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First Committee

11th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Dabbashi (Libya)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 89 to 107 (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 Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): Before I open the floor, we will hold an awards ceremony for the graduates of the 2013 United Nations Fellowship Programme on Disarmament, during which the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, will present them with certificates. In accordance with the Committee's established practice, I will now suspend the meeting to enable the presentation to proceed in an informal setting, and I kindly ask all delegations to remain in their seats for the ceremony in order to congratulate and encourage our junior colleagues.

The meeting was suspended at 3.10 p.m. and resumed at 3.40 p.m.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We will now continue with the list of speakers under the cluster "Nuclear weapons".

Ms. Sweeb (Suriname): Suriname has the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in its capacity as President pro tempore.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your election. We look forward to successful meetings under your leadership.

In that regard, UNASUR joins the efforts of the international community in moving towards the negotiation of a universal and legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons, considering that their total elimination is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and that their very existence diminishes the security of all States, including those who possess them. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there will be a real risk of their use and proliferation.

UNASUR expresses its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We welcome the results of the Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in March, and call upon all States to participate in the second Conference, to be hosted by Mexico in February 2014.

UNASUR reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The aspiration of UNASUR States for the review cycle of the NPT is that new and concrete measures in favour of nuclear disarmament will be adopted at the next Review Conference, to be held in 2015 — for example, the adoption of a legal commitment to the elimination of all nuclear weapons, with clear benchmarks and timetables.

We believe that it is a legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States, including all UNASUR members, that nuclear-weapon States provide unequivocal and legally binding guarantees not to use

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or threaten to use those weapons. Therefore, we call for work in the negotiation and adoption, in the shortest possible time, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. Likewise, we call upon nuclear-weapon States to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines, security policies and military strategies in order to reach the complete elimination of those lethal weapons, regardless of their type or location.

Our countries will continue to support the efforts aimed at reviving the works of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, because there is an urgent need to begin the negotiation of new international legal instruments governing the fundamental issues for disarmament and non-proliferation that will favour international peace and security.

We reaffirm the need for all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, particularly those listed in annex 2, to do so as soon as possible as a sign of their political will and their commitment to international peace and security. On that point, we welcome the ratifications in the past year by Brunei Darussalam, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and the Republic of Iraq. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the States members of UNASUR reiterate the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing.

As members of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, the States of UNASUR urge all nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will help to eliminate the risk of use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

The States of UNASUR welcome the decision adopted at the eighth NPT Review Conference to promote the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of freely concerted agreements among the States of each region. On this point, it is important to note that UNASUR regrets the non-compliance with the agreement achieved on holding in 2012 an international conference for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We urge that the conference be convened as soon as possible, considering that the agreements that may be reached at it would be an important contribution to achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and a momentous step for the peace process in the Middle East.

The States members of UNASUR would also like to avail themselves of this important occasion to underline the essential contribution made by the International Atomic Energy Agency to common efforts to establish a more secure world. In this regard, UNASUR is pleased that Peru and Venezuela, members of the Union, have been part since September, and for a period of two years, of the Board of Governors of that Agency, along with Argentina and Brazil. We would also like to underline the importance of the Brazilian-Argentinean Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, the only binational safeguards organization in the world, which is an initiative of two of our member States.

Finally, we would like to express our satisfaction with the recent Latin American initiatives in favour of nuclear disarmament: the Meeting of Senior Officials of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States on Nuclear Disarmament, held in Buenos Aires, on 20 August; and the XXIII Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in the same city on 21 and 22 August. Likewise, we appreciated the holding of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, held on 26 September (see A/68/PV.11).

We hope that all of these initiatives can soon achieve their goal, so that humanity can direct resources devoted to the maintenance and modernization of nuclear arsenals to the social and economic development of their peoples.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Costa Rica to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.34.

Mr. Dengo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.34, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", under agenda item 99 (w), on behalf of Austria, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, Slovenia, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Costa Rica.

The draft resolution follows up on resolution 67/56, adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2012, establishing the open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

The open-ended working group, which I had the honour to chair, concluded its work in Geneva in late August. As requested by resolution 67/56, it adopted without a vote a substantive report (A/68/514) reflecting the discussions and proposals, which has been submitted to the General Assembly today. In our assessment, the open-ended working group was an important exercise in providing a space for substantive discussions on how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.34 recognizes the work that the open-ended working group carried out in 2013 and welcomes its report. The draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to transmit the report of the open-ended working group to the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission for their consideration.

In view of the overarching objective, the draft resolution contains several operational proposals on how to take this task even further. It requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on how to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, and decides to review at its sixty-ninth session the progress made in the implementation of the resolution and to further explore options for taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including, if necessary, through the open-ended working group.

I take this opportunity to express once again my thanks to all States, international organizations and civil society organizations that participated in the sessions of the Open-ended Working Group. The positive atmosphere of commitment that characterized the work is reflected in the comments on the report and in the references to it in speeches at the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) and during the deliberations at the First Committee. The sponsors also express their thanks for the constructive dialogue and comments we received during the informal consultations on the draft resolution that we are submitting for the consideration of the First Committee today. We hope that the changes in the text address the concerns and constructive criticism.

We ask the General Assembly to consider the draft resolution with an open mind and with a view to continuing to reflect on ways to move forward towards the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, and the value of multilateral negotiations towards that end. We are confident the

draft resolution will enjoy the broad support of the Assembly

I should like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

For those of us who work daily on nuclear disarmament, there are two options. We could take a pessimistic stance, which some prefer to call realistic. The sentiments expressed that have been expressed in that respect reflect the frustration, sadness and impotence before the paralysis of the so-called single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. On the other hand, there are those of us who are optimistic and — at least speaking for myself — would have no problem with being called idealists or utopians. After all, I know that those who live in hope are happier than those who have lost it.

Beyond being optimistic, Costa Rica is a country that perseveres. We remain firm in our efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore welcome the progress achieved in recent months on nuclear disarmament, without losing sight of remaining challenges. In particular, we applaud the bilateral negotiations being held among nuclear-weapon States with a view to reducing their arsenals and nuclear weapons on alert. We encourage those countries to make even greater efforts to arrive at zero.

Costa Rica reiterates that the best defence strategy and dissuasion doctrine is that which ensures that weapons of mass destruction will never be used by any actor. The best example is the Chemical Weapons Convention, a treaty that is nearly universal and the secretariat of which is now a deserving recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. In the same vein, my country adhered to the joint statement on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, issued by New Zealand on behalf of a significant group of countries. We believe that this new focus will allow for an analysis of the effects of nuclear weapons that goes beyond strategic defence and security theories. In this regard, in Oslo in March we confirmed that no country has the capacity to respond alone to the catastrophic humanitarian impact of a nuclear explosion. Our delegation played a significant role in Norway and will certainly be represented in Mexico next year.

With the same optimism, I highlight once again the work of the open-ended working group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The group's work was not easy. Nevertheless, my delegation

is extremely satisfied with the results. As Chair of the Group, I adopted a transparent, inclusive, comprehensive and objective approach, which we nicknamed the “TICO approach”. Those who had the opportunity to participate in the Group’s meetings — and I am pleased to see that many of them are present here today — can attest to the constructive spirit with which delegations, civil-society representatives and guests participated.

We fulfilled the mandate set by resolution 67/56. Among the relevant aspects, I underscore the educational value and awareness that was raised, especially during the first half of the sessions, as was mentioned a few minutes ago. This allowed us to level the playing field, to the benefit of many delegations, including my own, that cannot afford to dedicate a great deal of time or human resources to the important topic of nuclear disarmament.

I must also emphasize the active participation of representatives of civil society, academia and other bodies in our meetings. It became clear that nuclear disarmament is not an issue of interest solely to nuclear-weapon States. We all have a role to play. I would also like to thank all of the delegations that contributed oral or written submissions on how to take forward multilateral negotiations.

I shall now turn to other issues that require our attention. We are not far off from the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2015. As we said at the second Preparatory Committee, Costa Rica regrets that no conference to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has yet taken place. In our region, the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco was just the beginning of our gradual progress towards a goal. It was not until several years later that its universality was achieved. The Treaty of Tlatelolco has served as a political, legal and institutional point of reference for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. We are convinced that the creation of more nuclear-weapon-free zones is essential to achieving peace and security, and would thereby strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

Furthermore, in August the States members of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirmed the urgent need to make progress towards the priority objective of nuclear disarmament and to achieve the general and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we agreed to join forces with the international

community to move negotiations forward on a legally binding, universal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, such as the model nuclear weapons convention presented by Costa Rica and Malaysia. That proposal would prohibit the use, threat of use, possession, development, testing, deployment or transfer of nuclear weapons, and provide a phased programme for the elimination of such weapons under effective international control. We believe that this could serve as a starting point for negotiations on an instrument to build confidence in verification processes and ensure the supervision, dismantling and definitive reduction of nuclear weapons.

Complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament should be our ultimate goal. The only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. The Committee can count on Costa Rica in efforts to achieve that goal.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Switzerland and Nigeria on the issue of de-alerting, or decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear-weapons systems.

Although the Cold War ended more than two decades ago, close to 2,000 warheads are estimated to be ready for use on short notice, meaning that the decision-making time for launch is counted in minutes. Our countries have, for a number of years, called for action to address this issue of concern to the international community. Our call for action is informed by the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. It is informed by the fundamental questions arising from the maintenance on high alert of weapons that have enormous destructive capacity and that pose a threat to the survival of humanity.

It is a deep and constant concern that this dangerous feature of Cold War doctrine has been perpetuated to this day. While tensions that marked the international security climate during the Cold War have lowered significantly, corresponding decreases in the alert levels of the arsenals of the largest nuclear-weapon States have not been forthcoming.

The concerns caused by maintaining nuclear weapons on a high level of readiness are compounded by worrying developments in cyberwarfare. Cyber-related attacks on nuclear command-and-control systems or on nuclear weapons themselves cannot be ruled out, and the possibility of such attacks on nuclear weapons maintained on high alert could represent a clear new

danger. We welcome the fact that some nuclear-weapon States are now looking more closely at these as-yet unknown risks.

Reducing the operational readiness of nuclear-weapons systems would represent an important disarmament step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. It would represent a confidence-building measure and demonstrate a commitment to diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines. It remains also our strong view that progress in lowering operational readiness would have positive effects not only on international security but also on human security.

We acknowledge and welcome the progress that was made in the past. The level of operational readiness of non-strategic nuclear weapons has been considerably lowered, and decisions to stand down strategic bombers have also been taken. These examples highlight the fact that de-alerting is possible and that technical and political obstacles can indeed be overcome.

We remain concerned that these initial steps, which were taken at the end of the Cold War, have not been complemented by additional measures. Lowering alert levels is closely linked to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines. In this context, we note that the new nuclear-weapons employment guidance issued by the United States earlier this year directs the Department of Defence to examine and reduce the role of “launch under attack” in contingency planning. We hope that this will result in concrete developments.

We are also encouraged by the numerous calls made by former high-ranking officials from nuclear-weapon States arguing in favour of the necessity and feasibility of reducing the level of operational readiness of nuclear weapons.

Our delegations presented resolution 67/46, on decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems, to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, and presented similar texts at previous sessions. We are pleased by the strong and growing support for the resolution, which demonstrates the Assembly’s collective commitment to a diminishing role for nuclear weapons and its recognition that reducing alert levels is an important interim step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The year 2014 will represent a key milestone in the implementation of the commitments made in the NPT framework by the nuclear-weapon States regarding

de-alerting. Next year’s reporting by the nuclear-weapon States on the implementation of the different provisions set forth in action 5 of the 2010 action plan, including on further reducing the operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems, will enable States parties to assess whether and to what extent progress has been made in lowering the alert rate of nuclear weapons. Moreover, this reporting will inform decisions regarding further action in this area.

While we will not submit a resolution to the First Committee this year, we will continue to spare no efforts in advocating for progress towards lowering operational readiness in all relevant forums, and intend to revisit our resolution next year.

Mr. Gerasimovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): It is my honour to read out a statement on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization: the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the voluntary ban on nuclear weapons undertaken by the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and other States of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

“Some 20 years ago, in 1993 and 1994, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and Ukraine voluntarily carried out their obligations under the Lisbon Protocol to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (START I). They also joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as non-nuclear-weapon States. Following the Lisbon Protocol, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine became plenipotentiary parties to START I until it expired in December 2009. We consider that decision and the ensuing steps towards the voluntary removal of all nuclear weapons from Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine as key events in nuclear disarmament during the post-Soviet era, which paved the path for new nuclear initiatives.

“The importance of the contributions made by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine towards nuclear disarmament has been recognized by the international community and noted in various international documents. We intend to continue strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The NPT is a fundamental

pillar of international security and strategic stability. Under the NPT, States are obligated to engage in talks on the most effective measures for nuclear disarmament and on complete overall disarmament. We have taken a gradual, phased approach to meeting those obligations, and ensured the multilateral and irreversible character of the process.

“In that connection, we underscore the need for the full and voluntary application of the safeguards enshrined in the Budapest Memorandum of 5 December 1994. We believe that action 8 of the action plan for nuclear disarmament contained in the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, concerning the obligation of nuclear States to abide by existing security safeguards, can be applied directly to the safeguards stipulated in the Memorandum.”

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): I associate myself fully with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the bedrock of our disarmament efforts. Consolidating it is our priority; the action plan adopted by consensus in 2010 is our road map. It is important to implement this road map and to commit to it without deviating from the chosen path in order to ensure the success of the 2015 Review Conference.

I would like to commend the professionalism of our colleague Ambassador Cornel Feruta of Romania. Under his presidency, the NPT Preparatory Committee held in-depth and balanced discussions on each of the three pillars. We were also able to address key issues such as withdrawing from the Treaty and complying with non-proliferation commitments. I would also like to commend the efforts of Mr. Jaakko Laajava in preparing the conference on a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which we regret did not take place in 2012. We offer the facilitator our full support.

Implementing the road map adopted by consensus in 2010 will clearly require the nuclear-weapon States to live up to their commitments. Alongside the other five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5), we are working relentlessly to that end. We meet each year to follow up the NPT action plan, and we have

established groups of experts. The meeting organized in Geneva on 18 and 19 April by the Russian Federation allowed us to have very substantive discussions on all the issues. Together, we are working to bolster the mutual trust and transparency that are essential to making progress on disarmament. The group of experts tasked with preparing a glossary of common definitions is making satisfactory progress under the guidance of China. Furthermore, we remain fully aware of the 2014 reporting deadline, and we are pursuing our talks on that matter.

The P-5 are fully committed to promoting the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, I welcome the ratifications this year by Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq. I also welcome the creation by the Executive Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization of a group of eminent persons to advance the Treaty's entry into force. Above all, the P-5 continue to support the immediate launch of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with document CD/1299 and the mandate set out therein.

France has long supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In the context of such a regional approach, it has already issued negative security assurances to over 100 States. We stand ready to sign the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as soon as possible. There has been some encouraging progress in our talks with the five Central Asian States on the protocol to the Treaty of Semipalatinsk on finding solutions acceptable to all States parties. I also recall that in September 2012 we signed a parallel declaration with Mongolia on its nuclear-weapon-free status. While valuable, that regional approach should not overshadow the fact that France also issued security assurances in 1995 in order to meet the expectations of the non-nuclear-weapon States that engage France.

As a nuclear-weapon State, France is aware of its specific responsibilities in implementing the road map of the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. I would first like to recall some of our past actions, some of which are irreversible and unique among the nuclear-weapon States.

We have completely, unilaterally and irreversibly dismantled our nuclear test sites and our plutonium and uranium production facilities for nuclear weapons. We have reduced by half the number of our nuclear

warheads, completely dismantled our ground-to-ground component, and reduced by one third our airborne and sea-based components. That record is exemplary; it is made up of actions, not words. France has never participated in any nuclear arms race. It applies the principle of strict sufficiency by maintaining its arsenal at the lowest possible level compatible with the strategic context. The French deterrence is strictly defensive. Its use is restricted to extreme circumstances of legitimate defence and in no way contravenes international law.

The implementation of the road map of the 2010 NPT Review Conference is also a collective responsibility. The road map is, first, a shared approach that applies to all States parties to the NPT. It is a step-by-step approach. It is a sequence for multilateral action, with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). That is a logical sequence. The time for discussions on the order of priorities for disarmament negotiations has passed. That debate was settled by the action plan adopted by consensus in 2010.

In that regard, the plan is very clear. Action 15 calls for negotiations on an FMCT to begin without delay in the Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. It is therefore urgent that the Conference on Disarmament adopt a programme of work based on document CD/1864, adopted by consensus in 2009. We are committed to beginning those negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament without delay. To that end, we supported resolution 67/53 to move forward the discussions on the Treaty, which should be negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that the Group of Governmental Experts that will meet in 2014 and 2015 will enable important progress. France calls on all States invited to the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts to participate. Questioning the priority of negotiating an FMCT would be a deviation from the path laid out in the road map adopted by consensus in 2010. It would therefore risk wasting more time.

Last year, my country tried to warn the General Assembly of the probable consequences of certain initiatives that created parallel forums. It is clear that it did not lead, as we feared, to the reopening of discussions on the step-by-step approach and the priority of the negotiations. That debate was settled with the adoption of the common road map, represented

by the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Disarmament depends above all else on mutual trust among States and on the general perception of security. It cannot be decided upon in disregard of the strategic context.

Proliferation remains the most serious threat to international peace and security. In February, North Korea conducted another nuclear test — its third since 2006. That test was a serious act and a major threat to international peace and security. It was a new, unacceptable violation by North Korea of its international obligations. Those acts were condemned by the Security Council in resolutions 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013). Recent information that the plutonium-producing reactor at Yongbyon is once again in operation is of particular concern. Pyongyang must end that escalation and its warlike rhetoric.

The Iranian proliferation crisis naturally remains a central concern for us. The latest report (see A/68/324) of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) once again confirms Iran's violation of its obligations under the resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors and the Security Council. Its stockpile of enriched uranium, including uranium enriched to nearly 20 per cent, continues to grow, and its heavy-water-related activities bring Iran closer to being able to effectively produce plutonium.

The declarations of Iran's new President indicate, we hope, an openness. The President of the French Republic met with him in September in New York. He informed the Iranian President of our willingness to talk, but also of our firmness on nuclear proliferation and on France's position that it would be unacceptable for Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon. We are awaiting concrete gestures to restore confidence and show that Iran is truly prepared to fulfil the expectations of the international community.

A few days ago, discussions took place in Geneva to test the serious commitment of the new Iranian authorities to moving forward with the implementation of measures to be verified by the IAEA. For the first time and in a new atmosphere, we had detailed and substantial discussions with Iran. Although important differences remain between the parties, we hope that those discussions will mark the beginning of a credible cycle towards rebuilding trust. We stand ready for that while at the same time remaining focused on developments in Iran's nuclear activities on the ground.

France is determined to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the objectives of the NPT, in a way that promotes international stability, based on the principle of equal and undiminished security for all.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Today, global efforts to regulate, reduce and prevent the spread of armaments, particularly nuclear weapons, are facing serious challenges. Thirty-five years ago, the General Assembly reached consensus on the mandate and machinery to pursue the disarmament agenda. Over time, this consensus has broken down and the shared goal of nuclear disarmament has become elusive.

A progressive erosion of the international consensus on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament norms, rules and mechanisms is evident from the following developments: the disavowal by most of the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of complete nuclear disarmament; the prolonged non-entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and prospects of new tests by some States; the existence of doctrines envisaging the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear-weapon States; the pursuit of selective non-proliferation, exceptionalism and discriminatory conditions for peaceful nuclear cooperation; the growing asymmetry in military power among States; the danger of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and other non-State actors; and the inability of the disarmament machinery to evolve consensus on any of the issues that are on its agenda.

Both non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are important to international peace and security. Their simultaneous pursuit alone can erect effective barriers against risks of proliferation and promote disarmament. The so-called step-by-step approach alone is a subterfuge to oppose the aim of nuclear disarmament. The determination of few powerful States to retain nuclear weapons while prescribing strict regimes for the weaker States only aggravates the sense of insecurity among States.

Despite high-blown rhetoric and moralistic assertions, the fact is that nuclear weapons remain integral to strategic doctrines of military alliances. Nuclear weapons also provide extended deterrence to non-nuclear weapon States that are members of military alliances. As such, these States indirectly and implicitly encourage the possession or even use of

nuclear weapons as part of the strategic doctrines of their alliances.

We recognize that nuclear disarmament will not happen overnight or even in a lifetime, but the effort to eliminate nuclear weapons must start now. It has been too long since the first special session devoted to disarmament for us to give practical shape to obligations adopted by consensus.

Pakistan believes that a rules-based, equitable and non-discriminatory international order needs to be evolved and must pursue a comprehensive disarmament agenda. This agenda should build upon existing achievements and should include measures to address the security concerns of all States, and carry forward strategic and conventional weapons limitation and reductions. The unilateral and bilateral measures undertaken by some are partial and insufficient and cannot substitute for the implementation of multilateral disarmament obligations. The disarmament agenda must also strengthen the international non-proliferation regime through policies that are equitable, criteria-based and non-discriminatory. There should be no exceptionalism or preferential treatment driven by motivations of power and profit.

There should be an end to the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. Extending nuclear deterrence to alliance partners amounts to horizontal proliferation. Negative security assurances should be extended to non-nuclear-weapon States. These assurances are cost-free and do not undermine the security of nuclear-weapon States. Instead of undertaking half measures, disowning obligations to disarm and advocating a treaty banning only the future production of fissile material — which is not even a non-proliferation measure — there should be a reduction of existing fissile material stocks as well, which would be a genuine step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Along with these steps, the international community should immediately start negotiations on a convention for the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

For a vast majority of States, nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority on the international security agenda, despite the equivocation of some nuclear-weapon States. The *raison d'être* of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is to negotiate nuclear disarmament. Yet, after the lapse of more than three decades, the goal of negotiating and concluding a convention on nuclear disarmament is as elusive as ever. If States that have

been opposing negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the CD have legitimate security concerns, they should openly state their reasons. The fact that they have chosen not to do so raises serious questions regarding their motives and commitment to nuclear disarmament, and indeed to the work of CD itself.

Pakistan welcomes the first-ever High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). We support the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the meeting, as well as the draft resolution to be presented by NAM as a follow-up to the High-level Meeting. The adoption of the draft resolution will reaffirm the ripeness of nuclear disarmament. It will also reinforce one priority of the international community — the early commencement of negotiations in the CD on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention.

The demand for negative security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s in pursuit of the security to which they have a right under the Charter of the United Nations. Pakistan, along with a vast majority of Member States, believes that this issue is ripe for negotiations at the CD. It would also contribute to building a climate of trust and understanding and could contribute to easing the current strains on the wider disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Accordingly, as in the past, Pakistan, along with a large number of sponsors, shall submit draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.49, entitled “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”.

In conclusion, Pakistan reiterates the long-standing call of the 120 members of the Non-Aligned Movement for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly to revive a global consensus that will ensure the elimination of nuclear weapons while meeting the security concerns of all States.

Mr. Hannan (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

As we mentioned in our general statement (see A/C.1/68/PV.6), the position of Bangladesh on nuclear disarmament is unambiguously clear. We believe that nuclear weapons do not secure people’s lives; they only endanger them. We also believe that the sustenance and proliferation of nuclear arsenals impede the

realization of the purposes and is incompatible with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We are convinced that peace, security and economic and social development are indivisible and that the pursuit of armament, in particular nuclear arsenals, far from helping to strengthen international security, actually weakens it. We therefore have voluntarily opted not to seek them.

Yet the arms race continues. The nuclear-weapon States, insensitive to the security of all others, continue to have faith in nuclear arsenals to ensure their security. Their vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the competition for the qualitative refinement and enrichment of weapons of all kinds, to which economic and scientific resources and technological advances are diverted, pose an incalculable threat to peace. We must therefore urgently seek their total elimination.

For us, nuclear weapons themselves, irrespective of who possesses them, are the problem. Nuclear weapons are wrong weapons, and borrowing the Secretary-General’s oft-quoted remarks, “There are no ‘right hands’ that can handle these ‘wrong weapons’”. We have all along emphasized that disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. Obviously, the proliferation of nuclear weapons by new countries, whether they are responsible members of the international community or not, is unacceptable, but so is the lack of progress towards the fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their disarmament commitments. Both disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and should be pursued in tandem to progress towards the path to zero.

We have all along maintained that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, so does the risk of their use, threat of use and proliferation, as well as the risk of their falling into the hands of terrorists. The only absolute guarantee against the danger of nuclear weapons is therefore their total elimination. Until total elimination is a reality, non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to negative security assurances against any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them, in any circumstances.

The so-called existing provisions of negative security assurances, as claimed by some Members, are inadequate. They must be brought under a universal legal instrument, and the Conference on Disarmament is possibly the right platform to initiate negotiations on such a legal instrument.

Sadly, the Conference on Disarmament has remained deadlocked for more than a decade now, with no discernible forward movement in the negotiations of a non-discriminatory, internationally and effectively verifiable Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, including existing stocks. That impasse has to be removed. For that to happen, we will need the political will and flexibility of a number of Member countries towards achieving consensus for the success of the Conference on Disarmament — the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

My delegation would like to underscore the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as an interim measure until the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes a reality. However, such zones should be established where they do not presently exist, including South Asia and the Middle East.

Bangladesh remains a staunch advocate of the immediate entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Within 30 days of its adoption, Bangladesh, an annex 2 State, had demonstrated its full faith in the CTBT and in 1996 was the first country of South Asia to have signed the Treaty, which we ratified in 2000. We join the 161 States parties to the CTBT in urging the 13 countries that have not yet signed and the 35 that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so without further delay. Non-ratification of the CTBT by the remaining eight annex 2 States remains the only obstacle to the entry into force of the Treaty and to a permanent banning of nuclear tests by anyone, anywhere. The universalization and entry into force of the CTBT at an early date are crucial for attaining our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In a world of finite resources, there is a close relationship between expenditure on armaments and economic and social development. The hundreds of billions of dollars, together with the human, technical and technological resources spent annually on the manufacture, maintenance and improvement of nuclear weapons, are in stark contrast to the challenges posed by poverty in which two thirds of the world's population lives. Realizing the goals of disarmament therefore means stopping the colossal wastage of scarce resources dedicated to non-productive purposes and freeing valuable resources in order to save millions of lives, address pressing development needs and ensure the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We therefore reinforce our call for diverting

resources away from nuclear programmes so as to eradicate poverty and hunger and finance development.

We believe that our progress lies not in making weapons but in making peace by establishing linkages among peoples. We should promote a culture of peace rather than a culture of war. All wars, intolerance and conflicts emanate from a mindset of hatred and intolerance, and a culture of peace would promote greater understanding among peoples and tolerance of differing views. We need to promote unity in diversity. It is from that perspective that Bangladesh has submitted a draft resolution every year on that subject. There may be a price for the promotion and maintenance of peace, but it is much less than that of making nuclear weapons, fighting a war and making peace afterwards.

Bangladesh is located in a region with three nuclear Powers. Despite living in the shadow of nuclear neighbours, we have unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear — a position that is rooted in and emanates from our constitutional obligation to general and complete disarmament. Nuclear weapons have no place in our security posture. The only purpose that nuclear power serves for us is its peaceful use under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, which may help address key development challenges of many countries. In that regard, Bangladesh, with the assistance and strict supervision of the IAEA, has been working on the civil and peaceful uses of nuclear technology, especially in the agriculture, energy and health sectors.

At this debate of the First Committee today, my delegation expresses the hope that the world will use nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes and that the aspirations of the peace-loving peoples of the world to see a planet free of nuclear weapons will soon be realized.

Mr. Eberhardt (United States of America): In the interest of time, I have shortened my spoken remarks, but the full United States statement will be made available on the website of the United States Mission to the United Nations and the secretariat's QuickFirst portal, as well as circulated to delegations.

Earlier this year in Berlin, President Obama reaffirmed his commitment to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The United States continues to undertake mutually reinforcing steps in pursuit of that goal, knowing that only a balanced approach to maintaining international security will move us closer

to the world our President envisioned in Prague and again in Berlin. That requires both strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and working towards nuclear disarmament. A practical, step-by-step approach to disarmament has proved to be the most effective means to increase stability, reduce nuclear dangers and fulfil our obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We know there are some who have called for alternate, immediate, wholesale approaches to nuclear disarmament. While we share the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, we know that real and lasting disarmament will take sustained effort and commitment, requiring us to proceed in a deliberate and step-by-step way. We are pursuing concrete measures towards that end, but the hard truth is that the final goal of disarmament will not be realized overnight or in a single negotiation. Calls for immediate and total disarmament distract from more realistic efforts.

We understand the sincere motivations behind efforts to address the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons; indeed, we share the interest of all States in extending the 68-year record of the non-use of nuclear weapons. But any call to move nuclear disarmament into international humanitarian law circles can only distract from the practical agenda set forth in the 2010 NPT action plan. We do not support proposals to set up new United Nations mechanisms to address nuclear disarmament. Such mechanisms would fare no better than existing bodies because the same political challenges present in existing disarmament bodies would be replicated in any new multilateral body.

Moreover, it is clear that the pragmatic, sustained approach we have taken has borne fruit. We recognize our responsibilities, along with the Russian Federation, as the countries holding the largest nuclear arsenals. The United States and the Russian Federation continue to successfully implement the New START treaty, which is the most comprehensive nuclear-arms-control agreement in 20 years. When Treaty reductions are completed, we will have cut American and Russian deployed nuclear weapons to their lowest levels since the 1950s. The Treaty's verification regime is, in some ways, the most intrusive nuclear-weapon verification regime yet, and sets an important precedent and foundation for future negotiations.

The June 2013 release of the Nuclear Posture Review Implementation Study and President Obama's Berlin speech that same month demonstrate the intention of

the United States to seek additional strategic nuclear reductions in conjunction with Russia. We also intend to work with our NATO allies to seek, with Russia, reductions in non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe. The United States will continue to seek reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons — strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed. To further those goals, we have begun a bilateral dialogue with Russia on strategic stability that can lay the groundwork for future negotiations.

Now, as we make deep reductions and pursue additional ones, I would like to underscore that the United States is neither developing new nuclear weapons nor pursuing any new nuclear missions. Stockpile stewardship and management activities are intended only to sustain existing designs, modernize their safety, security and use control features, and modernize facilities. In addition to enhancing the safety of the nuclear-weapons stockpile and maintaining the capabilities for pursuing nuclear-disarmament goals, investments in more modern facilities also benefit a range of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, emergency response and counter-terrorism activities.

The five NPT nuclear-weapon States continue to engage intensively on a wide range of topics related to all three pillars of the NPT action plan: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Russian Federation hosted the latest in a series of conferences of the permanent five members of the Security Council (P-5) this past April in Geneva to review and plan P-5 progress in fulfilling the action plan. The P-5 are focusing on transparency, reporting, confidence-building and verification; working towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the commencement of fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations; and engaging on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and the NPT withdrawal issue.

The United States has also worked vigorously in recent years to advance nuclear-weapon-free zones, the establishment of which has long been recognized as making an important contribution to disarmament. The signature and ratification of protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties also provide the basis for extending legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. The United States recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving those assurances, and we

believe that extending such assurances can strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We have submitted protocols to two nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties to the United States Senate for advice and consent to ratification. We have also engaged with the other nuclear-weapon States and the parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in an effort to reach an agreement that will allow us to sign those Treaties' protocols. The United States is committed to that process and looks forward to signing those Protocols as soon as possible.

More broadly, the United States has in place a declaratory policy that it will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

In that spirit, we continue our work to implement the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan and strengthen all three pillars of the NPT. In addition to our disarmament activities, we are working with the IAEA and its member States to strengthen safeguards, continuing our efforts to make adherence to the additional protocol universal and to ensure that the IAEA has the support necessary to fulfil its missions. And we will continue to work with others to resolve non-compliance by Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Syria with their non-proliferation obligations and Security Council resolutions. Unresolved non-compliance presents a fundamental challenge to all NPT parties and puts at risk the many security benefits that compliant States derive from the NPT.

We believe that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would play a central role in leading the world towards a diminished reliance on nuclear weapons, reduced nuclear competition and eventual nuclear disarmament. The cessation of all nuclear-weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions would constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, as well as the development of advanced types of nuclear weapons. We are fully committed to pursuing ratification of the CTBT and its entry into force.

In Berlin, the President called upon all nations to begin negotiations on a treaty that ends the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. A verifiable treaty

to prohibit the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons has long been on the disarmament agenda and is overdue. An FMCT is an absolutely essential step for global nuclear disarmament and the next logical step in halting the increase of nuclear arsenals. Three years ago, the United States initiated consultations among the P-5 and other countries to unblock fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, and to prepare our own countries for what we expect to be technically challenging negotiations. We remain hopeful that bringing those countries to the table will help move an FMCT forward and end the stalemate holding up negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

The United States is actively working to reduce its holdings of fissile material stocks that could be used in nuclear weapons. Under the United States-Russia Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA), each side will verifiably dispose of no less than 34 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium — enough in total for 17,000 nuclear weapons. The PMDA entered into force in 2011, and our two countries are working towards an agreement on verification provisions with the IAEA. Once disposed of, that plutonium will be in a form that cannot be used for nuclear weapons.

In addition, we have disposed of excess, weapons-origin fissile material by down-blending approximately 140 metric tons of highly enriched uranium (HEU) — enough material for more than 5,600 nuclear weapons. As a transparency measure, the United States cooperated with the IAEA to allow international monitoring of the downblending of 50 metric tons of that material.

This year also marks a significant non-proliferation accomplishment — the 1993 United States-Russian Federation Highly Enriched Uranium Purchase Agreement will reach a major milestone with the final delivery of low-enriched uranium (LEU) derived from the downblending of 500 metric tons of Russian weapons-origin HEU. The LEU that results from this downblending process is delivered to the United States, fabricated into nuclear fuel, and used by nearly all United States nuclear power plants. We have eliminated enough HEU for about 20,000 nuclear weapons under that unique Government-industry partnership.

We know that much remains on our agenda, and that the path to a world without nuclear weapons remains a long one. Yet we should not forget that we have made real progress, and we know what we need

to do next to move further down that path. The United States is committed to fulfilling its obligations and working with the international community to take the next steps. Of course, all Member States have a role to play in disarmament, and we look forward to working with the First Committee to achieve that ultimate goal.

Mr. Rosnes (Norway): Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are issues of global concern. We all share a common interest in building a more secure world without nuclear weapons. We all share a common interest in preventing new States from acquiring those weapons of mass destruction, and not least in ensuring that weapons of that kind and sensitive materials do not fall into the wrong hands. We would all like to see the atom used solely for peaceful purposes.

Since last year, the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has been firmly on our agenda. That is fully in line with the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The participant countries have clearly expressed their deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.

In March this year, Norway hosted in Oslo the international Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. A total of 128 States attended the Conference, together with relevant United Nations humanitarian organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and representatives of civil society. The objective of the Conference was to present a facts-based understanding of the humanitarian impacts of nuclear-weapon detonations and to facilitate an informed discussion on the issue with stakeholders from States, the United Nations, other international organizations and civil society.

The main conclusion from the Conference was that no State or international body would be able to address the humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation in any adequate or meaningful way. The effects of a nuclear-weapon detonation, irrespective of its cause, would cross borders and affect people regionally, as well as globally. The Conference established, in concrete terms, what “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” means and implies.

It is therefore vital that all States Members of the United Nations, nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike, take part in the follow-on discussions. We encourage all countries to participate

constructively. We warmly welcome Mexico’s offer to host a follow-up conference in February 2014. That will address the long-term consequences of a nuclear detonation and the level of preparedness needed to respond to such a catastrophe.

Norway attaches great importance to ensuring the full implementation of the plan of action adopted at the most recent Review Conference, which covers the three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It has rightly been stated that since the end of the Cold War there has been a dramatic reduction in nuclear arsenals. At the same time, there are legitimate grounds to ask whether it is necessary in today’s world to maintain nearly 20,000 warheads. From the Norwegian perspective, our common security would be better served by moving towards and building a world without any nuclear weapons at all.

Norway therefore remains a staunch supporter of bilateral disarmament measures such as the New START agreement. We welcomed President Obama’s Berlin address in June, in which he highlighted the need for further disarmament initiatives, which should include all categories of nuclear weapons. A new round of negotiations would provide important impetus in the lead-up to the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

We also greatly appreciate our forward-looking cooperation with the United Kingdom on verification of nuclear disarmament. A world without nuclear weapons would require extensive verification to ensure that reductions are truly irreversible. Furthermore, we welcome last year’s decision to set up a group of governmental experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty. A ban against the production of fissile material for weapons purposes would send a strong message that the role of nuclear weapons in security policies must be significantly reduced. It would furthermore consolidate the non-proliferation regime. Norway recognizes that the question of existing stocks must also be addressed as part of a comprehensive disarmament process.

However, there has been a protracted impasse in multilateral efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament. We are all familiar with the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which prevents us from moving forward as recommended by the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is, unfortunately, not on the horizon. It is a paradox that an international treaty supported

by more than 150 States parties is unable to enter into force. The United Nations Disarmament Commission has not been able, in this century, to agree on any specific recommendations on nuclear weapons. There is therefore considerable impatience regarding how multilateral nuclear disarmament can move forward.

While we share the overall objective of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, we continue to disagree on what we should do to reach that common goal. Despite different views on how and when a convention should and could be negotiated, there are a number of measures that could be taken to enhance our common security.

We must continue and accelerate efforts to reduce existing arsenals. In addition, steps must be taken to hinder the development of a new generation of nuclear arms. Pending the introduction of a fissile material cut-off treaty, Norway urges all nuclear-weapon States to adopt a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. It is essential to reinforce the norm against nuclear testing. That is why Norway has condemned the nuclear and missile tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Furthermore, the CTBT Provisional Technical Secretariat must be given the necessary political and financial support to enable it to complete the verification regime. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we should continue our efforts to further reduce the role of that category of weapons in security policies and doctrines. Much has been done in recent years, but there is room for further progress.

We should consolidate existing — and support the creation of new — nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular in the Middle East. It is therefore of great importance that the conference on a Middle East weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone be held before 2015. We also sincerely hope that the process towards a denuclearized Korean peninsula can be accelerated.

There can be no doubt that a highly credible non-proliferation regime is essential if we are to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Norway maintains its call for universal adherence to the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the additional protocol. It is of great importance that the Agency be given the necessary political and financial support to enable it to carry out its mandate. We support efforts to develop proliferation-resistant nuclear-fuel cycles, which will

facilitate the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Norway has in previous years provided voluntary financial contributions to that end.

We support the programme of action adopted at the Nuclear Security Summit to secure all sensitive nuclear materials. Norway has provided funding to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund and we have supported efforts to minimize the use of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector.

Lastly, we need to resolve all outstanding proliferation concerns. We hope that the current talks concerning the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran will yield a positive outcome. In that respect, we urge Iran to resolve the outstanding issues related to its past and current nuclear programme, and therefore to fully honour its NPT obligations.

In conclusion, the humanitarian effect of nuclear weapons is a matter that concerns all States Members of the United Nations. Addressing that issue is part of our NPT agenda. We need to fully implement the NPT 2010 Action Plan as a matter of urgency, thereby contributing to achieving our common objective of a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Tilegen (Kazakhstan): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Belarus on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

The past few years have been marked by some well-known important developments on nuclear disarmament, such as the recently held General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit and the Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. However, on the global scale, nuclear disarmament remains an aspiration rather than an action. The reasons are many and well known. Chief among them is the slow implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Despite its asymmetry, the Treaty remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We therefore call for universalizing the NPT, with timely action between now and the 2015 NPT Review Conference, in order to demonstrate tangible results, with subcommittees working in parallel on various action plans of the outcome document. That should be done in harmony

with the Secretary-General's five-point plan and the various initiatives launched by groups of countries. In accordance with that, Kazakhstan calls for a universal declaration on the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world as the first step towards a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

Compliance with nuclear abolition should be adhered to not only by State parties of the NPT, but also by States that are not parties to the Treaty. We acknowledge that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and linked to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, my Government is finalizing procedures for hosting a nuclear-fuel bank under the supervision of International Atomic Energy Agency.

The main criterion of commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world is the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by annex 2 countries. Presently, a voluntary moratorium against nuclear weapons tests enjoys near-universal political support; but it cannot be seen as a substitute for a strong, transparent, confidence-building and legally binding obligation.

For its part, the Republic of Kazakhstan has been an unwavering supporter of banning the testing of nuclear weapons. It also strives to ensure that the Treaty's deterrence and detection mechanisms — the international monitoring system and the on-site inspection regime — are also fully operational even before the Treaty enters into force. They are important not just in terms of detecting nuclear-test explosions, but also for civil and scientific applications. We therefore call on signatory States to provide the political and financial support to complete that verification regime.

The Republic of Kazakhstan, which has been the venue for a total of four Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization field exercises — in 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008 — stands ready to offer its expertise and experience to Jordan, which will conduct the integrated field exercise in 2014.

In our region, the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia has contributed to international and regional security. We appreciate the cooperation of the nuclear-weapon States for a fruitful dialogue and look forward to signing the protocol on negative assurances very soon.

We need to move forward on establishing a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We hope that the long-awaited conference on that subject will take place before the end of 2013. My Government stands ready to host subsequent meetings in Kazakhstan in support of that process.

Finally, the adoption of resolution 64/35, which designates 29 August — the day that the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was shut down in 1991 — as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, is Kazakhstan's contribution to the abolition of nuclear tests as a means of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. The International Day creates public awareness worldwide to harness enlightened public advocacy and diplomacy and to make political leaders accountable for fulfilling their commitments. The Government of Kazakhstan has also initiated the Atom Project, in which our mission is to abolish testing, as an e-campaign with the similar purpose of mobilizing people worldwide to press for a ban on nuclear weapons. I encourage participants to visit its website — www.theatomproject.org — to add their voice to that of the thousands who have spoken out. My delegation is committed to joining the international efforts to achieve the long-cherished goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): As this is the first time that the delegation of Lithuania takes the floor during the current session of the First Committee, let me congratulate the Chair and the Bureau on their election and offer our full support for their work.

Lithuania associates itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.10). Let me, in addition, touch upon several matters of particular importance to my delegation.

Lithuania stands committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the essential foundation for the achievement of nuclear disarmament, the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the basis for the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for those who choose that path. Lithuania reiterates its enduring commitment to the goal of general and complete disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons. Until we reach that goal, effective measures related to nuclear arms control and further disarmament, especially reducing the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, remain of greatest importance.

In that regard, Lithuania, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, considers confidence-building measures, reciprocal transparency and effective verification as integral and essential parts of the nuclear arms-control and disarmament process. Those measures should apply both to strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons. Yet non-strategic nuclear weapons should be a priority, since they are not regulated by existing reduction treaties.

We are fully aware that many States differ in their opinions on the means or sequencing in achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that the international community should focus not on differences but on common ground by identifying concrete and practical building blocks for a sustainable process leading to that end.

It is essential to avoid fragmentation of the international community. The process must be multilateral and as inclusive as possible; in particular, it should involve States that possess nuclear weapons. We agree with the approach that involvement could be built through demonstrated implementation of concrete disarmament measures by all States possessing nuclear weapons, as well as an ongoing commitment to non-proliferation by all non-nuclear-weapon States. The international community already has a number of multilateral building blocks that support achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons, including the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Limited Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Sea Bed Arms Control Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, as well as the multilateral disarmament machinery.

There is room for more building blocks. The next logical step, in our view, is the adoption of the treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In that respect, the CTBT is key. Lithuania calls upon all States parties that have not done so, especially the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay and without conditions.

Let me now turn to nuclear non-proliferation, which, together with nuclear disarmament, should be regarded as one side of the same coin. The international non-proliferation regime, based on the obligations set forth under the NPT and the IAEA verification

and safeguards system, has prevented the significant spread of nuclear weapons; however, it has not stopped proliferation completely. We should seek to strengthen the NPT regime further, since it is facing a series of challenges, not only from States but also from non-State actors.

Nuclear terrorism represents the most serious threat to international security, as the risk of non-State actors getting access to nuclear materials or radioactive sources is not diminishing. For that reason, national and international nuclear security measures must be in place in order to secure nuclear materials and counter illicit nuclear trafficking and nuclear terrorism. Accordingly, Lithuania is committed to implementing its commitments undertaken at the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit. In 2012, we established a national nuclear security centre of excellence that serves as a capacity-building and training venue for our national institutions responsible for the prevention, detection, investigation of and response to nuclear and radiological smuggling.

Let me conclude by stressing that Lithuania will continue to be actively involved in working together with interested partners in order to strengthen international cooperation to advance nuclear security in the region and worldwide.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): The statement of the delegation of Morocco will be submitted to the Secretariat so that it can be accessed by delegations on the website of the First Committee. It will also be posted on the website of the Permanent Mission of Morocco.

We would like to use our time today to make a few comments and ask some questions relevant to the issue before us. We can all agree that the current situation in the sphere of nuclear weapons is characterized mainly as follows.

Nuclear weapons are the only weapons among weapons of mass destruction that are not subject to prohibition under an international instrument. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is not yet in force. The disarmament machinery is lacking progress and is at a standstill. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has yet to be fully implemented. Disarmament measures that were agreed upon during past NPT Review Conferences have not been implemented. In that context, I would like to underscore that the 2010 Action Plan emphasized

the commitments made during the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The treaty on the prohibition of fissile material remains elusive, in spite of the fact that some work has been done in the context of a group of governmental experts.

Despite the foregoing, however, there has been progress on some very important fronts, including non-proliferation. In that regard, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has undertaken herculean efforts that should be supported. We also underscore the need for all States concerned to cooperate with the IAEA to find appropriate solutions to outstanding issues relating to nuclear security and combating terrorism.

Again, the IAEA is undertaking very important work. Morocco is an active party to a number of international initiatives that are playing an important role in support of multilateral action. In the field of disarmament, we acknowledge the importance of efforts undertaken by some States to reduce nuclear arsenals, whether unilaterally, in the context of bilateral agreements or as part of the collective efforts of the five nuclear-weapon Powers. In that regard, we recall that the 2010 Review Conference underscored the importance of transparency and the irrevocable nature of disarmament measures and international verification. I would like to ask, what form of multilateral international verification would be acceptable to the nuclear Powers? What are the alternatives before us now, given the current situation? I must note that there is no disagreement on the nature of that situation. Maintaining the status quo is not a feasible option, it is an unacceptable one.

First, Morocco supports the approach of a gradual, step-by-step process towards the final aim. But we have to agree on what is meant by such gradual steps and approach. There is no time for us to elaborate on that, but we do feel that there are conditions that must be met in taking such gradual steps, so that they can actually be effective. Foremost among those conditions is that there should be a clear agreement on the ultimate objective of the steps. Therefore, we should agree on the final objective in the form of a legal instrument.

Secondly, such steps should allow for progress towards the ultimate agreed-on objective, and no action should be taken that reverses the gains made to date.

Thirdly, the steps should be interdependent so that they have a cumulative effect that would facilitate the achievement of the ultimate objective.

Fourthly, the steps must be internationally verifiable or subject to at least one form of international verification. In addition, efforts must continue in order to universalize the NPT and proceed with the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. I would like to stress that non-proliferation and disarmament are two fundamental pillars and that there can be no serious progress on one without progress on the other.

Before concluding, I would like to emphasize that, were nuclear weapons to be used — whether willfully or inadvertently — they would have grave and disastrous consequences for human life and the environment. Decisive steps towards eliminating such weapons are therefore necessary. An international consensus on the goal of eliminating them already exists — inherent, in our view, in the NPT and the final documents of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and of the 1978 special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): Please allow me to congratulate the Chair — and the other members of the Bureau — on his election to chair the Committee. I assure him of the full support of our delegation.

In addition to the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.10), we would like to make the following remarks.

Professor Einstein is believed to have said, “I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.” He was referring to the devastating effects of nuclear weapons. I think that Mr. Einstein was not worried — and for the right reasons — about all the disarmament specialists and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs who would be out of work when sticks and stones became the weapons.

The Netherlands is fully committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the most important instrument for reaching that goal. The discussion on humanitarian consequences in Oslo reminded us of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons and therefore of the need to make progress towards the objective of further nuclear disarmament. The Netherlands considers paying attention to the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons of great importance. Together with the security dimension, the humanitarian issue underpins

our practical and sustained efforts aimed at achieving the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. To underline the importance of the issue, we are supporting the joint statement on this matter that will be presented by the representative of Australia later during this thematic debate on nuclear weapons.

The Action Plan to which all NPT member States agreed by consensus in 2010 contains actions on all three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses. Those actions are interrelated, and all represent important goals in and of themselves and are mutually reinforcing. Progress on non-proliferation leads to progress on disarmament, and vice versa. Disarmament and non-proliferation should go hand in hand. In cooperation with the other States of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), which now number 12 in total, we will continue to work on advancing the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan. At the General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the NPDI, urged all States, in particular the NPT nuclear-weapon States and those States outside the NPT, to take steps towards the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons.

In our view, the best path towards a world without nuclear weapons is through a step-by-step approach and by taking practical and concrete measures. Steps can be of a unilateral, bilateral, regional or multilateral nature. Essential steps of a multilateral nature are the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a treaty that bans the production of fissile material for military purposes.

While regretting that thus far it has not been possible to start negotiations on an fissile material cut-off treaty, we look forward to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to resolution 67/53, which will start its work in 2014. We stand ready to contribute in a constructive way to its success in any way we can, and we would like to kindly thank all delegations who joined us yesterday at the side event that we organized, together with Canada and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, to look ahead at the work of the Group of Governmental Experts.

All nuclear-weapon States and States outside of the NPT can already now take practical concrete measures towards the total elimination of their nuclear weapons. That includes greater transparency concerning their

nuclear arsenals; further diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their military and security concepts, doctrines and policies; de-alerting their nuclear forces to help lower the risk of inadvertent use; and reducing, and ultimately eliminating, all types of nuclear weapons — both strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed — in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

We appreciate that there have been more regular meetings of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) on disarmament, as we once again heard today. We would appreciate it, however, if there were more briefings in the Conference on Disarmament or other disarmament forums about the progress made in that respect. We hope that those P-5 meetings will produce concrete results. We await concrete steps and we would like to hear about them.

We welcomed the statement made by President Obama in Berlin on 19 June on further disarmament steps by the United States. The implementation of the New START agreement is an essential contribution to nuclear disarmament. We believe that, in the next round of negotiations on further reductions of nuclear arsenals between the United States and the Russian Federation, all types of nuclear weapons should be included, including non-strategic nuclear weapons. Mutual reductions that take the different starting positions into account are a logical next step.

Last year there were a number of encouraging developments towards nuclear disarmament. The discussion on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons has been mentioned already. It invigorates the drive towards global zero. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the importance of the effectiveness of our disarmament endeavours. We look forward to the conference to be held in Mexico in February 2014, in which we will actively participate.

The Netherlands participated as a friend of the Chair in the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, held in Geneva. We were encouraged to see that a constructive and open discussion on nuclear disarmament was possible, in which delegations were prepared to focus on common ground rather than on differences. The building blocks or elements we need to progress towards a world without nuclear weapons are useful, regardless of the approach one favours.

We express the hope that we can further build on the positive outcomes of those meetings in a constructive, inclusive and non-divisive way.

The Netherlands emphasizes the importance of not only disarmament and non-proliferation but also a reduction in the broader risks connected to nuclear material, including the risk of nuclear terrorism. Within 160 days, the Nuclear Security Summit will begin in The Hague. During a side event here in New York on 7 October, the Summit's sherpa provided an overview of the main objectives of The Hague Summit. My country's hosting of the event is in line with our tradition as a country of peace, justice and security. The Nuclear Security Summit is meant to give fresh impetus, at the highest political level, to global efforts to ensure nuclear security and prevent nuclear terrorism.

We have taken note with interest of the discussions and statements in the meetings of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors and of the message by the Iranian President, Mr. Rohani, in his speech in the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.6). We welcome the words by the President of Iran on what we hope to be a new chapter of constructive engagement by Iran. The ball is firmly in Iran's court. This is Iran's chance to make good on its intentions. We urge Iran to fully cooperate with the Agency and comply with its international legal obligations.

For two years, the Netherlands has expressed its concern about the non-compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic with its safeguards obligations under the NPT. We welcome the Syrian decision to become a member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We hope that step will be followed by steps regarding the outstanding issues on its nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Notwithstanding the difficult situation in large parts of Syria, the Netherlands once again urges Syria to fully cooperate with the IAEA. It also calls on Syria to start the process to resolve all outstanding issues. In the present situation, the Syrian authorities remain fully responsible for urgently remedying their non-compliance with their Safeguards Agreement.

The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains of grave concern. We condemn the third nuclear test, which took place on 12 February. The test is a clear violation of international obligations and a serious threat to regional and international peace, stability and security. The test only underscored the

importance of the CTBT and of its earliest possible entry into force.

We are also concerned about the uranium-enrichment program and ongoing construction at the light-water reactor at Yongbyon, where new activity has been reported. The Netherlands remains convinced of the essential role the Agency has in verifying the application of safeguards in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urges the Government of that country to allow an early return of IAEA inspectors.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are firmly rooted cornerstones of our foreign policy, with the NPT as its foundation and the Action Plan of 2010 as our road map. The Netherlands will continue, including with our partners in the NPDI, to make innovative, practical proposals to implement the Action Plan. We are ready to engage with other States to reach the final goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We will proceed step by step, but more progress is definitely needed as we approach the NPT Review Conference.

Ms. Ruksakiati (Thailand): At the outset, Thailand associates itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

This year, we meet following the unprecedented General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). Thailand is pleased that the event was successful, with active participation from Member States. We hope that the Meeting will reinvigorate the international community's commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament, which would contribute positively to negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, in the near future.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is key to achieving the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Thailand is strongly committed to and is working to accelerate the CTBT ratification process. We reiterate our support for the speedy entry into force of the CTBT and its universalization.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating body on nuclear disarmament, must renew its work in an inclusive and transparent manner. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals

to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Among its top priorities is the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which should begin as soon as possible. An FMCT is a meaningful step if the international community is to fulfil its ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

While the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is a shared goal, the immediate threat of nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands is a present threat. Thailand joined the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) last year. We remain committed to its implementation and to that of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). This year we hosted a Thai/United States workshop on the PSI and the second Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum confidence-building-measures seminar on the implementation of the resolution to advance its capacity on the matter. Furthermore, from 13 to 15 January 2014, we will host the Nuclear Security Summit sherpa meeting, in preparation for the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit, to be held in The Hague.

Regional mechanisms, including the establishment of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, have an important role in the ultimate realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We regret that the conference on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has yet to take place. We urge the relevant parties to take steps that will allow for the conference to be convened.

As an active proponent of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone — the Treaty of Bangkok — it is our hope that the five permanent members of the Security Council will sponsor the draft resolution on the Treaty of Bangkok again this year. We also urge the nuclear-weapon States to sign the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok as soon as possible.

Thailand recognizes the essential role of the IAEA in promoting and ensuring nuclear safety and security, safeguards and verification, as well as nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes. As a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, Thailand will work closely with the international community to enhance global nuclear safety, security and safeguards. At the regional level, we are pleased to inform the Committee that Thailand has made significant progress towards the establishment of the ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM).

The terms of reference were finalized at the first ASEANTOM meeting, held in Thailand in September, and later officially endorsed by ASEAN meeting of senior officials. In addition, the action plan of activities for the Network was also substantially discussed. Thailand stands behind the establishment of ASEANTOM and will continue to support its role in enhancing regulatory activities and further strengthening nuclear safety, security and safeguards in the ASEAN area, in compliance with IAEA standards and guidelines.

In conclusion, Thailand reiterates its view that it is the inalienable right of States to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also maintain our conviction that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. Thailand remains hopeful that, with a spirit of cooperation, together we can advance the agenda of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Al Taii (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): First and foremost, I would like to express our appreciation for the professional manner in which the Chair is guiding our work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to support the statements made by the representative of Iran, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Bahrain, on behalf of the Arab Group (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

My Government supports the non-proliferation regime, above all the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as we are convinced that nuclear weapons cannot ensure the security of any party and will lead only to a regional arms race. I would also like to underscore the importance of resorting to peaceful solutions — through dialogue, in a calm environment and through multilateral diplomacy — in order to help ease tension and conflict in that regard.

Iraq is aware that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones could be another step for strengthening the efforts to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That would bring us closer to our ultimate goal of international peace and security. Based on that principle, we have supported the efforts made for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various geographic areas, particularly in the Middle East. We have always expressed our firm belief in the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as enshrined in the General Assembly resolution adopted under that agenda item.

My delegation believes that any initiative to establish such a zone requires taking a number of main steps, the first and foremost of which is to ensure Israel's adherence to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), its disarmament and its adherence to the NPT and to the implementation of Security Council resolution 487 (1981). Those are necessary prerequisites for reducing tension in the region.

A large number of Member States support the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Calls for the establishment of such zone came early on, as compared to other parts of the world. However, the initiative still faces a number of obstacles and unacceptable excuses. Among those calls, we would like to highlight the General Assembly resolutions as well as resolutions adopted by the relevant Review Conferences that reaffirm the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States to do their best to expedite the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Furthermore, the Security Council also has the responsibility to maintain international peace and security through the non-selective implementation of the provisions pertaining to non-proliferation. In addition, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone does not in any way impede or stand in the way of other relevant international instruments.

The failure to adopt a resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has further exacerbated instability and tension in the region and has added to the complexity of the universal nature of the NPT, thereby leading to the possibility of more obstacles and jeopardizing the NPT — thus undermining its credibility. Peace and security in the Middle East requires the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons above all, in line with Security Council resolution 686 (1991) as well as the relevant General Assembly resolutions — in addition to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the NPT Review Conference in 1995, the decisions of the 2002 Review Conference and the final outcome document of the Review Conference in 2010.

In that regard, I have the pleasure of taking this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the final declaration of the Baghdad Summit of the League of Arab States. We also commend the steps taken since the 2010 Review Conference, and we underscore the need for the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in order to ensure the establishment

of such a nuclear-weapon-free zone. A failure to do so would jeopardize peace and security in the region. I would also like to express our disappointment with regard to the international efforts made in 2012, as all countries had lent their support to the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone, with the exception of Israel. That will have negative consequences on the credibility of the NPT, its review process as well as the overall non-proliferation regime. The reasons for the postponement of the 2012 conference are unacceptable. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the depositary States to ensure that the conference be convened as promptly as possible.

Ms. González-Román (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): In a world of great changes and significant challenges to international security, strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament regime is and must remain one of our priorities. Spain is a country that has renounced the manufacture, stockpiling, installation and deployment of nuclear weapons within its territory. At the same time and without straying from the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world, we advocate for a pragmatic approach and the fulfilment of a realistic and gradual agenda. We are aware of the complexity of that process and of the existence of various mutually reinforcing dimensions to disarmament and arms control. We therefore underscore the need to make progress through a series of constant yet careful steps to promote mutual trust while at all times safeguarding international and regional stability.

Spain fully aligns itself with a statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.10). We would also like to reaffirm our commitment to the complete and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Against that backdrop, Spain upholds the universality of the NPT and the need to make progress in the implementation of the Action Plan adopted by States parties at the Review Conference held in May 2010, with a view to the holding of the 2015 Review Conference.

The bilateral agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation on the reduction of their strategic nuclear stockpiles are significant steps that Spain welcomes. We hope that both States will continue in that process, and that other nuclear-weapon States will tread the same path, given that it is their responsibility to make progress towards disarmament using new measures before the holding of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The other dimension of the Treaty, that is, non-proliferation, has for long encountered significant challenges that pose a serious threat to the international community. In recent years, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and in Asia has created a climate of distrust and of tension, which adversely affects regional and global stability. In that context, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a central role as a guarantor for the verification of the Treaty in the spheres of non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as the legitimate right of every State. Spain calls for the universalization of the IAEA's safeguards regime, in complement to the additional protocol, as the international standard of verification and transparency.

In our view, the nuclear non-proliferation regime has two further fundamental aspects, that is, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a priority for Spain. The Treaty has been open for signature for more than a decade, and the recent ratifications of Iraq and Guinea-Bissau show that the process is still alive. However, political momentum is necessary to expedite its entry into force. We call upon all States that have not already done so, in particular annex 2 States, to ratify it as soon as possible.

With regard to a fissile materials cut-off treaty, last year the First Committee adopted the draft resolution that became resolution 67/53, entitled "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". The resolution established a Group of Governmental Experts that will meet in 2014 and 2015. Spain continues to lend its firm support for the commencement of the work that could lead to the negotiation of a treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. That would be an important milestone on the road to nuclear non-proliferation, with the added virtue of serving as a catalyst so that a forum as important as the Conference on Disarmament can eventually regain its leadership and dynamism.

I would like to express our concern with regard to regional proliferation crises and the development of nuclear programmes by Iran and North Korea, as well as the ballistic programme of the latter country, which Spain referred to in its statement made during the general debate of this Committee (see A/C.1/68/PV.4). Spain appeals to those countries to comply with their international obligations, and thus to restore the trust

of the international community. Spain welcomes the statements made by the Iranian authorities concerning greater cooperation in this field, as well as the recent contacts established within the E3+3. We hope that those intentions and first steps will lead to progress in nuclear negotiations aimed at creating a climate of trust.

With regard to Syria, we deplore the lack of progress on the outstanding nuclear undertakings, in particular the difficulty for the IAEA to undertake its mission of conducting a physical inventory of the Syrian capacities in this area, given the conflict in the country.

On the regional level, Spain attaches great importance to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Spain decidedly advocates the convening of a United Nations conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We have supported and are grateful for the efforts that are being made in that regard by the facilitator of the conference, Ambassador Laajava. We ask everyone not to desist from making efforts in this endeavour. In our opinion, a pragmatic approach would be apt for ensuring the fulfilment of a realistic agenda based on incremental steps.

Moreover, we must tighten precautionary measures in order to ensure that technologies and materials related to weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of terrorist groups. In that context, we wish to highlight the the importance of the obligations and commitments pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Spain is firmly committed to that objective, as borne out by our commitment to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, whose technical programme Spain coordinated between 2010 and 2013.

Recently, we have witnessed a heightened debate on the humanitarian impact of nuclear warfare, the echo of the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 68 years ago as well as the international tension in this area. Spain shares the concerns of other nations concerning the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons, as demonstrated on those occasions, and also as a result of the desire never to see such a tragedy reoccur. Therefore, we call upon all nuclear-weapon States, including those that are not party to the NPT, to adopt new initiatives that will enable the international community to rekindle the hope that this objective might be met. We believe that progress must be based on a balance between disarmament and non-proliferation

commitments, fostering trust, confidence and adopting a phased approach.

Before concluding, I would like to emphasize the importance we attach to multilateralism and international cooperation, in particular the role of the United Nations in addressing disarmament and non-proliferation challenges. During the previous session, a number of initiatives were presented at Headquarters in the nuclear sphere, including resolution 67/56, on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, as well as the decision to hold a High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September (see A/68/PV.11), in which Spain participated. Spain also would like to emphasize the central role we attach to the NPT and the need to ensure that the various initiatives contribute to the development of the 2010 Action Plan and to the success of the forthcoming 2015 Review Conference.

We have an obligation to make progress along the path of building on positive feats, as this clearly shows that the dynamic of consensus is also possible in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation. Ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons remains an outstanding debt, not only to ourselves but also, above all, to future generations.

The complete text of this statement is available on the First Committee website and on the Spanish Mission website.

Mr. Zhang Junan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The international nuclear-disarmament process is moving forward. The goal of the complete prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons and the establishment of a world free of such weapons is widely recognized by the international community. The General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) and the 2013 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty have been successfully held. The international community is steadily implementing the outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the same time, we also recognize that many uncertainties and negative factors still exist in the field of nuclear disarmament. There is still a long way to go to further promote nuclear disarmament and to achieve the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons. That requires long-term efforts by the international

community. The Chinese delegation has the following comments to make on promoting the disarmament process.

First, we should adhere to the goal of promoting international nuclear disarmament. The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to take the lead in making drastic and substantive reductions when the conditions are ripe. Other nuclear-weapon States should also join in the multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in order to accomplish that ultimate goal. The international community should have a long-term plan composed of phased actions, including the conclusion of a convention.

Secondly, we should uphold the principle of maintaining global strategic balance and stability and undiminished security for all. Nuclear disarmament is closely linked to the security of the international community. Creating favourable conditions is an important precondition.

Thirdly, we should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the national security strategies. Nuclear-weapon States should abandon the doctrine of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons, undertake unequivocally to not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones and sign a legally binding international instrument in that regard.

Fourthly, we should preserve the authority, universality and effectiveness of the existing mechanisms — the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — which are important components of the international nuclear disarmament regime. Issues related to nuclear disarmament should be dealt within the existing mechanisms.

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and it is firmly committed to a nuclear strategy of self-defence. China has adhered to the policy of the no-first-use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances. We have made unconditionally committed not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. That open, unequivocal and transparent policy is unique among the nuclear-weapon States. China has never deployed nuclear weapons in

foreign territory. China has never taken part in the nuclear arms race and will never do so in the future. China has kept and will keep its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security.

China supports the purposes and objectives of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and has strictly observed its commitment for a moratorium on nuclear-weapon testing. China has steadily advanced its preparations on the implementation of the CTBT. China supports the CD's commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices at an early date, so as to conclude a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty.

China always respects and supports the efforts of the relevant countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of voluntary arrangements and actual situations. China has signed and ratified all the relevant protocols to such treaties. China supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and Central Asia and hopes that the relevant countries will settle the outstanding issues and promote the earliest signing of the protocols. China appreciates the efforts by the facilitator, Mr. Jaakko Laajava, and other parties to promote the convening of the conference on the Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. In September 2012, China, together with other nuclear-weapon States, signed a joint statement to reconfirm the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia and the security assurances we have committed accordingly.

China is dedicated to international nuclear disarmament efforts and has voted for such resolutions as "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments" (resolution 67/34), "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" (resolution 67/64), "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" (resolution 67/29) and "Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems" (resolution 67/46). On 26 to 27 September, China successfully held the second expert-level meeting of the P-5 working group on a glossary of definitions for key nuclear terms. China will host a P-5 conference in April next year in Beijing to exchange in-depth views on important issues

on the implementation of the outcome of the Review Conference outcome.

China is ready to work together with the international community to continue our efforts to promote international nuclear disarmament and achieve the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and the thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Moura (Portugal): Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier at this session by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.10). Let me make a few comments of particular relevance to my country.

The importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) can never be understated, as the universalization of the NPT and the upholding of all of its provisions are our best chances of achieving lasting peace and dispelling the gloomy shadow that nuclear proliferation casts upon our peoples. That is why Portugal calls on States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

Unfortunately, the threat of nuclear proliferation remains real, as doubts over the nuclear programmes of the Islamic Republic of Iran and of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea persist. Portugal urges both States to fully abide by their international obligations, including the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors. Portugal takes good note of the positive signs recently conveyed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. We are confident that the negotiations that have started in Geneva will be replicated in the IAEA, and we hope that the particularly positive momentum will gain further speed. In addition, we all call on the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with resolution GOV/2011/41, adopted by the Board of Governors in 2011.

In that light, it is more imperative than ever to achieve full compliance with the current IAEA verification standards, including the measures set out in the comprehensive safeguards agreement and in the additional protocol. Portugal has been working towards the universalization of such standards and is ready to assist the IAEA and its member States in that endeavour, as it has done in the past.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of key importance to advancing the

goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We urge all States that have yet to ratify it to do so at the earliest date possible and to observe a moratorium on nuclear-test explosions. Portugal, along with the European Union, will continue to work towards that goal.

In addition, it is painfully clear that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty must start at once, and that a moratorium on the production of fissile material should be observed in the meantime.

In a broader context, I would like to call the Committee's attention to the need for the Conference on Disarmament to work on a more inclusive basis, which would entail its enlargement.

The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is an aspiration whose realization we must continue to strive for. Despite the setbacks, Portugal believes that it is crucial to remain seized of the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, guided by the Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We therefore urge all countries in the region to continue to engage with Ambassador Jaakko Laajava and the convener of the conference and to approach the issue in a spirit of cooperation and compromise, so that the conference on the establishment of such a zone can be convened as soon as possible.

I would like to conclude by drawing the First Committee's attention to the issue of nuclear security, as it requires an approach that must be both comprehensive and inclusive.

Portugal follows the matter very attentively and already takes part in several initiatives of a global scale, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and

the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. As a member State of the European Union, we also contribute to the Nuclear Security Fund. Portugal stands ready to play an even more active role in these matters, as the security of our peoples requires broad collaborative action more than ever.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Kim Ju Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The United States of America has again avoided commenting about its nuclear posture on the Korean peninsula, which means it is playing with the withdrawal of deployed nuclear weapons in South Korea. In fact, it is the country that originated the nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula, destroying the peace and security of the region. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is the unchangeable position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But that goal seems to be growing ever more elusive due to the lack of political will by the United States. Instead, it is currently introducing all kinds of nuclear-strike means in the Korean peninsula, forcing us to hold on to our nuclear-deterrence power more strongly.

In that context, the United States has even tried to remove our legitimate right to the peaceful access to outer space by manipulating the Security Council. Outer space is the common property of humankind, not a parking garage of the United States in which only allies are allowed to park. Likewise, we strongly and totally reject the Security Council resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which are nothing more than a product of the manipulation and deep-rooted hostility of the United States.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.