of Eight, which we are presiding over this year, to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. For us, it is an absolute priority, notably with the strengthening of International Atomic Energy Agency guarantees, the widespread acceptance of the Additional Protocol, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and of course the opening of negotiations on a cut-off treaty.

That brings me to our second priority: breaking the deadlock of the Conference on Disarmament and launching the fissile material cut-off treaty negotiation. The deadlock of the Conference on Disarmament, in addition to giving rise to legitimate frustrations which we share, also leads to dangerous delays in the necessary progress of disarmament and contributes to undermining the international community's trust in multilateralism.

The High-level Meeting debates proved — if proof were necessary — that the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament stems from political antagonisms and not procedural constraints. We must take note of this, but we must also recall to those who think they can take advantage of the current deadlock that they are swimming against the current of history.

Some people would like to try and get around the Conference on Disarmament. We believe this is an exercise in futility. Exporting the problems to another forum will not help to resolve them. On the contrary, we must tirelessly continue to work towards establishing a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament that respects the priorities established by the international community — first and foremost, determining the elements of a fissile material cut-off treaty — while allowing the member States, without exception, to have their security interests protected by that forum's rules of procedure.

Thirdly, we must ensure that the nuclear issue does not overshadow the other multilateral negotiations on disarmament. Mobilization remains necessary in all areas: biological, chemical and conventional weapons, ballistic missile proliferation and outer space. It is not just a matter of improving international security but also of preventing nuclear disarmament from being offset by a new arms race in those other areas.

With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention, I would like, at this crucial moment in its implementation, to reaffirm France's attachment to both the universalization and the full implementation of the Convention.

Regarding the Biological Weapons Convention, the main challenge for the 2011 Conference will be to further improve, in the current context, the proper application of this instrument. It will also require improving the fight against biological threats of all kinds, notably those linked to the hijacking of scientific and technical progress for terrorist or

criminal purposes. Lastly, it will also require perfecting our cooperation mechanisms to improve the prevention and detection of public health risks at the global level.

With respect to cluster munitions, France welcomes the success of the second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which was so perfectly organized by the Lebanese Government. We also welcome the increasing number of accessions to the Convention, some of which were announced in Beirut itself.

Regarding the next session of the United Nations Conference on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which is to be held next month in Geneva, France would like to see substantial progress on the text presented by the chair of the group of governmental experts. In particular, this requires us to improve certain provisions relating to the immediate humanitarian impact that a future protocol VI to the Convention, which would be compatible with and complementary to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, should have.

Lastly, we welcome the progress made in the preparatory work on the adoption of an arms trade treaty. We believe that the mechanism implemented by the draft resolution adopted in the First Committee two years ago (resolution 64/48) is working in an exemplary manner. We are working actively to ensure that the July 2012 conference will constitute a decisive step with respect to the adoption of such a treaty. In the meantime, we will support, in the coming days, any decision or resolution that will allow us to further improve the preparations, in February, for the work of the future conference.

Finally, allow me to draw members' attention to ballistic proliferation, which several Security Council resolutions consider to be — along with weapons of mass destruction — a threat to international peace and security. At this stage, the international community does not have a mandate on that issue, but we all know that the Iranian and North Korean programmes in particular are moving forward. It is a collective concern, and it is becoming urgent that we deal with it.

Allow me to conclude by recalling that one of the most important issues we will have to face in the coming months concerns the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. There, too, the

NPT Review Conference made significant progress possible. Furthermore, what happened in numerous countries of the region and on the southern shore of the Mediterranean is changing for the better the parameters of a particularly complex political equation. It is in the interests of all the countries of the region to take advantage of this historic opportunity.

We hope that significant progress will be made in the coming weeks, in particular through the selection of a facilitator and a host country, as well as the holding in 2012 of the conference, which was called for in the final document of the 2010 Review Conference, which should bring together all concerned players in the best possible conditions. Expectations in that regard are high, and legitimately so. Any failure in that respect, when the conditions seem so favourable, would have consequences. We are therefore particularly encouraged that the European Union, for its part, was able to host an academic seminar last July on confidence-building measures, which was attended by all the countries of the region.

These are some of the thoughts I wanted to share with the Committee, along with actions France is taking or plans to take to contribute to progress on the path of disarmament, towards the safer world we all wish for.

**Mr. Sea (Cambodia):** I would like to begin by joining previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I am fully confident that, under your able leadership, the Committee will be able to conclude its deliberations successfully.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of all the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The progress made by the international community in the field of arms control and disarmament over recent years has been obvious. However, my delegation is of the view that more effort should be dedicated to this field, if we wish to reach our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Cambodia welcomes the entry into force of the New START Treaty, signed last year by the United States and the Russian Federation, which contributes to

reducing the risk of a nuclear conflict. In spite of that progress, there are still concerns over the existence of large nuclear-weapons stockpiles, which pose a serious threat to humanity.

Mindful of the fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force, Cambodia joins the increasing calls by the international community and all States parties to the Treaty to those nations that have not yet joined this Treaty to do so as soon as possible, as we all have the responsibility to ensure that our planet is safe and secure for all.

Cambodia also strongly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones remains the cornerstone of building a favourable climate for nuclear non-proliferation. In that connection, the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, which was open for signature in Bangkok in 1995 and entered into force in 1997, remains the fundamental legal basis for creating a zone of peace and cooperation without nuclear weapons in South-East Asia. It not only serves as an instrument for peace in our region, but also continues to play its pivotal role as an effective confidence-building measure for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

The Royal Government of Cambodia attaches great importance to addressing the question of conventional weapons, as they continue to threaten peace and stability. The use of illegal weapons, undoubtedly, has a long-term impact on human life and impedes national socio-economic development efforts.

Being a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Cambodia continues to exert its efforts to clear the anti-personnel mines and other remnants and unexploded ordnance left behind by wars in our country, which continue to kill and injure innocent people and cause major obstacles in the day-to-day life of the Cambodian people. We are very grateful for the assistance provided by the international community for demining activity in our country.

To promote international cooperation on demining activities and further raise awareness of the danger of mines, Cambodia will host the eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, in Phnom Penh next month.

Cambodia re-emphasizes the importance of the continuation of the work of the Conference on Disarmament so that disarmament negotiations can move forward. Although there is much disappointment and frustration over the long-term stagnation in the Conference, we hope that, in the interest of all States Members of the United Nations, a realistic approach to the discussions can be found again, so that an agreement allowing the Conference to carry out its mandate can be reached.

Mobilizing sufficient resources for effective peacekeeping operations in regions with conflicts remains a great challenge for the Organization. There was a time, in the 1990s, when my country received United Nations peacekeepers. So the Royal Government of Cambodia fully understands the importance of there being sufficient material and technical assistance, as well as the importance of its own efforts, to achieve sustainable peace.

Through the implementation of the win-win policy of Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen in 1998, Cambodia has transformed itself from a war-torn country into a country with full peace and sustainable development, and further, into a country that could make a significant contribution to international peace and security. Over the years, Cambodia has dispatched hundreds of its troops to serve in various United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad. At present, Cambodia is preparing to dispatch more Cambodian peacekeepers to other countries.

In conclusion, it is the responsibility of all nations, through a concerted approach and full cooperation, to disarm nuclear weapons, control conventional weapons and root out unexploded ordnance and other remnants of war in order to make the world more safe and secure for all.

**Mr. Djusupov** (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation joins others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the post of Chair of the Committee. We hope that under your leadership we will be able to make continued further progress towards our shared goals.

Let me first highlight the activity of the Kyrgyz Republic in the sphere of non-proliferation. Our country is committed to the international policy of

disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are convinced that strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and its mainstays, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), is the key to success in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as they ensure strategic stability and security.

We have been a party to the NPT since 1994, and to the CTBT since 1996. We have been a depositary of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia since 2006. Since 2003, Kyrgyzstan, as a full member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has enjoyed effective cooperation with that agency. In 2004, the IAEA Safeguards Agreement entered into force.

As a party to both the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, we consider these Conventions to be an effective tool to strengthen international peace and security. We therefore call for their universalization.

Kyrgyzstan scrupulously and fully complies with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on averting the risk of nuclear technologies and materials falling into the hands of terrorist organizations. In 2003, we adopted an export control law that paved the way for the foundation of a national export control system. In view of our commitment to strengthening non-proliferation regimes, the Kyrgyz Government is currently amending national legislation in order to improve the export control system, based on best practices of other States and in line with our commitments to strengthening international non-proliferation regimes.

Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to mitigating the environmental damage caused by uranium mining in the past and by the related process of nuclear fuel production. I remind you, Sir, that this issue was raised at the NPT Review Conferences in 2000, 2005 and 2010. In Kyrgyzstan, there are 36 uranium-tailings storage sites, 31 of which contain radioactive waste, including 28 with uranium. Their total volume is 82 million cubic metres.

Let me also point out that article 6 of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia provides that each party should undertake to assist in any efforts towards the environmental rehabilitation of territories contaminated as a result of past activities related to the development, production or storage of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in particular uranium-tailings storage sites and nuclear test sites.

In recent years, dangerous natural processes, such as earthquakes, landslides, mudflows, and so on, have intensified, leading to the destruction of uranium-tailings storage sites and causing environmental disasters. We believe that uranium-tailings storage sites have the potential to cause an environmental disaster similar to those seen at Chernobyl and Fukushima. In that regard, we would again call on delegations and international organizations specialized in the field of conservation and recycling of radioactive wastes to consider the possibility of providing technical assistance to my country.

As was stressed in the statement of Her Excellency Ms. Roza Otunbaeva, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, at the general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly (see A/66/PV.15), tackling the problem of uranium-tailings storage sites is extremely important. The International High-level Conference on the subject, which took place in Geneva in June 2009, demonstrated the intentions of the Central Asian States to cooperate in solving this key issue together. In that context, our delegation is ready to introduce a draft resolution on the prevention of radiation threats in Central Asia.

As was mentioned earlier, the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia has been successfully operating in our region. A distinctive feature of the Treaty is that its parties are required to conclude agreements with the IAEA on the implementation of comprehensive safeguards, pursuant to the NPT, and to add the additional protocol to their respective safeguards agreements with IAEA. In addition, the States parties pledged to comply with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. We consider that clause of the Semipalatinsk Treaty to be an additional protective measure.

I would also like to draw attention to the proposal of Kyrgyzstan to reduce the use of highly enriched

uranium in nuclear reactors for peaceful purposes as a measure against nuclear terrorism. Together with Norway, we raised this issue at the NPT Review Conference in 2005, and then adopted a proposal under paragraph 61 of the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference in 2010 (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. 1)).

Kyrgyzstan also supports the development of a multilateral dialogue on the issue of banning the production of fissile materials that could be used to foment a nuclear arms race in outer space.

We are concerned about the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and support the adoption of measures to combat their illicit proliferation. We also encourage the active participation of the United Nations in tackling this issue. Kyrgyzstan supports the proposal to develop a legally binding international instrument regulating the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, as well as an instrument on illicit brokering.

Kyrgyzstan considers the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation to be an important instrument to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction delivery systems, which threaten international peace and security. We support the ban on the production and use of anti-personnel mines and call for their complete prohibition.

In conclusion, let me point out that the existing arsenals of weapons of mass destruction pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Kyrgyzstan has always stood for strengthening non-proliferation regimes and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. We have acceded to all major treaties and conventions in that area, and we honour all our commitments under those instruments and under resolutions of the Security Council.

In that regard, Kyrgyzstan is ready, as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, to do its utmost to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Al-Jarman** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I am pleased to congratulate you sincerely, Sir, on your election as Chair of this important Committee.

I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for the important statement he made earlier. We wish to express our

support for the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in connection with the items on the agenda of the Committee.

The United Arab Emirates, which recently participated in the meetings of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, in support of its regional, international and multilateral efforts towards the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world, hopes that the nuclear-weapon States will enter into serious and effective negotiations that will lead to ending all activities aimed at improving and developing nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, and ensure the gradual elimination of these weapons or their conversion to peaceful purposes within the agreed time frame stipulated in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), under strict and effective international supervision and in accordance with the recommendations of the International Court of Justice in this regard.

In this context, we also urge States not parties to treaties on disarmament of weapons of mass destruction to accede to these strategic treaties as soon as possible, including the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in order to enhance the universality and inclusiveness of those treaties. We also call on the international community, in particular nuclear-weapon States and other influential Powers, to show genuine political will in order to achieve progress towards the implementation of the plan of action adopted by the NPT Review Conference in 2010.

We also call upon the international community to intensify its efforts aimed at the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

We hope that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the three depositary States of the NPT, will make every effort to ensure that these endeavours meet with success.

We also call on the international community to step up its efforts to pressure Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly calling for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, including the resolution adopted by the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

We believe that the promotion of the international disarmament agenda requires activation of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the pivotal international multilateral body responsible for promoting universal negotiations on disarmament issues. Hence we call upon all States to initiate efforts aimed at putting an end to the production of fissile material. We support the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and a legally binding international instrument that assures non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, until the complete elimination of these weapons has been achieved.

We wish to reiterate the acquired right of developing countries to participate without discrimination in nuclear energy research and in the production and use of energy for peaceful purposes, within the safeguards of the IAEA. We also urge the nuclear States to unconditionally provide countries with the material, scientific equipment and technology required to continue their nuclear programmes.

In this context, the United Arab Emirates will continue to take further concrete steps towards developing its peaceful nuclear energy programme in order to meet its growing electricity needs within the framework of the safeguards and under the supervision of the IAEA, in compliance with the highest standards of transparency, nuclear safety and security and non-proliferation, and in full cooperation with the Agency and other friendly and responsible States with relevant experience in this field.

We attach special importance to the current efforts aimed at achieving international consensus on the elements of a declaration of a fourth disarmament decade, including the identification of the focal issues for a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, and on the work of the organizational session of the open-ended Working Group, in the hope that the Group will be able to submit its report before the end of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

In closing, my country reaffirms its continued political commitment to all multilateral diplomatic efforts undertaken at the international and regional levels with the aim of building confidence in the area of strategic weapons disarmament, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law. We hope that our

deliberations in this important Committee will lead to achieving international consensus on promoting and developing our efforts to realize security, peace and development as well as regional and international stability.

**Mr. Shakir** (Maldives): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's congratulations to you, Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the members of the Bureau for their extensive efforts to ensure the success of our work during the weeks and months ahead.

Maldives firmly believes that disarmament and non-proliferation are crucial to the establishment of security and to the consolidation of peace throughout the world. To that end, we must all work together and give disarmament the high priority it deserves. We strongly believe that the ultimate objective of such efforts should focus on the collective realization of a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Major steps have been taken towards disarmament. In this regard, Maldives welcomes the entry into force on 5 February 2011 of the New START treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, reducing the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers and warheads. However, much more still needs to be done to further reduce the threat of nuclear and conventional weapons worldwide. A comprehensive and universally ratified arms trade treaty would be a major step in the right direction.

Maldives wishes to stress some points to which it attaches particular importance.

In 1971, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2832 (XXVI), which declared the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Forty years have passed since then, and important steps towards greater cooperation have been taken. Yet even greater efforts are required to develop a discussion on its practical implications. We need to look at measures to ensure conditions of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

Maldives warmly welcomes the fact that the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, decided to include in this year's agenda the item entitled

“Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace”. In the past, Maldives has always supported measures to limit risk and further peace. We believe that multilateral approaches have the potential to contribute to the development of mutually beneficial dialogue and to advance peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

We have long supported efforts to establish nuclear-weapon free zones all over the world. A world free from the threat of nuclear annihilation and striving for cooperation and trust is not unrealistic. But to achieve that goal, we need confidence-building measures. We need frameworks. We need geographical zones that guarantee security, stability and peace to everyone. This is why Maldives supports such zones at both the regional and the subregional levels and why we encourage the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East and in Africa. Such zones would not only enhance the inner security of those regions but also have a positive impact on neighbouring regions.

Small island developing States like Maldives face particular vulnerabilities when it comes to international security. Many small States do not possess the resources to adequately deal with the emerging pressures posed by international terrorism and organized criminal activity. This is especially frightening when seen in the context of the acquisition of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors. As a small island developing State, we depend on the cooperation of the international

community, as well as on solid international legal frameworks, to ensure that such scenarios do not materialize.

Despite the ongoing financial crisis, the year 2010 saw a worldwide increase in military expenditures by 1.3 per cent in real terms, reaching the incomprehensible figure of \$1.63 trillion. However, Maldives believes that through negotiation and the establishment of institutional frameworks not only can this number be significantly reduced, but we can do even more. We remain convinced that the dream of general and complete disarmament can become reality.

Maldives is now a State party to a number of major disarmament treaties and conventions, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. By working closely with the various treaty bodies, we are showing our unequivocal support for general disarmament and the non-proliferation of existing weapons of mass destruction.

Maldives strongly believes that nuclear weapons do not necessarily make our world a safer place. The contrary is true: a world free of nuclear weapons is a more secure one. And such a world, one free of nuclear weapons, is possible. Maldives remains convinced that the multilateral approach towards disarmament can lead us towards achieving that goal. We stand firm and encourage everyone to work together to make that dream become a reality.

*The meeting rose at 12:15 p.m.*