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First Committee

12th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Percaya (Indonesia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda items 86 to 102 (continued)

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

The Chair: We begin this morning with the few speakers remaining on our rolling list for the nuclear weapons cluster, who did not have time to speak last Friday.

Mr. Al-Ahmad (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I associate myself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Arab Group and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This year's session of the First Committee comes against the backdrop of consecutive setbacks in the international system of multilateral disarmament and international security, and of the challenges it faces, in particular regarding the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms. One of the most serious setbacks was the failure of the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the cornerstone of the system. In addition, there is a lack of any positive development, and in particular of qualitative progress, in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

There has been growing international concern over the increased risk of the spread of nuclear

weapons. Dealing selectively with the concept of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has led to the accumulation of frightening amounts of those weapons in many countries. It is clear that nuclear-weapon States do not take the issue seriously. To the contrary, they breach their international obligations with regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and ignore the promises given to non-nuclear-weapon States. The strongest evidence of that shortcoming is the continued cooperation of some nuclear States with Israel in the nuclear field. Worse still, a number of States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) granted exceptions to non-signatories without having the legal authority to do so.

Because of its geographical location in a region witnessing a race for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, the State of Qatar is keen to implement all international instruments on the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and to prevent access to such weapons by terrorist groups. Like other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the State of Qatar is concerned about the possibility of the uncontrolled spread of weapons of mass destruction and its serious consequences for the region. It is particularly concerned that weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of non-State actors, which is one of the biggest threats to international peace and security.

In this regard, the State of Qatar has enacted several laws aimed at preventing the spread and smuggling of nuclear weapons. It has established the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons, which

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has drafted a bill on the prevention and monitoring of nuclear weapons, to be promulgated in the near future. In addition, the State of Qatar is working with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to draft a comprehensive law to regulate nuclear and radiological activities in the country. The State of Qatar has a monitoring mechanism that monitors all border points in order to preserve the security of the country.

The Middle East region is a clear example of the lack of effectiveness of the NPT in bringing security to States, since it is the only region that has seen no international effort to free it of nuclear weapons. This encourages Israel to acquire military nuclear capabilities outside any international supervision. In this regard, it is worth warning of the dangers of the continued international silence about the position of Israel, which wants to play the role of policeman in the Middle East, attempting to maintain its dominance through the possession of nuclear weapons and threatening to use force against any nation seeking to acquire nuclear weapons, which further undermines the credibility of the international community in making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons. Moreover, some countries apply double standards regarding the possession of nuclear weapons. While they turn a blind eye to Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, they seek to prevent other countries in the region from acquiring and using nuclear energy.

On the basis of what I have just said, the State of Qatar believes that Israel is the main obstacle to achieving the goal of ridding the Middle East of the danger and threat of nuclear weapons. The State of Qatar believes that there will be no possibility of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region as long as Israel does not accede to the NPT and agree to subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Qatar reiterates its position, shared by other Arab countries, that Israel must accede to the Treaty and place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

On the other hand, the State of Qatar emphasizes the need to give priority to peaceful and diplomatic solutions regarding Iran's nuclear programme, rather than taking the path of escalation and threats, which would bring to the region the scourge of war that might destroy its political, economic and social stability.

Despite the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure the success of the conference to be held at the end of this

year in Finland to lay the building blocks for ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the intransigence of some countries and their persistence in ignoring the international will do not inspire optimism and satisfaction, nor do they bode well for the conference achieving the desired results.

As the holding of that conference draws nearer, the State of Qatar expresses grave concern about Israel's decision not to participate, a decision that undermines international efforts to rid the region of the nuclear threat. It shows that Israel is not committed to peace, and still less to disarmament of weapons of mass destruction; rather, Israel follows a policy liable to inflame tensions and escalate the arms race.

The State of Qatar calls on the international community to pressure Israel to participate in the conference and work to turn it into the first step towards achieving the goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): My delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the groups that we belong to, in particular the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of Arab States.

We reiterate our position, as reflected in our statement in the general debate (see A/C.1/67/PV.8). We attach high priority to nuclear disarmament. We also insist that there are obligations and commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that need to be respected and fulfilled. We also are convinced that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has certain obligations for nuclear disarmament negotiations in good faith, and that the Conference on Disarmament remains the sole forum for negotiations on achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament in an irreversible, transparent and verifiable manner.

We reiterate what we said in our statement about the necessity for the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiating on nuclear disarmament, in the context of a balanced programme of work, as soon as possible. We continue to call for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and call on the annex 2 countries to ratify the Treaty without delay.

Nuclear weapons are no guarantee of security. Rather, we believe that their existence is a threat and that their use would have catastrophic humanitarian

consequences. We associate ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of a group of countries in this regard.

On the other hand, in the Middle East we think that the 2012 conference is a historic opportunity to launch a process that ensures that the Middle East is free from all weapons of mass destruction in a sustainable manner.

We felt that we had to reiterate our positions, as everybody has done, but we do not see the added value of repetitive statements. We would like to share thoughts with the Committee, and encourage all delegations to embark on such a discussion. We need to think together, in a collective and flexible manner, about how to make better use of this debate and this time. With a repetition of positions stated in our general debate, sometimes extra information is added, but the essence is the same.

We encourage delegations to consider ideas, with us, making this an interactive debate focusing, for example, on the implementation of resolutions. The Committee has been adopting a set of draft resolutions for a long time, mostly on a yearly basis. The focus should be not on adoption, but on implementation; this clustered, thematic debate should focus on the progress made in implementing resolutions.

On the other hand, we also suggest that when it comes to nuclear disarmament, for example, we must have an exchange with nuclear-weapon States on their nuclear disarmament efforts. That would be very useful for this debate. We also suggest an exchange with some non-governmental organizations on some of their proposals and the ideas that they are advocating. We need an interactive, in-depth debate with them on that.

Discussions should continue on how to make the Committee's work more effective. This issue should remain in our minds and on our agenda. We are open to further discussions on this. I understand that such discussions took place a few years ago, and we do not see why we should not continue them to make our work more effective.

Mr. Laggner (Switzerland): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the following Member States: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, the

Marshall Islands, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Thailand, Uruguay, Zambia and Switzerland; as well as the Observer State Holy See.

Our countries are deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences that any use of nuclear weapons would have. We welcome the increased attention that this issue has received over the last few years. The 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons expressed its "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and reaffirmed "the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law." (*NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I, p.19)*). We feel encouraged that consideration of this issue has garnered greater prominence in a number of General Assembly resolutions and in other forums since 2010.

Serious concerns related to the humanitarian implications of nuclear weapons have been voiced repeatedly. When the horrific consequences of their use became apparent in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) took a clear position calling for the abolition of these weapons of "extermination". The sheer horror of the use of nuclear weapons informed the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1946 (resolution 1(I)), and was later reflected in key multilateral documents. The NPT preamble refers to the

"devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples".

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament stressed in 1978 that nuclear weapons posed the greatest danger to humankind and to the survival of civilization. Several decades after their adoption, those expressions of concern are as pertinent as ever, and will remain so for as long as nuclear weapons remain.

If such weapons were to be used, be it intentionally or accidentally, immense humanitarian consequences would be unavoidable. As the ICRC has already concluded, international organizations providing emergency relief would be unable to fulfil their mandates. In addition to the immediate fatalities, survivors of the horrendous effects of a nuclear explosion

would endure immeasurable suffering. Studies have shown that the radiation released by even a single nuclear weapon would affect populations, agriculture and natural resources over a very wide area, and also constitute a very real threat for future generations.

Further studies conclude that even a limited nuclear exchange, in itself a contradiction in terms, would cause a global climate change with such a serious and long-lasting impact on the environment and food production that it could cause a global famine affecting over a billion people. Nuclear weapons have the destructive capacity to pose a threat to the survival of humankind, and as long as they continue to exist the threat to humankind will remain. This, in addition to the perceived political value and prestige attached by some States to these weapons, is a factor that encourages proliferation and non-compliance with international obligations.

Moreover, it is of great concern that, even after the end of the cold war, the threat of nuclear annihilation remains part of the twenty-first century international security environment. The utility of these instruments of mass destruction in confronting traditional security challenges has been rightly questioned by many States as well as by civil society experts. Moreover, nuclear weapons are useless in addressing current challenges, such as poverty, health, climate change, terrorism or transnational crime. In times of decreasing funds available for social welfare, health care or education, using vast financial resources each year for the retention, modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals would appear to be at odds with our collective responsibility in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. The choice should be clear.

The grave humanitarian concerns resulting from the unique destructive capacity and uncontrollable effects in space and time of nuclear weapons also raise important legal issues. All the rules of international humanitarian law apply fully to nuclear weapons: notably, the rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution, as well as the prohibition on causing superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, and the prohibition against causing widespread, severe and long-term damage to the environment.

Last November, the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted a resolution not only emphasizing the incalculable human suffering resulting from any use of nuclear weapons, but also stressing that it is difficult

to envisage how any use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with the rules of international humanitarian law. It is of the utmost importance that nuclear weapons never be used again, under any circumstances. The only way to guarantee this is the total, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, under effective international control, including through the full implementation of article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. All States must intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Civil society plays a crucial role in raising awareness about the devastating humanitarian consequences as well as the critical international humanitarian law implications of nuclear weapons. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons concern the community of States as a whole. Accordingly, the General Assembly has a particularly important role in addressing this matter in a comprehensive fashion.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on cluster 1, “nuclear weapons”. The Committee will now take up cluster 2, “Other weapons of mass destruction”.

I warmly welcome the President of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of the Netherlands, who will introduce the discussion on this cluster.

Mr. Van den IJssel (Netherlands), President, Seventh Review Conference, Biological Weapons Convention: I have the honour to address the First Committee in my capacity of President of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, which was held in Geneva from 5 to 22 December 2011.

I do not need to introduce the Biological Weapons Convention; all delegations are familiar with its importance as a key component, together with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, of the international community’s efforts to counter the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. The Convention is a fundamental pillar of international security, an important forum for addressing the full range of biological risks and engaging the relevant actors, and the means by which we can work to ensure that biological science and technology are safely and securely developed for the benefit of all.

The Seventh Review Conference represented a crucial opportunity to maintain and improve this important treaty. Work under the BWC had been steadily building momentum. States parties were working constructively together. The previous intersessional work programmes had succeeded in identifying a broad range of common understandings. Ten States had acceded to the treaty since its last Review Conference. This momentum was taken advantage of at the Seventh Review Conference to realize further incremental development of the Biological Weapons Convention.

I am pleased to report that we consolidated progress where it was to be found and seized every opportunity on offer. Having said that, I acknowledge that not all the ideas, proposals and wishes presented by States parties could be met in the final consensus outcome.

I would like to highlight some areas in which we made notable progress during the Seventh Review Conference.

The Review Conference decided to establish a new database to be managed by the Implementation Support Unit to house requests for, and offers to provide, assistance relevant to the Convention. We established a sponsorship programme to facilitate participation of developing countries in the work of the Convention. We reviewed modalities and revised the forms for exchanging information through the annual confidence-building measures. We looked back at the operation of the Implementation Support Unit since its creation in 2006, renewed the Unit's mandate and expanded its responsibilities. We also adopted by consensus a final declaration that highlights shared views on the importance of the treaty, the role it plays in supporting international peace and security, and agreements on how to best meet obligations under it. The Seventh Review Conference also created an intersessional work programme to lead up to the treaty's next Review Conference in 2016.

Throughout our work last year, I encouraged States to think in terms of ambitious realism. As former United States President Theodore Roosevelt famously urged, "Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground". I think that the current work programme and the outcome of the Review Conference includes both of those elements.

The 2012-2015 work programme is ambitious. It covers the full scope of the treaty. There are three standing agenda items: cooperation and assistance,

with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X; review of developments in the field of science and technology, drawing on expertise from both within and outside Governments; and strengthening national implementation.

States parties will also consider how to enable fuller participation in annual exchanges of information through the confidence-building measures, and how to strengthen efforts to respond to the alleged use of a biological weapon. States parties have been realistic in their approach. The current work programme is designed to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on specific topics related to better implementation.

States parties kept what worked well in recent intersessional work programmes, and built upon it where necessary. States parties have provided guidance for their work by agreeing on sub-items for each of the standing agenda items. There is also a more refined sense of structure, with annual topics identified for special attention to focus efforts to review developments in science and technology.

I am convinced that, through ambitious realism, there is a great deal of potential in the current work programme. States parties can use it to strengthen how they work domestically, how they work together and how they keep pace with technological developments. This will in turn further raise barriers to the acquisition or use of biological weapons and help ensure that life sciences continue to be used solely for the benefit of humanity. I urge all States parties to play their part in shaping the future of the Biological Weapons Convention and take specific effective steps to reduce the risks posed to international security by biological weapons.

To conclude, the successful outcome of the Seventh Review Conference illustrated that, in spite of different views and different aspirations of States parties, it is possible to work together in a multilateral environment and make substantial progress together. I am fully confident that, under the excellent guidance and chairmanship of Ambassador Delmi of Algeria, we shall have, after a successful meeting of experts in July, an equally successful and fruitful meeting of States parties in December. I also hope that the success of the Seventh Review Conference will serve as encouragement for those States that have not yet acceded to the Treaty

to do so, in order to make the Treaty and the ban on biological weapons truly universal.

Lastly, I thank all the States parties for their active and constructive engagement. The success of the Seventh Review Conference is their success.

The Chair: I shall now open the floor for delegations wishing to make comments or ask questions. To that end, I shall suspend the meeting to enable us to continue our discussion in an informal mode.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The Chair: The floor is now open for statements under cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction".

I call on the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.15.

Mr. Cassidy (Indonesia): I am privileged to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Mindful of the threat posed to humankind by existing weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and underlining the need for the total elimination of such weapons, the Movement reaffirms the need to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and therefore supports monitoring the situation and triggering international action as required.

NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention reaffirm that the Convention's effective contribution to international and regional peace and security can be enhanced through full, balanced, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all its provisions. They also reaffirm the importance of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, and in this connection call on the developed countries to promote international cooperation for the benefit of States parties through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical field, and the removal of all and any discriminatory restrictions, as they are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention.

NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention express serious concern that certain possessor States parties were unable to comply with their obligations regarding the total destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles by the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012. While stressing that such

cases of non-compliance endanger the credibility and integrity of the Convention, they urge all possessor States parties to take every necessary measure to ensure their compliance with the Convention in order to uphold its credibility and integrity.

They further express disappointment that, to date, the obligation of total destruction of all chemical weapons has not been met, and reaffirm that verification of the destruction of all the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles, as well as old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons, should continue to be the top priorities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention declare their firm conviction that international support to provide special care and assistance to all victims suffering the effects of exposure to chemical weapons is an immediate humanitarian need requiring urgent attention by the States parties and the OPCW, and in this context welcome the establishment, at the sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and a voluntary Trust Fund for this purpose.

NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention also welcome the decision on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of article XI of the Convention, also adopted at the sixteenth Session, considering it to be a positive step towards achieving the goal of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article XI.

NAM States parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) reaffirm that the possibility of any use of bacteriological agents and toxins as weapons should be completely excluded, and reaffirm the conviction that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind. They recognize the particular importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a legally-binding protocol and universal adherence to the Convention, and in this regard urge the party rejecting the resumption of the negotiations for such a protocol to reconsider its policy towards the Convention in the light of the persistent requests of other parties.

NAM States parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention welcome the outcome of the Seventh Review Conference, and in particular its

decision to include cooperation and assistance as one of the standing agenda items, “with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X”. They welcome also the Conference’s decision to implement the database system to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation between States parties, and its decision to establish a sponsorship programme, funded by voluntary contributions from States parties, in order to support and increase the participation of developing States parties in the meetings of the intersessional programme in the framework of the BWC.

NAM wishes to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.15, “Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol”, and calls for all delegations’ support. Under paragraph 2, the General Assembly would call upon all States

“to observe strictly the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, and [reaffirm] the vital necessity of upholding its provisions”.

It would also call upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to withdraw them.

Mr. Thornberry (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The UNASUR States strongly condemn the existence of chemical and biological weapons. The catastrophic consequences of their use must be prevented through their complete elimination. In this regard, UNASUR reaffirms its commitment to the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons and their total elimination, as agreed in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We also support the Convention’s full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation, and encourage continuing work towards its universalization.

While highlighting the increased participation of States in the Convention, we call upon States that have not yet acceded to it to do so promptly. We also express our appreciation for the efforts made by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the universalization of the Convention and its implementation at the national level.

We welcome the agreement reached in December 2011, which established a framework for the completion of the destruction of the remaining chemical arsenals, while preserving the integrity of the Convention and the credibility of the OPCW. In this regard, we call upon chemical weapons possessor States to fulfil their obligations under the terms of the Convention and destroy their arsenals. We also call upon all States to eliminate them and to adhere to the Convention promptly and unconditionally.

UNASUR notes that the provisions of the Convention should be applied in such a way that they do not hamper States parties’ economic or technological development or international cooperation on chemical activities for purposes not prohibited by the Convention, as well as those relating to the international exchange of scientific and technical information and chemicals and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

The UNASUR States express their appreciation of the Technical Secretariat’s contribution to the development and effectiveness of the OPCW, which helps to achieve the objective and purpose of the Convention and to ensure the full implementation of its provisions, including those for international verification of compliance, while serving as a forum for consultation and cooperation for the States parties. The UNASUR States appreciate the international cooperation and assistance provided by the OPCW, in particular through the promotion of annual events on assistance and protection against chemical weapons.

UNASUR welcomes the convening of the ministerial meeting on the Chemical Weapons Convention on 1 October this year to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Convention, and looks forward to substantial progress during the Third Review Conference, to be held in April 2013 in The Hague.

In the Organization of American States (OAS) Declaration on Security in the Americas, signed in 2003, our countries declared “our objective to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons”. In addition, through resolution 2107, of 2005, adopted by the OAS General Assembly, we decided unanimously to “fulfil concretely the shared commitment of member states to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons.”

UNASUR reaffirms the fundamental importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). We assure the Committee of our readiness to continue cooperating actively and constructively to advance the goals of full implementation and universalization of the Convention.

We share with many other States the idea of designing and implementing additional measures to ensure effective enforcement of the prohibition. The Convention lacks the means to ensure compliance with the commitments made by the signatory States. In this regard, we support the negotiation of a protocol to the Convention that would establish an effective verification regime.

UNASUR welcomes the consensus outcome document agreed at the Convention's Seventh Review Conference, held in Geneva from 5 to 22 December 2011, and is grateful for the report given this morning by the President of the Conference.

Furthermore, UNASUR welcomes the holding of the Regional Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean on National Implementation, Confidence-Building Measures and the Seventh Review Conference of the BWC, which was held in Lima, Peru, from 9 to 11 November 2011, with the support of the European Union and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The UNASUR States are convinced that national measures translate obligations undertaken by States into practical and effective actions. We therefore reiterate our support for the BWC Implementation Support Unit, which has provided assistance to Member States.

In conclusion, UNASUR reaffirms that the Conventions for the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons are vital international legal instruments to guide multilateral efforts in the struggle for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Abdelkhalek (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, Mr. Chair, allow me at the outset to reaffirm the Group's confidence in your able leadership, as you steer the work of our Committee towards success.

The Arab Group has consistently maintained its principled position of attaching high priority

to achieving a world free from weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical or biological, with particular attention to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

It is equally important to recall that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament clearly identified, by consensus, the priorities for disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. It also accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

The Arab Group has always stressed that the utmost priority with respect to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction must be given to nuclear weapons. However, the Group has taken an equally forthcoming position and active role in efforts relating to other weapons of mass destruction. It is in this spirit that the Arab Group turned its conviction into practical measures aimed at achieving a Middle East free from all weapons of mass destruction, within the framework of the action plan adopted at Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). Despite the Arab Group's adherence to the principles and objectives of all those legally-binding commitments, Israel continues to refuse to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The action plan adopted by the NPT 2010 Review Conference encompasses practical measures on the three pillars of the Treaty — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — and links them to another action plan on the implementation of the 1995 resolution (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex) on the Middle East. This action plan offers an unprecedented opportunity to attain a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The delicate balance crafted in that document clearly reflects the direct link between the need for Israel to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and accession by all States of the region to the conventions governing other weapons of mass destruction.

The Arab Group has always supported the objectives of those treaties, and remains appropriately engaged in their processes. By ensuring the universality of the NPT through Israel's accession as a non-nuclear-weapon State, the world would become a safer place and the

credibility of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime would be safeguarded.

Within the framework of implementation of the commitments contained in the plan of action 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 all other weapons of mass destruction. The Arab States 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 the Israeli ambiguous nuclear capabilities is justified by a potential regional threat from other types of weapons of mass destruction. Arab States, in the meantime, made sure that paragraph 8 of the action plan addresses the importance of achieving parallel progress on the two tracks: the nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Arab Group is committed to engaging in serious negotiations on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We equally look forward to the positive involvement of Israel and other States of the region in the negotiations.

The Chair: I call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Kos (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continues to be a major threat to international peace and security that calls for a global approach. The risk that terrorists may acquire biological or chemical weapons adds a further critical dimension. It is vitally important to enhance international cooperation, both in the framework of the United Nations and between all Member States, in order to address these challenges.

The main multilateral instruments relevant to this cluster debate are the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. These legally-binding instruments play a key role in reducing the threat from such weapons of mass destruction. Full compliance with their provisions is of critical importance to international peace and security. The European Union calls for the universalization and effective implementation of these instruments. We also call on States to consider withdrawing any reservation made upon acceding to the 1925 Protocol.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. Not only does it prohibit State-sponsored bioweapons programmes, but its articles III and IV, if fully implemented by all States parties, will also help combat the threat posed by terrorists.

The EU welcomes the outcome of the Seventh BWC Review Conference, namely, the adoption of the new sustained agenda for the intersessional process until 2016 and other decisions facilitating the implementation and strengthening of the Convention. The Implementation Support Unit for the BWC continues to play a particularly important role in maintaining the link between the States parties to the BWC. The EU wishes to express its continued appreciation and support for the work done by the Unit.

Strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is one of the priorities of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. To implement the Strategy in the field of biological weapons, the EU is focusing on practical measures. In 2006 and 2008, the EU adopted Joint Actions in support of the Convention, with the aim of increasing the membership of the BWC and assisting States parties transpose their obligations into appropriate national legislation and administrative measures.

The implementation of the Joint Actions, which was entrusted to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, had the foreseen results. Since the adoption of the first Joint Action in 2006, 10 more States have become States parties to the Convention, and several States have benefited from assistance provided by EU experts in projects co-organized by the BWC Implementation Support Unit. The last

assistance projects were conducted in Uganda, Serbia and Madagascar.

Under the two Actions, the EU has funded projects in support of the Convention with more than €2 million. After last year's Seventh Review Conference, the European Union decided to renew its commitment in support of the BWC, and adopted a new Decision in support of the BWC ensuring a financial contribution of €1.7 million for implementation of new projects. The technical implementation of the Decision will be again entrusted to the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The main objectives of the new Action are to help promote universality and national implementation of the BWC along with increased capacity for the United Nations Secretary-General's mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of biological and toxin weapons. The projects, which will be organised within the Council Decision, will aim at, among other things, promotion of awareness about implementation of the Convention; supporting key regional actors in defining needs for national implementation through regional workshops; assistance to both non-States parties and States parties, in order to transpose their international obligations into their national legislation; and support for the development of various enabling tools and activities in national implementation, including national confidence-building measures processes.

The EU attaches great importance to the full participation by all States parties in confidence-building measures, a politically-binding mechanism under the Convention. Through our previous Joint Action, we have funded a confidence-building measures guide, organized confidence-building measures workshops and carried out assistance visits. The question of an evaluation and improvement of the confidence-building measures mechanism and its functioning should be given due consideration as part of the intersessional process.

In addition, the EU supports the strengthening of biosafety and biosecurity in third countries through a series of other projects, including through a Joint Action in support of the World Health Organization. Last year, the pilot project was successfully conducted in Oman.

The Chemical Weapons Convention — the first international treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under international verification — is a major multilateral achievement. Today eight United Nations Member States, including

two signatories, have yet to become party to the CWC. The European Union continues to urge those eight States to join in our common endeavour of ridding the world of chemical weapons.

The time-bound destruction of chemical weapons remains one of the principles of the Convention, and the European Union is heartened by the fact that three declared possessor States have completed the destruction of their stockpiles, as provided for in the Convention. At the same time, the EU is concerned that the two major possessor States were not able to meet the final extended deadline. We encourage them to take every necessary measure to accelerate their destruction processes with a view to completing destruction in the shortest time possible. Chemical weapons destruction operations should continue to be conducted in a sincere and transparent fashion, and within the framework of the existing verification regime. We have no doubts about the commitment of both countries to complete destruction of all remaining declared stockpiles as soon as possible.

Syria's admission that it has a stockpile of chemical weapons, made public on 23 July this year, engendered a wave of international condemnation and renewed calls for it to accede to the Convention. The European Union is seriously concerned about the presence of such weapons in Syria. Their existence shows that the threat of chemical weapons is still very real. The EU urges Syria to act responsibly in relation to these abhorrent weapons, not to use them under any circumstances, and to keep them secure. The use of chemical weapons is prohibited by general international law and by conventions, including the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

We are concerned by the information provided last year by Libya about newly-discovered stocks of undeclared chemical weapons. We support Security Council resolution 2017 (2011), which recognized the urgent need to secure and destroy chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya, in accordance with its international obligations. We stress the importance of ensuring the security of all stockpiles. We welcome the resumption of verification activities in Libya by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and commend the transparency shown by the new Libyan Government. We look forward to the early resumption of destruction operations, and the quick and total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya, under strict verification.

The destruction of the weapons of the past must be accompanied by preventing the making of new chemical weapons in the future. In particular, the provisions on industry verification, national implementation and challenge inspections are vital for pursuing the non-proliferation goals of the Convention. We also strongly support efforts to strengthen article X on assistance and protection against chemical weapons.

The third exercise on the delivery of assistance is a clear example of the sort of activity in this area that is essential. The European Union recognizes that the implementation of all the articles of the Convention can prevent toxic chemicals from falling into the hands of terrorists. This applies in particular to measures that lead to enhanced national implementation. The European Union calls on all States concerned to ensure that the necessary legislation and infrastructure are in place to implement the CWC in a full and effective manner.

One expression of the European Union's commitment to the aims of the CWC is our continued support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Since 2005, the EU has provided more than €7 million to support OPCW projects, with the aim of promoting the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its full implementation by States parties.

In March 2012 the European Union adopted a new Council Decision, with a budget of more than €2 million to enhance the capacities of States parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and to enhance international cooperation in the field of chemical activities, including support for OPCW to adapt to developments in the field of science and technology.

The EU welcomes the outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting on the Chemical Weapons Convention held on 1 October 2012, and looks forward to achieving substantial progress during the Third CWC Review Conference in April 2013.

We continue to fully support the actions taken under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The resolution is fundamental to the development of effective mechanisms to prevent and counter proliferation to non-State actors of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We urge all States to comply with and fully implement the legally-binding obligations under the resolution, as well as resolutions 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011).

Resolution 1540 (2004) requires that all States shall take and enforce effective measures to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including controls over related materials. To this end, States shall also establish transit and brokering controls. In this context, the EU dual-use export control regime has been strengthened through the revised Council Regulation ((EC) No 428/2009) setting up a Community regime that now covers the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items. Since its entry into force in 2009, the Regulation has been applied in all 27 EU Member States.

We will continue to provide significant support to third countries to ensure the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). We have been assisting several countries in complying with their obligations, including through several regional outreach activities. When providing assistance, the EU collaborates with the 1540 Committee, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and other major donors to ensure efficiency and avoid overlapping. We are currently in the process of elaborating a new Council Decision that will continue to provide support to the 1540 Committee in promoting the resolution's full implementation.

We continue to support other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, such as the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The EU constructively contributed to the discussion within the G8 about the necessary evolution and update of the Global Partnership, and welcomes its extension beyond 2012, based on the areas of focus enunciated at the G-8 Summit in Muskoka in 2010.

The EU is helping to build capacities for the mitigation of risks related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by supporting the creation of regional chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons centres of excellence and through its Instrument for Stability.

Export controls are very important tools to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. In our view, the Australia Group plays an essential role to this end.

The EU is very concerned about the risks posed by the proliferation of missiles that could be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction, including

ballistic missiles of increasingly great range and sophisticated technologies. A number of tests of medium- and intermediate-range missiles conducted over recent years outside all existing transparency and pre-notification schemes, and in violation of Security Council resolutions, especially by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, deepen our concern.

The European Union continues to consider that The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, as a confidence-building measure, and the Missile Technology Control Regime are the best existing tools to address the problem of missile proliferation. The EU reaffirms the clear multilateral and universal purpose of the Code. We welcome the fact that, as of 2012, 134 States have subscribed to the Code. The EU calls on all States that have not yet done so to adhere to it as soon as possible and thus to join regional and international efforts to prevent and curb comprehensively the proliferation of ballistic missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. We also welcome the strong relationship between the United Nations and the Code, and strongly hope that this year's General Assembly resolution and the ministerial statement in support of the Code will further contribute to its development.

The EU welcomes the significant progress towards the full implementation of the Code. Through a Council Decision, which has recently been renewed, the EU has supported several projects aimed at promoting universality, better implementation and strengthening of the Code. The most recent EU activities include a visit to the European Spaceport in Kourou, in French Guiana, in coordination with the French presidency of the Code, in May 2011.

For the future, the EU plans to organize various events, including targeted outreach and broader seminars to raise awareness on missile proliferation and the role of the Code, and invites other countries to complement these efforts with their ideas and initiatives.

Export controls are also essential to prevent missile proliferation. We consider that the Missile Technology Control Regime plays a key role, and continue to promote EU member States' membership of export control regimes.

Mr. Špokauskas (Lithuania), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The EU is also in favour of examining further multilateral steps to prevent the threat of missile proliferation and to promote disarmament efforts in the missile field. Our proposal to start consultations on a treaty banning short- and intermediate-range ground-to-ground ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction remains valid.

International legal provisions are essential, but not enough by themselves; they must be effectively implemented. Each State must comply with its non-proliferation obligations. Operational cooperation is required to prevent and disrupt illicit transfers, to control exports even more effectively, to counter illegal networks of diversion and trafficking, and to combat proliferation financing.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): France of course associates itself with the European Union's statement. I would like to make some additional remarks from our national perspective.

The discussion on other weapons of mass destruction is of critical importance for my delegation. This is no minor issue. The fact that the Damascus regime acknowledged on 23 July this year that it has chemical weapons demonstrates the urgency of the threat. The international community has legally-binding instruments adapted to the specific nature of these different types of weapons. These instruments are indispensable. They need to be universalized and thoroughly complied with to prevent this threat.

The Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) will be held in 2013. The Convention is unique in the disarmament field. It is the only international convention that provides for the complete eradication of a whole class of weapons of mass destruction and a binding verification system that allows for action to fight proliferation.

Today, we can take pride in the substantial progress made since the Convention entered into force, with the destruction of more than 76 per cent of the chemical weapon stockpiles reported by possessor States. However, there is still much to do to achieve their total elimination, and we urge possessor States to complete the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles as soon as possible.

The Third Review Conference next April should be an opportunity to maintain and strengthen the

credibility of the system set up under the Convention, by adapting it to the challenges of the twenty-first century. Now that the process of destroying chemical weapons is well under way, we should put the emphasis on the objective of non-proliferation, which requires strengthening of the industrial verification system and implementation at the national level.

Even though 188 States are now parties to the Convention, its universalization has not yet been completed. My country urges all States that have not already done so to sign and ratify the Convention. The risk posed by chemical weapons still exists. We can see it today in Syria, where the situation is particularly worrisome, given the level of violence there and the repeated outrages that the Damascus regime has committed against its people.

On this point, I recall that, as the President of the French Republic told the General Assembly (see A/67/PV.6), the regime's use of chemical weapons would have major consequences for Syria. Faced with this situation, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons must be ready to act if it is called upon by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We welcome the action taken by its Director-General in this matter.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, whose Seventh Review Conference was held in December 2011, is another crucial component of the international system for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It enshrines a fundamental principle for international peace and security: biological weapons must not be developed, produced or stockpiled for any reason whatsoever. France urges all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the treaty, whose universalization is a crucial objective for my country.

My delegation welcomes the adoption at the Seventh Review Conference of a new intersessional process to deal with three vital subjects on an ongoing basis: scientific and technological developments; cooperation and assistance; and national implementation. Before the next review conference in 2016, discussions will also focus on a confidence-building measures mechanism and implementation of article VII.

The meetings held in the new intersessional process will enable States parties to share useful

experience and information. But they will also give us an opportunity to discuss practical measures to make the Convention more authoritative and effective. With this in mind, France will continue to promote the idea of a peer review system, initially presented at the Review Conference held at the end of last year.

As the depositary State of the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of chemical and bacteriological weapons, France reaffirms its attachment to that instrument, which is still vital, particularly since the major conventions prohibiting those two types of weapons are not yet fully universalized. France urges all Member States that have not yet acceded to the Protocol to do so without further delay, and it urges those States that submitted reservations to withdraw them.

No one must think that the use of such weapons of mass destruction will go unexplained or unpunished. Therefore, France maintains its full support for the Secretary-General's Mechanism for investigating their alleged use. France reaffirms that it will contribute, in accordance with its capacities, to a specific request for help in putting the Mechanism into effect. In order to ensure that it functions well if called upon, France will organize training for the experts likely to be involved. It will take place from 4 to 10 November this year within the framework of the Group of Eight Global Partnership.

The issue of weapons of mass destruction delivery systems is also central to this discussion. The Security Council has repeatedly stressed, particularly in its resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2011), that the proliferation of missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction threatens international peace and security. The international community has a limited range of instruments to fight the proliferation of ballistic missiles, and they do not provide for mandatory monitoring of activities in this area.

But we are all aware that the Iranian and North Korean programmes in particular are moving forward. The Syrian Government's continued activities related to developing its missiles, probably with the help of third countries, is also very worrisome, especially in view of the revelations concerning its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

Missiles are therefore a collective concern that must be dealt with urgently. We should step up our efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of multilateral

arrangements, such as The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

We still face major challenges, even though this year marks both the tenth anniversary of the HCOC and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the MTCR. We especially support the efforts to universalize the HCOC. We are determined to continue raising the international community's awareness of this threat and to promote transparency regarding ballistic missiles.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): The United States remains encouraged by the progress made by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in working towards a world free of chemical weapons since the entry into force some 15 years ago of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The CWC now has a near universal adherence of 188 States; 75 per cent of all declared chemical weapon stockpiles have been verifiably destroyed; and over 4,700 inspections have been conducted at military and industry sites. That progress, of course, is due to the combined efforts and commitment of States parties, along with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, led by its Director-General, our former colleague in Geneva, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü.

The United States has safely destroyed approximately 90 per cent of its chemical weapons stockpile under OPCW verification, before the April 2012 deadline. The United States continues its steadfast commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and will continue working in a transparent manner towards the complete destruction of our remaining small amount of chemical weapons.

The United States also remains fully committed to the non-proliferation of chemical weapons and to working to ensure that there will be no re-emergence of chemical weapons. Such a goal will take commitment from all parties and a continued effort in a number of areas, to include universality. We recognize that preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons requires a strong inspectorate, a credible industrial verification regime, and enactment by all States parties of the necessary domestic legal regimes to fully enforce the CWC. These are all areas of vital importance for the success of the CWC and the Organization responsible for its implementation.

The Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention next April provides a good opportunity to reinforce those concerns and to work with international partners to ensure that the CWC remains an important instrument for ensuring global peace and security.

While we remain proud of the accomplishments of, and cooperation from, States parties and the OPCW, there remain real challenges and sobering realities, such as the acknowledged possession of chemical weapons by Syria and its stated willingness to use them in response to "external aggression". President Obama has made it clear that the use of chemical weapons in Syria would have enormous consequences. The Secretary-General and the Director-General of the OPCW also have emphasized that the use of chemical weapons would be reprehensible. Other world leaders have stressed this same point.

The world is now faced with a situation in which the possibility of the use of chemical weapons is very real. These chemical weapons pose a grave threat to peace and international security, and further underscore the vital importance of the OPCW and States parties and the vital role they can play in working to ensure the elimination of such weapons and strengthening international security. The United States applauds the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the OPCW and encourages the continuation of such efforts.

We reiterate the call on the Syrian Government to eliminate its chemical weapons arsenal and accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we will continue to work with the international community towards that end. As stated in the Convention's preamble, all States parties have

“[d]etermined for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons, through the implementation of the provisions of this Convention”.

We must stand together to make that goal a reality.

I turn to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC was an opportunity for greater imagination and greater collective effort in confronting the threat of biological weapons, and an opportunity to continue the

important work of adapting our international efforts to a changing world and a changing threat.

The Conference, under the distinguished presidency of Ambassador van den IJssel, was challenging. Not everyone was ready to seize the opportunity to do something new. And among those who were ready, not everyone agreed on what that something new should be. But it is in the nature of things that multilateral discussions on important issues are complex, that there are competing views, that dialogue and understanding are important, and that change may only occur through gradual processes. So while the Review Conference did not achieve everything my Government certainly hoped it would, we are satisfied with the outcome, and believe the stage is set for enhancing the important work of this forum.

For the first time ever, a United States Secretary of State led the United States delegation to the Review Conference. When Secretary Clinton addressed that gathering, she spoke about how the biological weapons threat is evolving, and the importance that the world community adapt its outlook in the face of new challenges. She also highlighted the value of transparency and efforts to build mutual trust among parties to the Convention; we may not always agree on how to do it, but we all agree that it is important to have confidence that our treaty partners are living up to their obligations.

As part of that initiative, the United States hosted a number of ambassadors on a tour of our national biodefence campus in July. We also hosted a large number of countries, organizations and other stakeholders at an international conference on health and security in September, which highlighted the value of collaboration and preparedness.

At the Review Conference, Secretary Clinton also called for renewed work in three broad areas: strengthening national implementation measures to combat proliferation and the threat of bioterrorism; understanding and addressing the implications of developments in science and technology, including taking steps to guard against the misuse of scientific knowledge; and building international cooperation and assistance, particularly in detecting and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease.

The Review Conference adopted a five-year workplan whose structure reflects those key areas. They are broader topics, intentionally so, than we have

addressed in the past. And for the first time, the new programme will allow us to address each of these topics every year. That means that over the next five-year cycle we will come back to the same issues systematically in order to make real progress and generate momentum for the Eighth Review Conference in 2016. This approach will also enhance our ability to have coherent and predictable interaction with other organizations and international actors who are stakeholders in the interconnected health security field.

But the real challenge is before us now. The Review Conference set the stage, but it is up to us, the BWC States parties, to take meaningful action. In July, the BWC States parties held the first expert-level consultations of the new process, under the very able chairmanship of Ambassador Delmi of Algeria. Overall, my delegation is impressed by the seriousness with which delegations engaged the issues.

Some important proposals were put forward by a number of delegations — mine included — for consideration at the BWC States parties' Annual Meeting this December. I hope that all Member States will join together in making the most of this opportunity to strengthen international security and advance global health.

All 165 BWC States Parties should work together as well to support universalization of this important treaty. In that regard, as one of the depositaries of the BWC, I am particularly pleased to congratulate Ambassador Kabua of the Marshall Islands, whose legislature, the Nitijela, has just approved the accession of the Marshall Islands to the BWC. Once the instruments of ratification have been duly deposited, the Marshall Islands will become the 166th State party to this important treaty. I hope that other non-parties will attend the universality luncheon, which our Vice-Chair of the BWC 2012 meetings will host today at the Swiss Mission.

Mr. Amano (Japan): The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has significantly contributed to the goals of the United Nations in terms of promoting international peace and security through disarmament by banning the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons in an effectively verifiable manner. While we highly commend the wide adherence to the Convention, with 188 States parties joining over the 15 years since its entry into force, the universalization of the CWC

has become increasingly important, given the current international security environment.

We praise the continued efforts made by the chemical weapon possessor States for the destruction of their stockpiles in good faith. With the verifiable destruction of 75 per cent of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, the completion of the destruction process is now coming into sight. Pending its completion, the destruction of chemical weapons will still be the core objective of the Convention.

In order to continuously adapt to the rapidly changing international security environment, it is high time for us to consider the future of the CWC. The Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the CWC, to be held next year, will be a perfect opportunity for doing so. Against the backdrop of global efforts towards preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including to non-State actors, the CWC is expected to perform more important roles than ever in this respect.

Japan has steadily implemented the obligations of the CWC and has played a constructive part in promoting the effective achievement of the Convention's objectives. We take our obligations under the CWC seriously, and therefore Japan is committed to the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) in China and has achieved tangible progress through steady and sustained efforts. We have invested enormous human and financial resources in order to address the unprecedented and technically challenging tasks for the destruction of ACWs.

The results are evident. Japan has thus far destroyed more than 35,000 ACWs, with a mobile destruction facility, and has deployed another such facility to China in preparation for the next series of destruction operations. Moreover, we have been preparing earnestly for setting up an additional destruction facility. With the cooperation of China, Japan is resolved to fully complete the destruction of all abandoned chemical weapons, and will do its utmost to this end.

Like the CWC, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) has also significantly contributed to promoting international peace and security through disarmament. The rapid advance in biotechnology has benefited humankind, but at the same time biothreats posed by the misuse or illicit use of advanced science and technology, particularly by non-State actors, have been growing. In this context, the universalization of

the BWC has become more important than ever before for international security.

Japan welcomes the final document adopted at the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC last December. What is more, we hope that the valuable discussion during the current intersessional process will produce concrete results towards the next review conference on each agenda item.

In order to strengthen the implementation of the BWC, Japan, as a leading country in the field of life science as well as a member of the group of countries consisting of Japan, Australia, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand, has been an active participant in the debate on the various topics discussed under the BWC. In particular, we have been sending experts to BWC meetings to share our experience and knowledge in the areas of disease surveillance, education and awareness-raising for scientists, and other relevant issues.

Japan will carry on its efforts to strengthen BWC implementation, with a special focus on responses to the rapid advances in science and technology related to the Convention and the dual-use issues involved.

Ms. Nyhamar (Norway): The Chemical Weapons Convention is a key instrument to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction. We recently celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of its entry into force and its impressive achievements. At the same time, we recognize that more efforts are needed to ensure that the Convention meets its full potential. Destruction is far from completed and will remain the core objective for years to come. We strongly encourage possessor States to do their utmost to meet their destruction targets as soon as possible. Even if the Convention has already created a very strong norm against chemical weapons, we must continue our efforts towards CWC universality. It is only through universal adherence to the Convention that we will reach a world fully free of these inhumane weapons.

Syria's admission that it possesses a stockpile of chemical weapons has rightly caused great concern, and shows that the threat of chemical weapons is still very real. Norway urges Syria to act responsibly, not to use these abhorrent weapons under any circumstances, and to keep them secure. International law, binding also for Syria, strictly prohibits the use of chemical weapons.

We have encouraged the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to be ready and prepared to cooperate with any request from the Secretary-General, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention and the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW. Norway welcomes the conclusion of the Supplementary Arrangement with the United Nations.

The Third Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention next year will provide an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the CWC. Verification plays a crucial role in providing confidence that all States parties are living up to their obligations under the Convention. In this area, the CWC is in the forefront compared with other arms control instruments. As more non-States parties accede to the Convention, there will be an increased need for verification. It is essential that we make sure the OPCW maintains the necessary capacity for current and future tasks and remains the world's knowledge repository in the field of chemical weapons.

The use of chemical weapons has severe humanitarian implications. The international community must be able to respond swiftly if the worst were to happen. In doing so, we must take into account capacities already in place, not least those of existing relief agencies. Norway has financially supported OPCW activities in this area over the years and will continue to do so. We are also convinced that the CWC could benefit from increased inclusion of relevant stakeholders and civil society organizations in its work in order to ensure ownership and engagement. Evidently, we could learn from the working methods of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in this regard.

Norway welcomes the positive and forward-looking outcome of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), held last December. Our new programme of work, where we cover three standing agenda items and a fourth biennial topic, should allow us to explore ways to further strengthen the implementation of the Convention, as well as addressing existing and emerging challenges in the coming years.

During the first Meeting of Experts of the intersessional process, we had a good exchange of views and benefited from the variety of speakers. This makes us look forward to discussing the policy aspects

at the coming Meeting of States Parties in December. As with the CWC, we must continue to work towards universality of the BWC, although the Convention has created a very strong norm against biological weapons.

Increased universality, transparency and functionality of confidence-building measures (CBM) remain a Norwegian priority. We are pleased that the Review Conference managed to improve the CBM forms, reducing the reporting burden and hopefully increasing participation. Still, more efforts are needed both to improve the functionality of the CBM forms and to encourage more States parties to submit them.

A common challenge for both the CWC and the BWC is the need to strengthen national implementation of the Conventions. Norway is concerned about the relatively high number of States parties that have not yet put in place and enforced the necessary legislative and administrative measures, and urges all States to do so. We recognize that some Member States need international assistance to ensure full implementation of the Conventions. This issue is closely related to national capacity building and skills development in areas related to peaceful use. Against this background, Norway has made a number of voluntary contributions to assistance programmes and projects, particularly in Africa and South-East Asia. Norway will continue to be a staunch supporter of the CWC as well as the BWC, which we consider to be invaluable instruments in our common efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

One main reason for the CWC success story is that the Convention has been bolstered by the OPCW. We must ensure that this Organization and its Technical Secretariat are given the political and financial support they need to fulfil their mandate. Likewise, we would also highlight the importance of maintaining a strong Implementation Support Unit for the BWC, as the Unit has proved so valuable for the health of the Convention.

Lastly, I should like to say a few words on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This is an urgent issue. There is a window of opportunity to deal with this agenda in a preventive manner. Unless we deal with it soon, we will gradually be confronted by an increasing number of countries claiming national security interest as an excuse for inaction.

Norway is therefore ready to move forward on deliberations on how to prevent an arms race in outer space and to support the annual draft resolution in the

General Assembly on this topic. At the same time, we should not delay in enhancing transparency measures on civilian outer space activities. We are grateful for the work carried out by the European Union on a draft code of conduct for outer space activities.

Lastly, Norway joins others in calling for the full universality of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan joins other countries in reiterating the global commitment to the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which constitutes one of the fundamental policies of my Government and its foreign policy. My country has in recent years consistently translated international standards into action for accession to major international export control regimes and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In the past Kazakhstan was a centre of production and testing of nuclear and biological weapons, but after gaining independence the Government worked on the most difficult task of dismantling and eliminating infrastructure at the Semipalatinsk nuclear weapons test site and production facilities of the world's largest biological weapons production and weaponization plant in Stepnogorsk.

Kazakhstan signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction on 14 January 1993, and ratified it on 24 June 1999, and so possesses no chemical weapons whatsoever. My Government has therefore made many advances in non-proliferation of chemical weapons and chemical safety, closely collaborating with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its experts in enacting appropriate national legislation and regulations, complying with the Convention, and building national capacity for protection against chemical weapons.

The Kazakh Ministry of Oil and Gas has organized workshops and meetings for the States of Central Asia on effectively implementing the Convention. Furthermore, although Kazakhstan is formally not a member of the Australian Group regime, we are, in view of the large number of successful measures adopted by the country to improve export controls and the transit potential and growth of our petrochemical and chemical industries, now ready to become a member State of the Australian Group. The OPCW experts and foreign participants have

assessed positively the progress made by Kazakhstan in implementing the Convention.

My country has new areas of cooperation with many countries, with key target goals, such as developing expertise, through a cooperative biological research programme, to prevent proliferation of biological weapons; securing dangerous pathogens and strains by strengthening biosafety and biosecurity at facilities; consolidation of dangerous pathogens at secure central repositories; and the elimination of biological-weapons-related equipment and infrastructure. We have also developed our capacity to detect, diagnose, and respond to natural and bioterrorist infectious disease outbreaks. We also have worked on developing and testing new molecular diagnostics and therapies to cure diseases endemic to Central Asia.

The people of Kazakhstan, who experienced firsthand the horrifying consequences of weapons of mass destruction, are determined to be at the forefront of the global fight against the proliferation of those deadly weapons. We therefore stand ready to be an active and significant player in the multilateral action for the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Acting Chair: I call on the representative of Poland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.44.

Mr. Borkowski (Poland): I assure the Chair of Poland's full support for his leadership of the Committee. Poland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of Poland, draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.44, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". The continued work on the Chemical Weapons Convention draft resolution is a concrete input Poland has made over many years to promote the effective prohibition of chemical weapons. Full and effective implementation of the Convention and its universality is a core objective of Poland's efforts for the total prohibition of chemical weapons.

The draft resolution is a unique document. It emphasizes the importance of the universality of the Convention. It also provides United Nations support for all four pillars of the Convention. The first pillar is support for the irreversible destruction of all chemical

weapons and their means of production. The second is non-proliferation, to ensure that new chemical weapons do not emerge. The third is assistance and protection for States parties to defend themselves against the possible use of chemical weapons. And the fourth pillar is international cooperation to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry.

With the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus every year, the United Nations has expressed unequivocal support for the prohibition of chemical weapons.

We consider that the text of this year's draft resolution is well balanced. This year we have introduced two changes. One is to reflect the need to eliminate the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles in the shortest time possible, and the second is to recognize the preparatory work for the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

During consultations on the text, both in New York and in The Hague, we discussed several proposals to be reflected in this year's draft. We found, however, that there is no consensus support to introduce new proposals. As in previous years, our basic goal was to ensure consensus approval for the draft resolution. It is crucial to provide continued unequivocal support of the United Nations for the implementation of the Convention. During the extensive bilateral and open-ended informal consultations, attended by many delegations, we received broad support and a willingness to join a consensus on the proposed draft resolution.

Let me express our warm gratitude to all the delegations participating in our extensive consultations on this year's draft resolution, consultations that again confirmed the existence of broad political support in all regions for the implementation of all pillars of the Convention. The draft resolution is an expression of that support.

As in previous years, Poland is proud to continue to serve as the sole sponsor of the draft resolution. The delegation of the Republic of Poland asks that the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention be approved without a vote.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Committee about the International Meeting on Chemical Safety and Security. The meeting, organized by Poland

and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will take place in Tarnów, Poland, on 8 and 9 November. It will be a major international gathering, covering chemical safety and security in a holistic and comprehensive way. Representatives of States, international organizations, chemical industries and academia, gathered in Tarnów, will explore national approaches and innovative strategies to address chemical safety and security issues. They will identify steps that should be taken to enhance chemical safety and security worldwide, while ensuring economic growth and development.

The meeting will promote the precious goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It will support the engagement of the OPCW to enhance national capacity-building for research, development, storage, production, and the safe use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. It will create an opportunity to raise the issue of assistance needs in the areas of chemical safety and security. I extend a warm invitation to all members of the United Nations to attend the meeting. A concept note of the meeting will be made available to delegations.

Mr. McGauran (Ireland): I wish at the outset to align myself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Last week the Committee focused on considering ways of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. This is a key goal for Ireland, as for many other countries. However, we know that human genius has developed other ways of annihilating itself, and these also must be addressed.

In the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) we have two instruments which clearly outlaw two categories of weapon; their use, of course, was already banned by the 1925 Geneva Protocols. With 188 States parties, the CWC is close to universal acceptance; the BWC, with 165, is further from that point. In both cases, Ireland strongly encourages all States to join the overwhelming global majority as quickly as possible. The universal acceptance of a total ban on these weapons would be a major achievement and contribution towards global peace and security.

However, ratification of treaties alone is not enough to ensure that these weapons will not be used. Implementation is the key which will make the difference. Only 47 per cent of those States which have

fully ratified the CWC, for example, have comprehensive implementing legislation and regulations. While Ireland acknowledges that there are many reasons for this relatively low rate, it is clear that further work is required to close gaps in the global system which might allow the spread of either weapons or the elements required to make weapons to States or non-State actors.

Cooperation and assistance to develop the means for implementation will be important in this respect, and Ireland wishes to acknowledge the work undertaken by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat to this end. In particular, the efforts to enhance peer-to-peer experience exchanges and focused information provision are to be praised. We encourage the OPCW Technical Secretariat and States to provide information where they can and to take advantage of cooperation where they need to.

Similarly, Ireland fully supports the transparency measures undertaken in the framework of the BWC as an effective means of building confidence and trust between all States parties, an essential basis for achieving the total elimination of these appalling weapons.

Ireland regrets that it has not been possible to destroy all chemical weapons within the timeframe established by the Chemical Weapons Convention. We urge all possessor States to meet their destruction obligations as quickly as possible, in line with the relevant decision of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention. In this context, I must also recall that chemical weapons should never be used in any circumstances. While the Syrian declaration that it would not use chemical weapons against its own people is welcome, Ireland strongly urges Syria to go further and not only never use its weapons against anybody, but to make arrangements for their verified destruction as soon as possible.

I would also recall here our support for the measures outlined in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent resolutions. Full implementation of the steps identified therein would help not only to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups, but also to effectively implement obligations under both the BWC and the CWC.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles represents a threat to international peace and security both in its own right and as a potential means of delivery of weapons

of mass destruction. Ireland adheres to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, along with 133 other States. We encourage all States to adhere to the Code. We also believe that effective export controls must be an element of efforts to prevent missile proliferation, and in this context the Missile Technology Control Regime has an important role to play.

Ms. Rimsane (Latvia): Latvia aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union (EU) and fully endorses the EU policy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In addition, let me highlight some issues of particular importance to Latvia.

My country regards it as essential that we work together to limit conditions conducive to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials to, from and among States and non-State actors. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) provides a basis; under it all Member States are bound to adopt necessary legislation to counter all possible illicit flows of WMD-related materials. Latvia, along with other EU member States, employs a strict export control regime on WMD-related items, thus striving to meet the requirements of the resolution.

In this regard, I would like to draw attention to a particular subject in which Latvia, as a seafaring nation, is a stakeholder. The maritime domain is intensively used by States for peaceful commerce and trade. Unfortunately, it is used also for illicit trafficking in WMD-related materials. Yet the detection and prevention of possible WMD-related proliferation at sea is complicated by significant shortcomings in crucial areas.

First, I would mention maritime surveillance, a prerequisite for achieving full situational awareness of what is happening in the maritime environment. Current maritime surveillance mechanisms are not aimed at identifying WMD-related trafficking. Further areas where we see shortcomings and need for improvement are maritime cargo control and maritime interdiction.

Latvia believes that modernization of maritime surveillance systems to enable effective detection of WMD-related trafficking at sea and an enhancement of subregional, regional and international cooperation, including the signing of bilateral and multilateral standing agreements on interdiction and boarding of

vessels at sea, would strongly contribute to our shared commitment in countering WMD-related proliferation. Efforts to address this issue are ongoing. Allow me just to mention the Proliferation Security Initiative. Around 100 States have endorsed its principles, and we hope that the number will continue to rise.

Latvia is dedicated to contributing to the continuous improvement of the ability to counter the contemporary threat of WMD-related proliferation. In March this year Latvia hosted an international event on countering WMD threats in the maritime environment, in which participating States came up with many valuable thoughts on the way forward for improving the existing capabilities for WMD-related maritime counter-proliferation.

Finally, I take this opportunity to mention the issue of chemical weapons which were dumped in the Baltic Sea decades ago. They pose not only environmental and health concerns, but also safety and security concerns. My country fully supports initiatives led by Lithuania in raising international awareness on this matter.

Ms. Balaguer Labada (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction is a serious threat to international peace and security. Cuba reiterates its principled position of favouring the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, under strict international monitoring. Cuba does not possess, nor does it intend to possess, any type of weapon of mass destruction. As a State party to international legal instruments that prohibit such weapons, Cuba reiterates its strong commitment to the full and effective implementation of all their provisions.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has shown itself to be an effective instrument, and it should be maintained. We firmly believe in its contribution to promoting peace and security. The total, verifiable destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons, including abandoned weapons, is a fundamental pillar of the Convention, and should continue to be so.

The Third Special Session of the Conference to Review the Operation of the Convention represents a new opportunity to reassert the Convention's principles and basic objectives, and to maintain the

balance between its pillars: destruction, verification, assistance and international cooperation. Cuba reiterates its commitment to working with all States parties in a transparent and constructive manner to achieve a positive outcome of the Conference, which should contribute to enhancing the Convention's implementation. We firmly believe that the Conference can provide tangible solutions for issues that continue to be unresolved.

The best way to achieve universality of the Convention is through the full, non-discriminatory application of all its provisions. It is a body of interrelated norms, and its balance can be maintained only if all its provisions are respected. Greater attention should be given to the issue of international cooperation provided for in the Convention. Article XI should be enhanced. A renewed agreement needs to be established for the article's full implementation. Cuba reiterates its commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention, and supports all efforts to ensure its universalization. The possibility of any use of bacteriological and toxin agents as weapons should be completely removed.

The only way to enhance and perfect the Convention is through negotiating and adopting a legally-binding protocol that would be effective with regard to the production, transfer and use of biological weapons. This should also include monitoring of all the provisions of the Convention in a balanced and broad way. The Biological Weapons Convention is a whole, and therefore it is necessary to deal with all its provisions in a balanced and integral way. In this context, we pay tribute to the fact that the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties carried out a full review of all the provisions of the Convention.

As has been said on many occasions, including in the working document submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement at the Review Conference, we consider that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article X is essential in order to achieve the objectives and purposes of the Convention. The Seventh Review Conference represents a step forward, since a number of provisions were adopted in that regard. We are also pleased that the issue of enhancing cooperation under article X will be the subject of an ongoing review in the intersessional period. We are confident that the review's outcome will include the adoption of specific measures guaranteeing the full and effective application of the article.

At the same time, we reiterate that the intersessional period cannot be a substitute for discussions on the implementation of the Convention. However, we believe that the decisions adopted by the Review Conference with regard to the intersessional period, 2012 to 2015, are the appropriate framework for continuing to make progress in applying the Convention in all its aspects, in order to have a balanced focus, on the basis of consensus.

My country shares the legitimate international concern that groups of terrorists could obtain weapons of mass destruction. This risk cannot be eliminated by using a selective approach, limited to horizontal proliferation and ignoring vertical proliferation disarmament. If we really wish to deal with the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, we must make urgent progress in disarmament, including the total elimination of those weapons.

Cuba insists that no measure by the Security Council should replace the essential role played by the General Assembly and multilateral treaties that are in force with regard to weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, we reiterate that the selective initiatives and discriminatory measures promoted by groups of countries outside the multilateral framework should not replace the role played by the United Nations in all aspects of dealing with weapons of mass destruction. Finally, we reassert our continuing commitment to the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Berbash (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I express our full support for the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

I also acknowledge the observer of the European Union, who referred today to the work and position of my country as regards the stock of chemical weapons recently discovered. We believe that this is an expression of the European Union's support for our efforts to eliminate stockpiles of chemical weapons.

I wish to emphasize the following points.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the most important achievements of the international community in the field of disarmament, in that it reduces the danger posed by weapons of mass destruction. Numerous signatory countries — 188 States in total — have ratified the Convention. We all

hope that the Convention will be universalized and that all States, without exception, will become party to it.

I stress the significant role played by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), under the guidance of the Director-General, Ahmet Üzümcü, in seeking to attain the objectives set by the Convention and ensure its universalization and the elimination of all chemical weapon stockpiles.

As regards the new era in Libya, our country is resolved to fulfil all its commitments, in keeping with international disarmament instruments. Libya stands ready to cooperate in full transparency and credibility with the international community, in order to implement the provisions of salient international agreements and protocols in this area, in order to create an international environment conducive to the elimination and destruction of all weapons of mass destruction.

Accordingly, Libya rapidly alerted the OPCW, on 25 November last year, to the existence of excess stockpiles of chemical weapons discovered following the fall of the dictatorship. The weapons had not been disclosed by the previous regime. Libya has cooperated with the Organization's inspectors in order to verify the stocks and take necessary measures to ensure their protection, which the Organization acknowledged.

Libya has also submitted a detailed plan to the Organization's Technical Secretariat for the elimination of the stocks between now and 2016. My country will implement the plan in due course, and we hope that friendly countries will help us. We thank all those countries that have helped us to fulfil our obligations.

To add further detail on contacts between us and the OPCW, the Director-General made a formal visit to Libya with a delegation from the Technical Secretariat, between 27 and 28 May this year. During that visit measures for implementation of the Convention's provisions and measures to strengthen cooperation between Libya and the OPCW were studied.

Finally, we reaffirm our interest in pursuing that cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and the member States of the Organization in order to meet the objectives enshrined within the Convention for the sake of international security.

Mr. Woolcott (Australia): Australia remains deeply concerned by the threat to global and regional security posed by chemical and biological weapons. And, as

contemporary events show, this threat is current. But we must be clear — there are no circumstances justifying the use of such weapons.

Countering this threat demands undiminished commitment to strengthening implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and its successor resolutions, and related export control regimes. It also requires tailored responses to regional proliferation dynamics.

As well as nurturing and strengthening the multilateral infrastructure which underpins our ambitions to end for ever the scourge of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), it remains vital that States have in place the necessary measures to avoid being unwitting agents of proliferation through direct sourcing of WMD-related goods or through transit, trans-shipment or illicit brokering activity.

In this regard, Australia strongly supports the Republic of Korea, which is again presenting its biennial, cross-cutting draft resolution entitled “Preventing and combating illicit brokering activities” (A/C.1/67/L.24). We encourage strong support and co-sponsorship for the draft resolution; brokering must not be allowed to provide a loophole for efforts to combat proliferation, whether in the conventional or WMD-related field.

The Chemical Weapons Convention plays an integral role in the international security regime and contributes to global non-proliferation efforts. States parties can be decidedly proud of the achievements of the Convention since its entry into force. Thus far, 75 per cent of the world’s declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been verifiably destroyed. Chemical weapons possessor States need to make every effort to ensure all remaining stockpiles are destroyed at the earliest possible date, but no later than their planned completion dates.

Australia is committed to working with others to uphold the strength and integrity of the CWC and to achieving the goals of universal adherence, coupled with full and effective implementation of the CWC; the destruction of all existing chemical weapons; and maintenance of this position through effective verification regimes. Australia pledges its support and assistance in the fulfilment of these objectives, and urges all States not party to the CWC to accede without further delay. We strongly encourage all States parties that have not fully implemented their article

VII obligations to continue their efforts to establish a national authority, as well as legislation that covers all key areas of the Convention.

Australia maintains its commitment to ensure the continued success of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) beyond the destruction of all chemical weapons, so that it can, in conjunction with States parties, meet the non-proliferation challenges now and into the future, and that chemical weapons will never be used again. Australia unreservedly joins other countries that view with abhorrence and condemnation the possible use of chemical weapons by anyone, including by States not yet party to the Convention. The Third Special Session of the Conference to Review the Operation of the Convention, which will take place next April, will be an important opportunity to recalibrate and redouble our efforts.

Australia values the Biological Weapons Convention, which underpins the international consensus against biological weapons and supports international efforts to promote peaceful uses of the life sciences. As life sciences continue to develop rapidly, so does the contemporary relevance of the BWC. Indeed, the consensus outcome of the Seventh BWC Review Conference of the States Parties in December 2011 reaffirmed the importance of the instrument in multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

The new intersessional process agreed at that Conference now provides States parties the opportunity over the coming years to address in a sustained manner national implementation, as well as developments in the fields of science and technology and international cooperation and assistance. We need to use that opportunity. We need to use the intersessional period to develop a practical vision for the future of the Convention. And we need to ensure that the Convention is keeping up with the developments in the life sciences, for which industry and academia are increasingly the primary drivers. We also need to work harder to ensure that all States become States parties to the Convention, sharing the responsibilities, but also sharing the benefits of this unique Convention, which joins security and public health issues.

Regional exchanges can also complement and reinforce our multilateral efforts in Geneva. And Australia continues to play an active role in this regard.

For example, just last month the Philippines, the United States and Australia co-chaired in Manila an Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF) on preparedness and response to a biological event. By bringing together representatives of the health, emergency management, law enforcement and security sectors of ARF-participating countries, the workshop underlined the value of practical regional work to ensure the better implementation of the Convention.

Australia's commitment to bolstering non-proliferation is reflected in its active support for a range of additional measures — for example, the international arrangements for establishing global best-practice controls on the export of WMD-relevant items and the means ballistic missile technologies. We are also active in fostering capabilities to implement controls on the export, import and transit and trans-shipment of sensitive goods and technologies.

We chair the Australia Group, a cooperative and voluntary group which strengthens global security by making it harder and more expensive for would-be proliferators to obtain the dual-use materials, equipment and technology sought to develop chemical or biological weapons. The Australia Group common guidelines and export control lists provide an international benchmark to help all United Nations Member States fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and related resolutions.

Our activity in the year ahead will see the ongoing process of updating and refining the control standards and the broadest possible programme of outreach. And the good news is that an increasing number of countries are drawing on the work of the Australia Group to strengthen their national control systems, and consequently global standards are steadily improving.

However, challenges remain. Scientific developments and the availability of increasingly sophisticated production techniques offer proliferators new options. At the same time, the increasingly wide availability of sophisticated goods, combined with new procurement channels, means that we need to be constantly vigilant and proactive. It is our collective job to ensure that we address these new challenges in a co-operative manner.

Mr. Malov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I stress the extremely important nature of the theme that we are considering for enhancing international security and strategic stability, and also

the non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction.

A key role in this area is played by such international instruments as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). They demonstrate the important part that could be played by multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament mechanisms in enhancing international peace.

The Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC, held in 2011, demonstrated convincingly that States parties advocate enhancing the regime and enhancing transparency and accountability of States for activities in the biological sphere. In general, we support the outcome of that Review Conference. It is very important that the analysis of each article of the Convention allowed States parties to demonstrate how they view the Convention's implementation and what needs to be done to enhance it.

Secondly, I emphasize the importance of a regular exchange of information about national biological activities in order to enhance confidence.

The third element that I wish to stress is that, in order to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation and assistance in the use of contemporary biological technology for civilian ends, States parties agreed to establish the appropriate databases. However, the Conference showed that on many key issues relating to enhancing the Convention regime there continue to be significant disagreements between parties. First, this concerns the problem of enhancing confidence in full respect for the Convention, by States parties. There is growing concern about the inadequate oversight of biological research, whose products could have a dual use. There is no unity in addressing issues of implementing article X, which deals with providing assistance for peaceful biological activities.

We continue to believe that a major element in enhancing the Convention and ensuring confidence in its being implemented would be the development of an appropriate oversight mechanism. The Russian Federation is ready to undertake constructive work and cooperation with all States parties in order to ensure that during this intersessional period we reach a clear way forward to a consensus acceptable to all.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the most successful multilateral mechanisms in

the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We view the destruction of chemical weapons and their non-proliferation as a priority area in the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We again confirm our commitment to the Convention's basic aim — the full destruction of chemical weapons.

We are ready to make every effort to destroy, under international oversight, all existing Russian stockpiles of chemical weapons as soon as possible. There are currently in Russia six sites for the destruction of chemical weapons, and at the beginning of 2013 we shall launch the seventh and final site. We have destroyed over 70 per cent of our stockpiles: more than 27,000 tons of poisonous substances. We are increasing our budget appropriation for chemical demilitarization and finding additional sources of funding for the specialized Russian programme.

We are generally pleased with the compromise decision of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the CWC on the so-called 2012 problem. Although we do not regard it as being fully satisfactory, we supported its adoption in the interests of maintaining the Convention's integrity and authority and enhancing the effectiveness of the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. As the world's declared stockpiles of chemical weapons are destroyed, the non-proliferation issue becomes even more significant in that work.

Finally, we call upon all countries still outside the legal scope of the Convention to immediately sign up to it. States parties should fully implement its provisions by setting up national implementation bodies and bring national legislation fully into line.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.