



General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

First Committee

13th meeting

Monday, 22 October 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Percaya (Indonesia)

*In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Salim (Kenya),
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda items 86 to 102 (continued)

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

The Acting Chair: I should like to inform the Committee that I intend to suspend the meeting at 5.20 p.m. in order to accommodate the presentation ceremony of the 2012 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates. Delegations remaining on the list of speakers at that stage will have the opportunity to speak first at tomorrow's meeting.

By the same principle, we will first listen to the remaining speakers on the rolling list on cluster 2, entitled "Other weapons of mass destruction", who did not get to speak when we ran out of time at this morning's meeting. Thereafter we shall begin our consideration of cluster 3, entitled "Outer space (disarmament aspects)".

Ms. Mancotywa-Kumsha (South Africa): At the outset, my delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered at the Committee's 12th meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/C.1/67/PV.12).

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of

Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), which is the only international regime that prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and provides for the verified destruction of those weapons, has this year marked the fifteenth anniversary of its entry into force. As we commemorate the fifteenth anniversary and the remarkable successes in the implementation of the CWC, we should also take pride in the inspiring example set by the Convention as an effective multilateral instrument, as well as in the fact that nearly three quarters of the world's declared chemical weapons have already been destroyed.

However, while we reflect on those successes, we should not shy away from also reflecting on the challenges the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) faced during the 15 years of the implementation of the Convention. The 29 April 2012 deadline set by the Convention as the final extended deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons, which could not be met by possessor States parties, rendered those parties unable to comply with their obligations to complete their destruction in accordance with the Convention. In that regard, it is encouraging that during the sixteenth Conference of States Parties, in November and December 2011, OPCW States parties put in place measures to continue the verification of the efforts to destroy the remaining chemical weapons by the possessor States parties beyond that deadline.

Ensuring the Convention's universality is a remaining challenge for the OPCW. States parties need to redouble their efforts to encourage States not parties to the Convention to join it. The CWC is one of the

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pillars of international peace and security. Therefore, accession to it by States not parties would demonstrate their commitment to international disarmament and cooperation. It will also help to build confidence and transparency in security-related policies at the regional and international levels.

South Africa has noted with interest developments and subsequent discussions among States parties related to future priorities of the OPCW. In that regard, we would recommend that the OPCW be given space to undergo a natural transition and progression. We should be careful not to introduce drastic changes to the OPCW that overlook the primary task of the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons, and therefore divert the attention of the OPCW from its original intended purpose.

South Africa also calls for the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to ensure that it remains relevant to all States parties. We continue to encourage international cooperation and assistance. In that regard, we call on the OPCW to assist the States parties that have never possessed chemical weapons and do not have declarable chemical activities to develop their chemical capacities and industries. We believe that that will significantly enhance the ability of those States parties to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security, as well as highlight the contribution that the safe use of chemicals can make in meeting their developmental needs.

In the same vein, we emphasize the need for the OPCW's continued readiness to provide assistance and protection against chemical-weapon attacks and threats to all its States parties, as the OPCW has a particular role in preventing access to chemical weapons by non-State actors and in providing assistance in the event of a chemical attack.

South Africa also remains committed to strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) to ensure that our common goal of preventing the threat posed by biological weapons is achieved. In that context, my delegation continues to be concerned about the threat posed by naturally occurring organisms, as well as by those that could be deliberately manufactured or manipulated for use as weapons of mass destruction.

South Africa believes that it is critical that our common goal of eliminating the threat posed by biological weapons is achieved. Beyond the direct security benefits derived from the BWC, the Convention also includes important technical cooperation and assistance provisions that enhance the international community's ability to combat the debilitating impact of disease on the health of people and on the socioeconomic development of countries. South Africa therefore believes that greater international coordination and assistance is required to alleviate the burden of the threat posed by biological weapons. Initiatives such as the exchange of biological sciences and technology, the promotion of capacity-building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis, as well as the containment of infectious diseases, among many other things, could be further explored.

We welcome the outcome of the seventh BWC Review Conference, which took place in Geneva in December 2011. The outcome ensured a number of positive, although modest, gains in strengthening the implementation of the Convention in some important areas. While South Africa would have preferred a stronger outcome, we trust that States parties will fully utilize the new intersessional process and measures agreed upon during the Review Conference to advance the aims of the Convention and to strengthen its implementation.

As BWC States parties continue to seek ways to strengthen the regime, increasing attention has been given to the developmental and cooperation features of the Convention. South Africa shares the view that article X should promote the right of States parties to participate in the fullest exchange of equipment, materials and scientific information for peaceful purposes, and that States parties in a position to do so should contribute to the further development of scientific knowledge and discoveries in this field.

South Africa also strongly believes, in line with article X, that the Convention's implementation should not hamper the economic and technological development of the peaceful uses of biological agents, but should allow the beneficial elements of those agents to be developed to aid humankind. Article X is also of direct relevance to public health, particularly in the developing world, where resources are often scarce and insufficient, and could provide the overlap between international health, technological advancement and the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases

worldwide. South Africa is committed to close collaboration with countries worldwide and within the African continent on the implementation of the Convention and in the advancement of the goals of the BWC.

In conclusion, the continued universalization of the BWC is crucial for the effective eradication of all biological weapons. We therefore call upon those countries not yet parties to the Convention to join without further delay in order to ensure global peace and security in the fields of biological science and technology.

Ms. González-Román (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Spanish delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union at the Committee's 12th meeting, and would like to add a few comments in its national capacity.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The international community should provide itself with the capacities and means necessary to face that threat through a global response. That is why Spain would first of all like to convey the importance it attaches to the various international mechanisms for cooperation.

In particular, the Spanish delegation wishes to draw attention to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), adopted by consensus in 2004 when Spain was a member of the Security Council. The resolution underscores the need to strengthen the coordination of the preventative measures taken at national, subregional, regional and international levels to strengthen the global response to this type of challenge. Spain urges all States to comply with the legal obligations under the resolution, as well as with Security Council resolutions 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011). In the same spirit, Spain wishes to express its support for other international mechanisms designed to counteract the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as those designed to combat the illicit trafficking in substances and dual-use technologies, such as export controls.

There are three conventional instruments of particular importance in the area currently at hand, namely, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of

Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Spain hopes for the complete universalization and full implementation of those instruments.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons plays an important role in the eradication of the threat of the proliferation of such weapons. In that regard, Spain values the results of the seventh Review Conference, which took place in 2011 and provided additional support for the work of the Implementation Support Unit for the implementation and adoption of the agenda for a significant intersessional process up until 2016. Furthermore, Spain actively participated, both in its national capacity and as a State member of the European Union, in the first meeting of experts of the Convention, held last July. We acknowledge the valuable administrative work of the Implementation Support Unit since its establishment.

We are convinced that we must continue to work during this new session to enhance cooperation and assistance to other States parties to strengthen confidence-building measures and the national implementation of international commitments, as well as to review the relevant technological and scientific developments regarding the Convention. Furthermore, given the current economic global crisis, the new intersessional process must continue to be guided by the principle of maximizing effectiveness in the use of funds. Spain reiterates the need for a verification mechanism as a guarantee of transparency and to improve the implementation of the Convention at the national and international levels. We regret that the Convention has not yet been equipped with such an instrument.

As this is an international treaty that prohibits a whole set of weapons and establishes a verification mechanism, the Chemical Weapons Convention is another outstanding multilateral achievement in the field of disarmament. The experience gained in 15 years allows us to hold a positive view: both the destruction of their arsenals — almost 75 per cent of the declared global total — and the undeniable commitment of States parties to attain their complete, certain and effective destruction could make the end of these chemical arsenals a tangible reality. However, in view of the success in the field of disarmament, we

should not be complacent and disregard present and future challenges.

First, it is necessary to guarantee the effective destruction of chemical arsenals, since the extended deadline of 29 April 2012 for the destruction of all chemical weapons has proved to be too optimistic. We have noted with natural concern the statement issued by Libya last year regarding the discovery of undeclared chemical weapons. We fully support Security Council resolution 2017 (2011), which acknowledges the need to proceed urgently with the destruction of any remaining arsenals in Libya. More generally, it is essential that such destruction be accompanied by measures that prevent the future production of such abominable weapons. In that regard, the strengthening of article X of the Convention, which concerns cooperation and assistance, is of particular relevance.

Secondly, the universalization of the Convention must be a priority. We call on those States that have not yet done so to adhere to and ratify the Convention. In particular, Spain endorses the expressions of international condemnation following Syria's acknowledgement in July of its possession of a chemical arsenal. Spain urges Syria not to use under any circumstances that type of weapon, which has been prohibited by international law, including the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Thirdly, we must be attentive to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons, including the access to such weapons by non-State actors, as that threatens the international and national security of all States of the international community. In that regard, threats posed by the misuse of new scientific and technological discoveries cannot be overlooked, as the prohibitions of the Convention would turn out to be insufficient. The upcoming third Review Conference gives us an opportunity to intensify our efforts in those and other areas.

Every year we reiterate the value and the priority focus on disarmament and non-proliferation. But its effectiveness hinges largely on the ability and will of States to pursue the obligations undertaken. This is a complex undertaking that requires patience. We must therefore invest time and effort. Spain will continue to work with the same enthusiasm and in full cooperation with all States and international partners.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Islamic Republic of Iran associates itself with the statement

made on this cluster at the Committee's 12th meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the main victim of the use of chemical weapons in contemporary history. As a result of more than 400 attacks with chemical warfare agents during the eight-year war imposed against us by Saddam from 1980 to 1988, more than 100,000 Iranian citizens were either martyred or injured. That figure includes more than 7,000 civilians injured as a result of nearly 30 attacks on Iranian cities and villages.

For instance, on 28 June 1987 Saddam's warplanes unleashed sulphur mustard gas bombs on four residential areas of Sardasht, a town in north-west Iran. As a result, more than 130 unprotected civilians were martyred and almost 5,000 were injured and still suffer from long-term complications. The anniversary of that tragedy is commemorated in Iran as the National Day for Campaigning against Chemical and Biological Weapons.

Likewise, in 2010, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council invited the Director-General, on behalf of the OPCW, to convey annually on 28 June to the authorities and inhabitants of the city of Sardasht a statement in memory of the chemical-weapon attacks thereon, and to express sympathy for the victims. In implementation of that decision, in the past two years the OPCW Director-General made statements on the anniversary of the tragedy and, while conveying sincere sympathy to the authorities and people of the city of Sardasht, stated that

“Our hearts also go out to those who continue to bear the painful consequences of exposure to chemical weapons”.

He further reaffirmed our resolve to rid the world permanently of the threat of chemical weapons and to guarantee that chemical weapons would never be used again.

Needless to say, Saddam's army could not produce such inhumane weapons without the assistance and support of certain Western countries, particularly those with a permanent seat in the Security Council, and now imposing illegal sanctions on the Iranian nation. According to well-documented evidence, more than 450 companies, mostly from Western countries, including the United Kingdom, France and the United

States, were involved in the development of Saddam's chemical-weapons programme. Nearly 30 United States companies were among those that supplied through the Persian Gulf waterway more than two thirds of the equipment and materials required for such a programme. Given that all of those companies were under the scrutiny of their Governments, they could not transfer chemical-weapons precursors to Saddam without their Governments' blessing. Among them, France also provided the dictator Saddam with other weapons, including missiles and more than 60 warplanes, to strengthen the dictator's army for delivering such weapons on all fronts, particularly targeting ships in the Persian Gulf.

The use of chemical-warfare agents, in particular against civilians, mostly women and children, is a clear manifestation of a war crime and the crime of genocide. While Saddam and some of his partners, as the major perpetrators of such crimes, were properly punished, those who contributed to the development of Saddam's chemical-weapons programme have yet to be punished.

Despite that painful experience, Iran not only did not resort to using chemical weapons in retaliation for such attacks during the imposed war, but also promulgated a very public stance against the use of chemical weapons and afterwards actively participated in the negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Iran was among the first countries to sign and ratify that legally binding instrument.

The universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention is of the utmost importance to Iran, particularly in the volatile region of the Middle East. We urge all non-parties to the CWC to accede to the Convention without further delay. In that regard, it is regrettable that the provision of scheduled chemicals to a non-party has continued, thus discouraging it from joining the Convention.

The total destruction of all chemical-weapons stockpiles continues to remain the key objective of the Convention. In that context, as expressly reflected in the decisions of the policy-making organs of the OPCW, the major possessor States parties in non-compliance with the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 should embark on sustained and accelerated efforts, within the framework of the CWC and its verification regime, to fully comply with their obligations under the Convention.

As a result of such obvious non-compliance, the *raison d'être* of the Convention has been seriously challenged and its credibility significantly tarnished. Being a victim of the chemical weapons used by Saddam's army, with the support of certain Western countries, Iran considers the non-compliance of major possessor States parties with the 2012 final extended deadline for the total destruction of their chemical weapons as a setback in the operation of the Convention that seriously challenges its relevance and reliability. In our view, this important issue should be accurately reflected in the United Nations draft resolution on the CWC.

My delegation stresses the importance of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in particular its article XI. In that regard, we highlight the need for the full implementation of the relevant decision of the sixteenth Conference of CWC States parties. In that connection, we call upon the OPCW Technical Secretariat to expedite its efforts for the operationalization of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and its voluntary Trust Fund.

Concerning the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, while my delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of the seventh Review Conference, we emphasize that the full, comprehensive and effective implementation of the Convention, as well as its universalization, has regrettably not been realized 40 years after its entry into force. To ensure the universality of the Convention, the seventh Review Conference decided that States parties should "take action to persuade non-parties to accede to the Convention without delay" (*BWC/CONF.VII/7, para. 71*).

In that context, we call upon all States parties to remain fully committed to their obligations not to transfer equipment and materials, including biological agents and toxins, or scientific and technological information to non-parties. In that regard, the biological cooperation between some States parties, particularly Canada and Israel, and a non-party to the Convention, is regrettable.

Needless to say, the introduction of disincentives for non-parties to the Convention and ceasing cooperation with them would encourage and facilitate the realization of this instrument's universality. Additionally, the

effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention, including the adoption of concrete measures to prohibit the transfer to non-parties of any material and technology that could be used in the development of biological weapons, would further strengthen the role and enhance the relevance and credibility of the Convention.

We strongly support the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on the importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol, which unfortunately could not be concluded because of the adversarial position of the United States in 2001, after years of negotiation. We continue to believe that this very important issue should be addressed in order to explore ways and means of responding to the wish of the international community for an early conclusion of such an instrument.

Furthermore, we emphasize that promoting international cooperation, as provided for in article X, and overcoming the arbitrary and politically motivated denials should be adequately dealt with in the meetings of States parties. An action plan consisting of practical and concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of that article as the best way to reinforce the Convention should be worked out.

In conclusion, we reiterate our belief in a total ban on the use of biological weapons. In that connection, while appreciating the withdrawal of reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol by a number of States parties, we strongly support the position of the Non-Aligned Movement in calling upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to the Protocol to withdraw them without any further delay.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.29.

Ms. Körömi (Hungary): Hungary would like to introduce for the First Committee's consideration draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.29, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction" (BWC). The effective implementation and universal adherence to the Convention are core objectives of Hungary. We welcome the news we heard just this morning conveyed to the Committee by Ambassador Laura Kennedy of the United States that the Marshall Islands is to become a State party to the Convention soon.

As representatives will see, the draft resolution has been modified in many places as compared with the text of last year. That is because we deemed it appropriate to have a special focus on the seventh Review Conference, held in December 2011. Under the chairmanship of Ambassador Paul van den IJssel, the Conference concluded its work with success and with the appreciation of all States parties to the Convention. Apart from the core elements of the draft resolution, this year's text reflects the results and developments achieved during the seventh Review Conference. Consequently, the draft text contains new language in most parts that is based on the Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference.

We held informal discussions on the draft resolution. Here in New York we held one announced consultation and two subsequent consultations with a smaller group of countries, which provided written comments on the text. We were heartened by the considerable interest that Member States expressed with regard to this draft resolution during the consultations both in Geneva and in New York. We listened carefully and tried to capture all views and sentiments expressed. We believe that they are duly reflected in the text and that the draft resolution is a balanced document.

Nevertheless, by virtue of paragraph 10 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to continue to render assistance to the annual meetings of the States parties. The paragraph reads as follows:

"to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention, to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences and to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be required for the meetings of experts and the meeting of States parties during the 2012-2015 intersessional process".

I wish to put on record that there is a typographical error in the penultimate line of that paragraph. States parties to the Convention, at the seventh Review Conference, approved the cost estimates prepared by the Secretariat for servicing the meetings of experts and the meetings — in plural — of States parties of the 2012-2015 intersessional programme. Therefore the word "meeting" has to be in plural in both cases and the line should read as follows:

“required for the meetings of experts and the meetings of States parties during the 2012-2015 intersessional programme”.

I wish the Secretariat to amend the text of the draft resolution accordingly.

Under the final paragraph of the draft resolution, Member States would decide that the item on the BWC be included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

By adopting the draft resolution by consensus every year, the international community reaffirms its conviction that the Convention is essential for international peace and security and expresses unequivocal support for the prohibition of biological weapons.

Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the BWC. We hope that, as in the past, this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): Let me begin by associating my delegation with the statement delivered at the Committee’s 12th meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) represent important pillars of the global security architecture. Those instruments have made an important contribution to the goal of general and complete disarmament. The success of the Conventions demonstrates the continuing relevance and importance of treaties negotiated multilaterally on the basis of good faith and equality, while taking into account the security interests of all States. That spirit of cooperative multilateralism should also show us a way forward to promote the global disarmament agenda.

Pakistan ratified the BWC in 1974 as a non-possessor State and remains fully committed to its obligations under the Convention. We share the concerns of the international community regarding the possible negative use of biological weapons, including by non-State actors. Pakistan has taken a range of comprehensive legal and administrative steps to enhance its biosafety and biosecurity regulations.

Through an inter-agency consultative process, we have drafted BWC implementation legislation, which is under review in Parliament. To ensure implementation and compliance, we have taken the necessary and effective administrative steps as well.

We welcome the successful outcome of the seventh Review Conference. As a member of NAM and as a developing country, we accord special importance to the full and effective implementation of article X of the Convention. Pakistan believes that only a multilaterally agreed verification mechanism can provide the assurance of compliance with treaty obligations. Confidence-building measures enhance transparency and trust among States parties. However, they cannot be a substitute for compliance measures. We look forward to productive intersessional work.

The Chemical Weapons Convention represents a unique success story of disarmament through verified means. The Convention has also played a key role in preventing the proliferation of chemicals inconsistent with its object and purpose. We welcome the convening of the high-level meeting held last month as a means to advance the goals of the Convention.

Even as we draw satisfaction from the progress made in the destruction of significant quantities of chemical-weapon stockpiles, it is important that possessor States continue with the destruction process so as to complete it within the shortest possible time, as envisaged in the Conference of States Parties decision taken at its sixteenth session.

The provisions of the Convention relating to international cooperation and assistance are essential to keep a large number of States without chemical industry engaged with the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Cooperation in the field of assistance and protection provides a platform to a large number of developing countries to improve their capacities against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons.

Pakistan attaches the utmost importance to the full implementation of this Convention. Over the years we have interacted closely with, and extended full cooperation to, the OPCW on a range of activities. In active collaboration with the Technical Secretariat, we have hosted several regional and international capacity-building courses in the country. We are now in the process of establishing a subregional assistance

and protection centre that will serve as a centre of excellence for countries in our region.

We believe that sensitive technologies and materials must be adequately controlled to ensure their use for peaceful purposes alone. However, that objective cannot justify practices and cartels that hinder the legitimate trade in chemicals, equipment and technology among States parties for demonstrably peaceful purposes. It is vital to restore balance and even-handedness in the implementation of the Convention.

With regard to future priorities of the OPCW, we must adhere to the original intent reflected in the Convention. The Convention establishes a hierarchy of threats that different types of chemicals and related facilities pose to the object and purpose of the Convention. We look forward to the third Review Conference, next year, with a view to exerting collective efforts for advancing the goals of the CWC in a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory manner.

Mr. Ercan (Turkey): Humankind has a bad reputation for repeating history. But there are some instances in history that should never be repeated. The First World War, the Second World War and recent conflicts, which remind us of the disastrous effects of weapons of mass destruction, are among such instances. Those instances should remain solely in the annals of history that we consult only to draw lessons.

Fortunately, humankind also has a good reputation for progress in making conscious efforts to draw such lessons and not to repeat past mistakes. The 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) are among such efforts. They constitute humankind's attempt never to use two of the three most catastrophic categories of weapons of mass destruction. They are the fruits of arduous negotiations and a reflection of the will of nations that disease or poison should never again be used against humankind. Turkey is among those nations. As a reflection of that will, Turkey is a party to all three of the multilateral instruments that guide the norms of the cluster under discussion today, and does not hold, develop or conduct any research on such weapons.

The existence of chemical weapons in the Middle East is a major concern for Turkey, countries of the region and the international community as a whole. The past use of chemical weapons in two countries neighbouring Turkey — and on the very threshold of the twenty-first century — are painful reminders of the indiscriminate and inhumane nature of those weapons and the validity of this danger.

Fortunately, the Chemical Weapons Convention is designed and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is working hard to prevent the actualization of this danger. On 1 October, following the fifteenth anniversary of the foundation of the OPCW, we all shared our views, concerns and hopes regarding this issue here in New York at the high-level event organized by Director-General Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü. We also celebrated the unique role that the OPCW plays. The OPCW has overseen the destruction of three quarters of all declared chemical weapons and routinely inspects the chemical industry throughout the world. Its recent assistance in the destruction of the remaining warfare chemicals in Libya is a fine example of the OPCW's effectiveness and prominence.

But ongoing developments and the state of affairs throughout the world require the OPCW and the international community to remain alert and to take swift action in the case of any unexpected eventualities concerning stockpiles or the use of chemical weapons. Current events in Syria constitute a valid example in that context. We would like hereby to echo the incessant calls by the international community and by the Secretary-General to those who possess such weapons to keep them secure until they are destroyed and, above all, never to use them under any circumstances. In the Secretary-General's own words during the high-level event on 1 October, the use of such weapons would be an outrageous crime with dire consequences.

The spread and transfer of dual-use goods and technology that can be used to produce biological weapons, and the possibility of them falling into the hands of terrorists, is another major concern for humankind. Coupled with other weapons of mass destruction, the fact that those agents are so easy to obtain has made the concerns all the more significant in these past decades. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is a key instrument at our disposal to combat the proliferation of such weapons. We call for its effective implementation, universalization and

strengthening. We welcome the outcome of the seventh BTWC Review Conference.

Turkey believes that the exchange of scientific and technological information among States parties will promote transparency and thereby contribute to reducing the risk of the use of biological agents and technical equipment for purposes prohibited by the Convention. On the other hand, the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit for the BTWC was a welcome development. However, the Convention still lacks a verification regime, which is a useful mechanism, as in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We believe that a similar mechanism for the BWC will strengthen the Convention's effectiveness.

The international community must continue to do its utmost to prevent the acquisition of biological and chemical warfare agents by terrorists, unauthorized actors or even States, and for their stockpiles to be destroyed. In that context, the universalization and effective implementation of both the CWC and BWC must be a priority. We call on all countries to ratify and implement those two important instruments. In that context, regional approaches that pave the way for eventual universality should be utilized.

Turkey has been actively promoting the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We look forward to the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of the zone, pursuant to the decision taken at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We view such a conference as an initial step in a long process, the success of which will depend upon the genuine political engagement and participation of all States in the region. We welcome and support the facilitator's efforts to successfully convene the conference.

We must strive to emphasize the progressive face of humankind and not repeat past horrendous mistakes. That is even truer now that we live in a new age where we have the necessary legal instruments, information, experience, technology and other tools at our disposal for sense and humanity to prevail and, as a result, for all weapons of mass destruction to be forgotten in the dark pages of history.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Chemical and biological weapons are a serious threat to international as well as human security. First and

foremost, therefore, let me call on all Member States that have not yet done so to accede as soon as possible to those international instruments that provide for a total ban on chemical and biological weapons.

We are at a crucial moment in the history of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). As the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 has expired, there is clear consensus among the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) that the destruction of existing chemical weapon stockpiles remains a high priority. State parties still possessing stockpiles of such weapons have presented their national plans for the destruction of the remaining arsenals. Switzerland welcomes the progress made and urges the States parties possessing such weapons to continue with their destruction in accordance with the relevant decisions and provisions of the Convention. It is crucial that the CWC remain strong and credible and that the almost universal ban on chemical weapons be upheld.

Switzerland commends the efforts of the OPCW to launch a comprehensive debate on the future priorities of the Organization. In the light of the expected completion of the destruction of chemical-weapon stockpiles, we have to prepare the Organization for a transition to an agency whose main task would be to ensure that the threat of chemical warfare and the use of toxic chemicals for hostile purposes will never re-emerge. The recommendations to date on a possible reform agenda to adapt the OPCW to the changing environment provide a valuable basis for deliberations among States parties. Switzerland is prepared to contribute actively to that discussion and is convinced that a consensual way forward can be agreed upon in view of the 2013 Review Conference.

The relevance and credibility of the CWC as a disarmament and non-proliferation instrument depends on its ability to cope with the rapid advances in science and technology. Such advances, which bring about new opportunities, could also create challenges for the Convention. The convergence of biology and chemistry is a pertinent example in that regard. In that context, Switzerland reiterates that it will be important, within the framework of the OPCW, to carry out a comprehensive and focused debate on incapacitating chemical agents and their status under the Convention, in order to establish transparency and confidence

among States. We are hopeful that further space and time will be allocated to this issue in the near future. We will actively engage in that discussion.

Switzerland also welcomes the recent supplementary arrangement concerning the implementation of the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW, by which the latter will cooperate and put its resources at the disposal of the Secretary-General, if so requested, in the case of the alleged use of chemical weapons involving a State non-party or in a territory not controlled by a State party.

The seventh Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), which took place last December, gave States parties an opportunity not only to review a range of issues related to the BWC but also to decide in a forward-looking manner on much-needed steps to strengthen that important Convention. While we welcome the overall positive atmosphere in the lead-up to and during the Conference, we believe that an important opportunity was nevertheless missed. In many ways, the actual outcome of the Conference was rather modest compared to the far-reaching challenges and opportunities we face in the life sciences. In order to ensure that the BWC continues to be the premier forum for preventing the misuse of biology, more progress will be crucial. For Switzerland a number of issues remain of great importance.

First, it is vital that the BWC not lose touch with the rapid developments in the biological sciences. To that end, States parties should consider conducting more regular and systematic reviews of scientific and technological developments, as the current five-yearly rhythm is clearly insufficient. Switzerland continues to believe that it is necessary to set up an effective and flexible mechanism to ensure a regular systematic review of relevant developments in the life sciences. That includes regular exchanges between the BWC community and life scientists, as well as mutual awareness-raising on developments with potential consequences for international security.

Secondly, Switzerland attaches particular importance to confidence-building measures (CBMs). Despite some minor modifications agreed upon during the Review Conference, the CBM mechanism is in need of additional adjustments if it is to remain the only instrument to establish some degree of transparency

and confidence among States parties. We recall that participation in that politically binding mechanism is by no means voluntary, and thus call on all States parties to regularly submit relevant information.

Thirdly, Switzerland continues to attach great importance to international cooperation and assistance, as well as to the implementation of article X of the BWC. We should extend our support to States parties in need of assistance in implementing the provisions of the Convention. Yet, substantial commitments as well as transparency on the needs, challenges and implementation achievements of receiving countries constitute a pivotal prerequisite for such cooperation. In that context, we welcome the recent launch of the cooperation database to foster international collaboration and enhance the coordination between assistance requests and offers.

In July we resumed the intersessional programme, which, in our view, started on a solid footing and in a very constructive atmosphere. That enables us to further strengthen the Convention's implementation until the next milestone, that is, the 2016 Review Conference. We should now seize the opportunity to agree on common understandings among States parties so that effective action can be taken. Switzerland is fully committed to that important process.

The 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, including their delivery systems, will be an important step for the universalization of the respective disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, as well as for the affirmation of the relevant international norms. We call on all States of the region not to use such weapons under any circumstances and to accede to the relevant regimes as soon as possible.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): The date of 29 April 2012 occasioned the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). All of us are well aware of the long and difficult road that led to the opening for signature, in Paris on 13 January 1993, of that important, historic and binding international juridical document. On that day 130 States, including the Holy See, signed the Convention.

Today, after nearly 20 years, it is with some satisfaction that we note that there are now presently 188 States parties to the Convention.

The Convention is now a notable multilateral success in the effort to curb the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction, and a tangible demonstration of what the international community can do when it is cohesive and moved by constructive dialogue with the common objective of promoting international peace and security.

It is encouraging to note how, in spite of the not insignificant hurdles to the implementation of the Convention, there has been a decisive commitment to its universalization, to the elimination of declared chemical weapons, and verification thereof, to the non-proliferation of those weapons and to international assistance and cooperation in the various fields listed in the Convention. The ongoing work of the CWC and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons demonstrates how disarmament can effectively and efficiently bring about important results and promote the climate of trust and transparency that is essential for the good of the international community. Such a climate rightly encourages a situation where reason and the force of law can prevail over aggression and the law of force.

The Holy See decided to ratify the Convention in order to lend its moral support to the international disarmament agenda, which, by bringing together the rights and duties of reciprocity among States, intends to ban weapons that are particularly cruel and inhumane and produce traumatic long-term effects that afflict entire, defenceless civilian populations. States have the duty and the responsibility to protect populations and to respect humanitarian law in that regard.

By pursuing disarmament and favouring the consolidation of peace and international cooperation, we can contribute concretely to the promotion of a culture of life and of peace based upon the dignity of the human person and the primacy of law, and can promote that culture through a multilateralism based upon the dignity of the human being and upon responsible, honest and coherent cooperation among the members of the concert of nations. These are indispensable elements for the construction of a real and lasting trust that will foster a climate of respect and solidarity among States.

Looking to the future, we realize that the challenges facing the various phases of the implementation of

the CWC are many. But they can be confronted more effectively if constructive dialogue and cooperation are maintained — something that has characterized the history of the CWC thus far.

As stated in the declaration of 21 May 1999 attached to the Holy See's instrument of ratification of the CWC:

“Dialogue and multilateral negotiation are essential values in this process. Through the instruments of international law, they facilitate the peaceful resolution of controversies and help better mutual understanding. In this way they promote the effective affirmation of the culture of life and peace.”

Unfortunately, in other fields the process of disarmament and arms control at the multilateral level over the past 15 years appears not to have enjoyed the same encouraging results obtained by the CWC. That shows the urgent need to design a new security paradigm that is capable of reviving multilateral disarmament diplomacy.

In an age such as ours, which is undergoing profound social and geopolitical shifts, awareness has been growing that national security interests are deeply linked to those related to international security, just as the human family moves gradually together and everywhere is becoming more conscious of its unity. The national and international levels of governance are also obliged to be conscious of that growing unity and to engage each other over the ongoing challenges of hunger and poverty, and new and increasing challenges of transnational terrorism and the destruction of the environment.

Peace, security and stability cannot be gained with armaments, as they are multidimensional objectives that include aspects that are not only linked to the military sphere but also to those of human rights, the rule of law, economic and social conditions and the protection of the environment — all of which contribute to the promotion of true, integral human development.

In the light of what I have said here, it is essential for the international community to see beyond near-term gains in national and international security, to adopt a far-sighted approach and to promote peace and security, in the knowledge that integral human development has a profound and beneficial impact on advancing security. At the same time, the pursuit of a true process of international disarmament can only

bring great benefit to development itself. The CWC is proof of that far-sighted approach, and continues to demonstrate how that approach is the road to such benefits for the whole of humankind.

The Acting Chair: That concludes the list of speakers under cluster 2, “Other weapons of mass destruction”. Before we move on to the next cluster, I shall call on representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard references to my country, Syria, and we want to reiterate once more that those allegations about Syria are totally baseless. However, we cannot minimize the threat and danger of such allegations by some countries that are moving against Syria and leading a media campaign in the international media and other forums. Those are the same countries that once fabricated the lie about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Today they are conducting the largest joint military manoeuvres with Israel, once again beating the drums of war.

Syria is party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which bans the use of toxic materials in warfare. We are committed to that Protocol. We are also ready to adhere to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, once Israel ratifies the Convention and adheres to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Syria was among the first countries to call for the establishment in the Middle East of a region free of all weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons. In 2003, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Syria submitted a draft resolution to rid the Middle East region of all such weapons. However, the same States that are today expressing concern about the alleged presence of such weapons are the same ones that opposed the Syrian draft resolution and threatened to use the veto — for the simple reason that they wanted to protect Israel, which has all forms of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Based on its responsible position, Syria kept that draft resolution going in the hope that it would one day overcome the policies of double standards.

In our practices with regard to disarmament, we act according to what we say, contrary to some countries, including Western countries. For instance, some Western European countries were behind the

two devastating world wars — one which included the use of nuclear weapons — that victimized millions. Many of them were citizens of the third world, which had been subject to the colonization of those countries. Regrettably, the people of those European countries that were responsible are still condescending and refusing to apologize for their crimes.

Secondly, history proves that some European countries with colonial mindsets criminally used chemical weapons during the First World War, as well as during the invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. What was said by the observer of the European Union is not credible. If his concern is genuine, we should like to see positive support for all the resolutions that call for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

It is well known to everyone that some members of the Organization used depleted-uranium weapons in the first Gulf War, in 1991, in the Balkan wars, in Kosovo, in the war against Afghanistan and in the war against Iraq in 2003. There are several reports on the issue. As an example, I wish to cite an article published in the London *Sunday Times* in 2006 under the headline “Did the use of uranium weapons in Gulf War II result in contamination of Europe? Evidence from the measurements of the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston, Berkshire, UK”.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to give a brief summary of the report.

“After the ‘Shock and Awe’ campaign in Iraq, in 2003, very fine particles of depleted uranium were captured with larger sand and dust particles in filters in Britain”.

“These particles travelled in 7 to 9 days from Iraqi battlefields as far as 2,400 miles away”.

“The radiation measured in the atmosphere quadrupled within a few weeks after the beginning of the 2003 campaign” — against Iraq — “and at one of the 5 monitoring locations, the levels twice required an official alert to the British Environment Agency”.

On the other hand, I should like to refer to Dr. Katsuma Yagasaki, a Japanese physicist at the University of the Ryukyus in Okinawa, who estimated that an atomicity equivalent to at least 400,000 Nagasaki bombs had been released into the global atmosphere since 1991 from the use of depleted uranium munitions.

(spoke in Arabic)

We all know the dangers and the catastrophic results of depleted uranium on humankind and the environment. It was our hope that some of the countries that have mentioned Syria would have looked at themselves in the mirror and notify international public opinion of the correct facts and apologize for the dangers that they have caused, which affect us still today.

Finally, my country calls on Western States to work with us sincerely to guarantee the success of the conference to be held in Helsinki on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, by pressurizing Israel to participate in the meeting and to adhere to the NPT and subject its facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency — if their intentions are indeed genuine and sincere.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: With regard to the concern expressed in the statement of my colleague the representative of Turkey, in reality that concern does not tally completely with the declared commitments of my country with regard to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Syria is party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We continue to call for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, including in Turkey itself.

However, the reality in fact reflects some unmatched political hypocrisy. On the one hand, Turkey hosts nuclear weapons on its territory as part of NATO armaments, which threatens the peace and security of my country and States neighbouring Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey and its allies manoeuvre around by defining the Middle East region in a manner that would exclude Turkey, so that it does not participate in the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, it will preserve its nuclear exception and violate its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

It is my country that should be gravely concerned as a result of the presence of nuclear weapons on Turkish territory and the non-compliance of Turkey with the NPT and its provisions. Since the Government of Turkey is hosting the armed groups that are carrying out terrorist and destructive activities in my country

from Turkish territory, we hoped that my colleague from the Turkish delegation would have restrained himself as we do.

Mr. Kilic (Turkey): We were rather surprised by the baseless allegations made by our Syrian colleague with regard to Turkey's positions. With regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), I need not repeat Turkey's commitment to the NPT and its application and to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Secondly, there was an allegation that we host armed groups in Turkey. That is absolutely baseless. However, there has been an influx of Syrian guests — whose number as of today stands at 100,000 — and there are some army elements among them. However, they are not armed groups. They are defectors who have come to Turkey as private citizens. I invite my Syrian colleague to revisit his facts on this issue and perhaps focus on discussing the issues under the cluster that we are now leaving and focus on the next one.

The Acting Chair: I shall now give the floor to delegations that wish to make statements or introduce draft resolutions under cluster 3, entitled "Outer space (disarmament aspects)". In that regard, let me urge all delegations once again kindly to keep their interventions within a reasonable time limit to enable the Committee to keep pace with the programme of work and timetable. As members may be aware, we are falling behind on our schedule, and it is imperative that we make up for lost time.

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

NAM recognizes the common interest of all humankind and the rights of all States in the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, and emphasizes that the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including a ban to deploy or use weapons therein, would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. NAM remains concerned over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the threat of the weaponization and militarization of outer space. NAM further emphasizes the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms limitation and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements, and with

the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space.

NAM also re-emphasizes the urgent need for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament, inter alia, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, taking note of the joint Russian-Chinese initiative.

NAM continues to be concerned about the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the threat of the weaponization of outer space, which have, inter alia, contributed to the further erosion of an international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security. The abrogation of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America brought about new challenges to strategic stability and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. NAM remains seriously concerned at the negative security consequences of the deployment of strategic missile defence systems, which could trigger an arms race and lead to the further development of advanced missile systems and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons.

The Movement, while noting some new initiatives on outer space, underlines the importance of a universal, non-discriminatory and comprehensive approach. In that regard, the Movement stresses that any proposal or initiative on outer space should be pursued within the competent United Nations bodies. Any possible decision thereon should be made by consensus.

NAM underscores that space science and technology and their applications, such as satellite communications, Earth observation systems and satellite navigation technologies, provide indispensable tools for viable long-term solutions for sustainable development. They can also contribute more effectively to efforts to promote the development of all countries and regions of the world, to improve people's lives, to conserve natural resources, and to enhance the preparedness for, and mitigation of, the consequences of disasters. In that regard, while underlining the importance of the availability of space science and technology to all interested countries, NAM stresses that they should be utilized in accordance with international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United

Nations, in particular the promotion of international peace and security.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.3.

Mr. Aljowaily (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to reaffirm the Arab Group's position on the matter at hand.

We firmly believe in the importance of maintaining the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. The placement of any weapon in outer space would have serious consequences. It would negatively affect all countries, both those that have and those that do not have the technological capability to launch orbital objects. Our lives today depend on space activities. The estimated 3,000 operating satellites provide vital services in an intricate web of information and communications. The possible interruption of such satellite services as a result of weapons in space would cause a major global collapse.

The legal instruments underpinning this issue — the 1963 Limited Test-Ban Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the 1979 Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and other Celestial Bodies — have played a positive role in the promotion of the peaceful use of outer space and in the regulation of activities in space. They have also been important in terms of prohibiting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and certain military activities in outer space.

However, there is widespread recognition of the insufficiency of international legal instruments dealing with the problem of weapons in space. The current legal system is not sufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space. There is therefore an urgent need for the reinforcement of the system, strict compliance with existing bilateral and multilateral agreements, and a review of new measures establishing effective and verifiable agreement on its prevention.

In that context, the Arab Group believes that it is in the best interests of the international community to start negotiations on an international legally binding instrument to prevent the placement of any kind of weapon in outer space. More than 30 years ago, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) was called upon by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to consider the issue of

preventing an arms race in outer space. For that reason, we endorse the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament on the matter, as part of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that provides an opportunity to negotiate a multilateral agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

Forward movement in the Conference on Disarmament requires political will to engage in negotiations and achieve consensus. Although some Member States affirm that the CD is a dysfunctional institution owing to its consensus rule, concerning other issues such as the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the use of consensus — surprisingly — is deemed to be perfectly legitimate.

In line with the positions of the Arab Group as I have set out here, allow me now to deliver some remarks in my national capacity.

Egypt, together with Sri Lanka, has traditionally introduced the draft resolution entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space” and has regularly voted in favour of the resolution entitled “Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities”, sponsored by the Russian Federation.

The draft resolution on preventing an arms race in outer space (A/C.1/67/L.3), which Egypt is introducing this year, is similar in substance to resolution 66/27, which was submitted by Sri Lanka and adopted last year under the same agenda item. This year’s draft resolution contains the necessary technical updates. A significant number of States have sponsored the draft resolution so far; it remains open for further sponsorship. We encourage delegations to sponsor the draft resolution in view of what it represents for making progress in preventing an arms race in outer space.

Since it is in the interests of all humankind that outer space continues to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, the draft resolution addresses an issue of particular importance. It emphasizes the need for strict compliance with existing agreements, including bilateral agreements, related to outer space and with the legal regime concerning the use of outer space. It reaffirms that further measures should be examined in the search for effective and verifiable bilateral and multilateral agreements in order to prevent an arms race in outer space, including the weaponization of outer space.

Through the draft resolution, the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral forum with the primary mandate of negotiating multilateral agreements, is once again invited, in the context of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, to establish a working group on the issue as early as possible during its 2013 session. That would permit the close examination, through negotiations, of a number of important initiatives that have been put forward within the framework of the Conference, including the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

Egypt looks forward to seeing the draft resolution enjoy the widest possible support this year and calls on the two States that abstained in the voting on last year’s resolution to reconsider their positions and to join the overwhelming majority of Member States in supporting this year’s draft resolution, given the importance of this issue to the peace and security of humankind.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Kos (European Union): I speak on behalf of the European Union 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, align themselves with this statement.

We all know that space activities are expanding and that their importance is crucial. Space is a resource for all countries of the world. Those that do not yet carry out space activities will do so in the future. The European Union and its member States have a long-standing position in favour of the enhancement of the multilateral framework concerning the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure environment in outer space and of its use on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. We stress that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the need to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential conditions for the strengthening of strategic stability. The European Union is fully committed to strengthening the security of activities in outer space that contribute to the development and security of States. To that end, the European Union aims at promoting international

cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

We are particularly sensitive to the issue of the safety of space systems and urge all States to take the measures and actions necessary to mitigate the creation of space debris. We are participating in the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on various aspects of space security. In that context, we have noted the proposal by the Russian Federation and China of a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and on the threat or use of force against outer space objects. We have also noted ideas for a legally binding prohibition on the testing and use of anti-satellite weapons.

A growing number of countries are now committed to the development and implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures as a means to achieve enhanced safety and security in outer space. In 2010, all European Union member States sponsored resolution 65/68, entitled “Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities”, which was introduced in the First Committee by the Russian Federation. Four European Union member States participate in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, which was established by that resolution and started its work in New York in July. We fully support it as a means conducive to achieving enhanced space security.

In our view, the elaboration of an international and voluntary set of guidelines — a tool that would strengthen the safety, security and predictability of all space activities — should be promoted. Such guidelines should, among other things, limit or minimize harmful interference, collisions or accidents in outer space, as well as the creation of debris.

To that end, based on its reply to resolution 61/75, of 6 December 2006, the European Union launched initial consultations to promote the development of an international code of conduct on outer space activities. In 2008, the European Union presented a preliminary draft. Following extensive consultations and comments received from third countries, presented revised drafts in 2010 and 2012. The European Union formally presented the latest draft international code of conduct to the international community in Vienna on 5 June. The draft code is guided by the following principles: freedom for all to use outer space for peaceful purposes;

the preservation of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit; and, finally, due consideration for the legitimate security and defence needs of States.

The proposed draft, which is now also supported by a large number of countries outside Europe, foresees that the international code would be applicable to all outer space activities conducted by States or non-governmental entities. As the draft code would be voluntary and open to all States, it would lay down the basic rules to be observed by spacefaring nations in both civil and military space activities. The draft code does not include any provisions concerning the placement of weapons in outer space, but insists on the importance of taking all measures in order to prevent space from becoming an area of conflict. It also calls on nations to resolve any conflict in outer space by peaceful means.

As an overarching initiative, addressing the safety and sustainability of the space environment, as well as stability and security in outer space, we consider that it would not be suitable to hold substantive multilateral discussions in any existing international forums dealing exclusively with either non-proliferation and disarmament issues, such as the Conference on Disarmament, or the civilian uses of outer space, such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). By pursuing discussions outside of those forums, in a process open to all United Nations States, we hope to broaden international participation in the initiative, including to States currently non-members of the Conference on Disarmament or COPUOS. We hope that that approach will bring the discussion of an international code of conduct to a swifter successful conclusion, which would then allow for its submission to the General Assembly for endorsement.

That initiative contributes to enhancing international space security, together with other ongoing international space initiatives, such as the work of the COPUOS Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space, which the European Union considers extremely important and complementary to the principles developed in the code. The code was presented last July to the Group of Governmental Experts and was positively received. Its non-legally-binding and overarching nature will not prejudice any substantive discussions on all issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament.

Following the discussion held in Vienna on 5 June on the nature and process of the initiative, we decided to hold the first multilateral experts' meeting to discuss the draft code in the near future, possibly in January 2013. The meeting should provide an opportunity to each participant to present and exchange views on the text, to ask for clarifications and to present possible new ideas. All States Members of the United Nations are invited to participate.

Our aim remains to find agreement on a text that is acceptable to all interested States, and that thus brings effective security benefits in a relatively short time. At the end of the process, the European Union and other supporters of the initiative intend to present a final version of the international code of conduct that would be open to participation by all States on a voluntary basis at an ad hoc diplomatic conference.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): The year 2012 has been an important one for looking forward in outer space and building on the accomplishments of those who have gone before us. This year we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the first American, John Glenn, orbiting the Earth. We also said goodbye to Neil Armstrong, the first human to walk on the moon. As President Obama said,

“Neil’s spirit of discovery lives on in all the men and women who have devoted their lives to exploring the unknown, including those who are ensuring that we reach higher and go further in space. That legacy will endure, sparked by a man who taught us the enormous power of one small step”.

The space environment has changed in dynamic and challenging ways since Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. Surely, most people of that time could not fully grasp the tremendous potential of space or how the world would become interconnected through, and dependent upon, a broad array of space systems. When the space age began, the opportunities to use space were available to only a few nations, and there were minimal consequences for irresponsible behaviour or accidents. Today space is the domain of a growing number of satellite operators, including approximately 60 nations and Government consortiums, as well as numerous commercial and academic operators. Although space is becoming increasingly easier to access, as well as to benefit from, space is also becoming increasingly congested with orbital debris. Consequently, the possibility of collisions in space

also increases. The interconnected nature of space capabilities, and the world’s growing dependence on them, means that irresponsible acts in space can have damaging consequences for us all.

The United States recognizes that each member in this forum may have a different vision of how to ensure the long-term sustainability and stability of the space environment. For our part, the United States is focused on near-term, voluntary and pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) to strengthen the long-term sustainability, stability, safety and security of the space environment.

At the same time, we are prepared to engage in substantive discussions on space security as part of a consensus programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament. We are willing to consider space arms-control proposals and concepts that are equitable, effectively verifiable and enhance the national security of the United States and its allies, but we have not yet seen a proposal that meets those criteria. The proposal for a prevention of placement of weapons in outer space treaty does not do so.

The international community has made much progress this year in the pursuit of transparency and confidence-building measures. The European Union launched a multilateral diplomatic process to discuss an international code of conduct for outer space activities. Many countries here today, the United States included, are actively cooperating in the development of an international code. The United States views the European Union’s draft as a good foundation for developing a non-legally-binding code of conduct focused on the use of voluntary and pragmatic TCBMs. Such a code would provide guidelines for responsible behaviour in space that would help to reduce the hazards of accidental and purposeful debris-generating events. Moreover, it would increase the transparency of operations in space, thereby minimizing the danger of collisions, and expand cooperation in areas that we all recognize as crucial for ensuring stability and sustainability in space. The United States looks forward to continuing to engage with the international community on this initiative.

This year has also seen the first meeting of the United Nations-established Group of Governmental Experts on space TCBMs. We congratulate Victor Vasiliev of the Russian Federation on his election as Chair of the study, and we welcome the progress made by the Group at its first session in New York. The indicative

programme of work adopted provides a solid framework for experts to conduct a comprehensive review of the role of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to strengthen stability in space. The Working Group's study provides a significant opportunity to explore international cooperation on pragmatic, voluntary, effective and timely TCBMs.

By maintaining a focus on voluntary and non-legally-binding measures, a consensus report can contribute to a substantive discussion on space security here at the First Committee. The United States is pleased that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) has established a Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, under the chairmanship of Mr. Peter Martinez of South Africa. Many of the best-practice guidelines that are being considered by that Working Group, including those for space situational awareness, space operations and space weather, are complementary to efforts to pursue TCBMs that enhance stability and security.

During the COPUOS full committee meeting in June, the four expert groups supporting the Working Group on Long-Term Sustainability began to develop draft best-practice guidelines. We are pleased at the progress that those experts' groups have made and look forward to the Working Group's continued strides towards a set of final recommendations.

We affirm that all nations have the right, consistent with international law and obligations, to use and explore space. With that right, however, comes the responsibility to preserve the environment so that future generations may make their own giant leaps for mankind. The United States is committed to working with the international community to address the challenges of today's increasingly congested and contested space environment. We are proud of the steps the international community has taken this year towards strengthening the stability and sustainability of the space environment. Neil Armstrong reminded us of the importance of one small step. What better way to build on his achievement, and other space achievements, than by continuing these efforts in 2013 and beyond.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully supports the statement just made by the observer of the European Union.

Space has become essential to modern life. Its peaceful applications are countless and range from

telecommunications and land, air and sea navigation to meteorology. Space is naturally also equally essential to international security. Consistent with its long-standing position, France remains committed to preserving peace and security in outer space and to developing space activities for peaceful purposes.

France supported the establishment, through resolution 65/68, of the Group of Governmental Experts on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures. France actively participates in the work of the Group, where those issues can be addressed. In that regard, we welcome the effective work of the Russian chairmanship, which successfully launched the work of the Group at its first meeting in July here in New York.

Moreover, France is concerned with avoiding an arms race in space. France considers that a new legally binding instrument will provide a real security gain only if it is comprehensive, specific, universal and credible. In addition, that work has to be conducted over the long term, while problems that we come across every day in outer space activities require pragmatic and swift solutions.

One of our priorities is to ensure that the space environment allows for the development of space activities for peaceful purposes to the benefit of all. But the increase in the number of stakeholders and the robust development and diversification of civil and military activities in space generate risks to the security of objects placed there. One of the greatest threats to space activities is the growth in the amount of space debris. In that respect, France is taking an active part in work on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities conducted in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

The problems we need to address are security problems in the broadest sense and require responses that cover civil and military aspects. That is why, to better ensure the security of space activities, France supports, in the various relevant bodies and in countries that have or intend to develop space activities, the development of voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures that are acceptable to as many countries as possible. We lend our full support to the draft international code of conduct on outer space activities launched in 2008, the most recent version of which was presented in Vienna last June.

As we have had the opportunity to state many times, we are extremely committed to the three major

principles that have guided the creation of the code and that we think should govern space activities. They include freedom of access to space for peaceful purposes; the preservation of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit; and respect for the right of States to self-defence. One of our priorities is to ensure that the space environment enables the development of space activities for peaceful purposes to the benefit of all.

The text that has been presented, which is currently supported by a very large number of countries, will apply to all space activities, whether they are conducted by States or non-governmental bodies. It will be voluntary and open to the participation of all States. It will define the main rules to be observed by States with capabilities in outer space in military and civil fields. The draft does not contain provisions concerning the placement of weapons in outer space as such, but stresses the importance of implementing measures to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict and calls on all States to resolve conflicts in space by peaceful means.

We believe that the ongoing work on the code of conduct with a view to developing information-sharing, confidence-building measures and best practice for space activities fully meets this objective because in our opinion it will develop confidence and understanding between space stakeholders, thereby effectively contributing to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Promoting transparency in order to build confidence will help prevent accidents and collisions of space objects. It will also help prevent malicious acts from going unnoticed or space incidents from systematically being interpreted as hostile action. It will therefore enhance the security of space activities. This comprehensive initiative addressing both military and civil aspects cannot be addressed in established forums such as the Conference on Disarmament, which deals with military aspects of the problem, or the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which deals with only civilian aspects. Discussions need to be pursued outside such forums within a process that is open to all Member States.

We hope that that approach will be productive and result in the adoption by as many States as possible of a code that will then be presented to the General Assembly. We call on all States Members of the United

Nations to participate in discussions that will take place in the months to come.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The matter of preventing an arms race in outer space is Russia's absolute priority on the multilateral disarmament agenda. We believe it is high time that we embarked upon serious practical work in this field by adopting pre-emptive tactics. It is easier to prevent a threat than to remove it. Based on those considerations, Russia joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.3, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", which was introduced this year by the representative of Egypt.

In the international arena, Russia has put forward a number of practical initiatives to achieve those goals. As members know, in 2008, together with China, we submitted at the Conference on Disarmament a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. Russia believes that the draft contains a set of preventive measures aimed at detecting up-to-date "high-tech" destabilizing types of weapons and new areas of confrontation. The placement of weapons in outer space could have unpredictable consequences for the international community, similar to what we witnessed at the dawn of the nuclear age.

At the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 2004, Russia unilaterally and unconditionally pledged that it would not be the first to place any kind of weapon in outer space. Our partners from the Collective Security Treaty Organization supported that initiative and committed not to place weapons in outer space. We call upon all States possessing relevant capabilities to follow suit. Every State has an equal and inalienable right to access outer space. Naturally, space security is our common goal, and together we must find a solution that would strengthen international security and stability.

Given that so far the Conference on Disarmament unfortunately has been unable to launch negotiations on the draft of the treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, we believe it would be wise to step up work on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. As members are aware, resolution 65/68 established the Group of Governmental Experts to conduct a study, commencing in 2012, on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures, to be submitted to the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly in 2013. In that respect, we believe that the application of those

measures, while not being a substitute for efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space, will contribute to greater transparency and predictability of outer space activities in all spheres, including military. As Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts, I should like to brief the Committee on the outcome of its first session, which was held in New York from 23 to 27 July.

(spoke in English)

The Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities held its first session in New York from 23 to 27 July 2012. Experts nominated by the Governments of Brazil, Chile, China, France, Italy, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America participated in the session.

During its first session, the Group took stock of the changes in the political and technical environment with respect to outer space activities since the 1993 report of the Group of Governmental Experts (A/48/305, annex), which were deemed conducive to transparency and confidence-building measures. The Group considered specific topics related to transparency and confidence-building measures, including, inter alia, basic principles related to the use of outer space, political measures related to the rules of conduct, information-sharing measures aimed at enhancing the transparency of activities in outer space, operational measures aimed at enhancing the transparency of activities in outer space, and the consultative mechanism in connection with outer space transparency and confidence-building measures.

The Group reviewed the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, including the final report submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, and considered the structure of its own report. To help to ensure that the work of the Group is as inclusive as possible, experts from other States, intergovernmental bodies such as the International Telecommunication Union and the World Meteorological Organization, as well as from civil society, are encouraged to provide their written recommendations to the Group. We have already received the first submission, from the Government of Australia, and I encourage other countries wishing to do so to follow suit.

In addition to help ensure that the work of the Group is complementary to other efforts in the field of outer space, the Group encouraged its Chair and its members to liaise and engage as appropriate with other bodies and initiatives such as the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and meetings organized by civil society and research institutes.

The second session of the Group will be held from 1 to 5 April 2013 in Geneva. Last, but not least, I want to express my deep personal appreciation to previous speakers who spoke highly about the start of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, and to my fellow experts who are in the room and who support the activities of this Group. I hope and strongly believe that the outcome will not be disappointing.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The General Assembly has recognized for more than two decades that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. It has been 30 years since the Conference on Disarmament (CD) began to consider measures to prevent such a race in outer space. The Final Document (resolution S-10/2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament includes more than 30 paragraphs that relate to the dangers and urgency of preventing an arms race in its various aspects. Paragraph 80 of that document specifically recommended undertaking appropriate international negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The existing international regime pertaining to outer space, including the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the 1984 Moon Treaty, has gaps which can be addressed only by a new legal instrument. The rapid growth and change in space technologies offers States both opportunities and challenges. Space security is no longer considered the preserve of a few developed States. Today developing countries tap into space technology in diverse areas ranging from meteorology and disaster management to the economy and telecommunications, and their dependence is set to grow rapidly in the years to come.

The Chair took the Chair.

History suggests that such monopolies do not last forever. Other countries will play catch-up. If we do not cap the possibility of the weaponization of outer space now, it may become extremely difficult to do so in the future. Let us avoid the mistakes made in the case of chemical weapons, which witnessed decades of production before the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction was concluded.

The development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems and their integration into space assets has added a worrying dimension to the issues relating to outer space. An arms race in, and the weaponization of, outer space would not only endanger the peaceful uses of outer space but also aggravate the intensity of conflicts on Earth, with potentially disastrous consequences for international peace and security. It is therefore important for the international community to ensure that the use of outer space is limited to peaceful purposes and remains the common heritage of humankind.

It is against that backdrop that Pakistan has consistently opposed the weaponization of outer space and calls for negotiations in the CD on this contemporary issue of interest and concern. There is a considerable body of existing knowledge on preventing an arms race in outer space. Much work has already been done in the CD by the ad hoc committees on this subject from 1985 to 1992. Moreover, the draft text introduced jointly by the Russian Federation and China in 2008 on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space also provides a useful basis to commence negotiations. We therefore see no impediment to starting substantive work in the CD on preventing an arms race in outer space.

Despite the dangers of the weaponization of outer space and its attendant repercussions for international peace and security, some powerful States continue to oppose the commencement of substantive work on the issue in the CD. There can be no other explanation except that those States seek to protect their monopoly on the technology and maintain their full-spectrum dominance. In the past three years there has been a growing lament expressed over the CD's deadlock. Some States have found it convenient to attribute it to one of the four core issues on the CD's agenda.

Facts speak for themselves. One inconvenient fact is that the CD, despite overwhelming support for

negotiating a legal instrument on preventing an arms race in outer space, has been prevented by a handful of States from doing so. The international community must therefore ask for a clear expression of the underlying reasons for such filibustering and how the commencement of substantive work on the issue would negatively affect the security interests of the States that oppose commencing such negotiations. In any case, those States should acknowledge their responsibility in perpetuating the CD's deadlock.

Pakistan views with interest various initiatives that have been put forward in the recent past regarding transparency and confidence-building measures for activities in outer space. While such proposals can be useful interim steps, they cannot, and should not, obviate the need and quest for a legally binding treaty in the CD on preventing an arms race in outer space. At the same time, we call for a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory agreement to address concerns arising from the development, deployment and proliferation of anti-ballistic missile systems.

The Chair: As the Acting Chair stated earlier, the award ceremony for the 2012 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates is scheduled to begin in a few minutes in this conference room. As is customary, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, will address the graduating fellows. For that purpose, in accordance with established practice, I will suspend the meeting at this point. Delegations waiting for their turn to make a statement will have the opportunity to speak first tomorrow. I would kindly ask delegations to remain in their seats for the ceremony in order to congratulate and encourage our junior colleagues.

The meeting was suspended at 5.25 p.m. and resumed at 5.35 p.m.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Cherniavsky (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to inform the Committee that the list of all the draft resolutions and draft decisions submitted to the Secretariat is now ready. They total 59 in number. Tomorrow morning, after we verify all the drafts, we shall put the list up on the QuickFirst website. The drafts have been sorted into the seven clusters in document A/C.1/67/CRP.4, which will be available online as well.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.