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First Committee

14th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Dabbashi (Libya)

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Nikolić (Montenegro), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 89 to 107 (continued)

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

The Acting Chair: In accordance with our programme of work and timetable, we will start by listening to an introductory statement on the cluster “Outer space”. After that, I will open the floor for the remaining speakers under the clusters “Nuclear weapons” and “Disarmament machinery”.

Before proceeding, I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee for a brief announcement.

Mr. Nakano (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform representatives that, behind the door at the back of the room, there are Secretariat staff ready to accept additional sponsorships of draft resolutions.

The Acting Chair: I now have the pleasure to welcome to the rostrum the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, Mr. Victor Vasiliev of the Russian Federation, who will make an introductory statement on the cluster “Outer space”.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It gives me great pleasure today to see many familiar faces, given that I have worked mainly here and in Geneva. I would like to welcome those who I know, as well as the new faces to the First Committee. There are changes happening. There are new people, and probably new ideas too.

(*spoke in English*)

In my capacity as Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, it is a great pleasure and honour to introduce the Group’s report (seeA/68/189), which it adopted by consensus. The report is the result of a study by 15 experts representing Brazil, Chile, China, France, Italy, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia. But it is also the result of inputs by many other States that presented their views both in response to the respective General Assembly resolutions on transparency and confidence-building measures and directly to the Group, as well as the Group’s interaction with other international organizations and bodies such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Meteorological Organization and others.

The study was undertaken 20 years after the publication of the previous report of the Secretary-General on this matter (A/48/305) and reflects the growing dependence of humankind on the uses of space and the dramatic increase in the numbers of actors in

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outer space activities. According to the data, today there are more than 1,000 operational satellites in orbit. More than 60 States, Government consortiums and entities own or operate those assets, and more and more States are becoming spacefaring nations or increasing their capabilities and resources linked to space.

The Group acknowledged existing international instruments and treaties on outer space containing several transparency and confidence-building measures. At the same time, experts agreed that further measures were needed to address challenges pertaining to outer space activities. In that context, the Group noted the work that is under way on several tracks. That includes the debates here in the First Committee, the consideration by the Conference on Disarmament of the agenda item "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" and the introduction of the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space established the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities to recommend, *inter alia*, a set of guidelines to enhance the safety and sustainability of outer space activities. The European Union presented a draft of a non-legally binding international code of conduct and held consultations on the proposal. Of note are the initiatives by some States or groups of States to introduce policies on not being the first to place weapons in space. The Group appreciated the work of international and regional organizations and the contributions of non-governmental organizations to promoting security in outer space.

As an outcome of three sessions of in-depth discussions and extensive intersessional work, the Group of Governmental Experts came up with recommendations that include a series of measures for outer space activities. The Group agreed that the proposed measures should be of a voluntary, non-legally binding character and without prejudice to the implementation of those measures that are part of existing obligations by Member States parties to such arrangements.

Specific recommendations include measures to enhance the transparency of outer space activities, *inter alia* through information exchange on space policies, notifications related to outer space activities and risk reduction, and contacts and visits to space launch

sites and facilities. They also include coordination and consultative mechanisms aimed at improving the interaction among participants in outer space activities and clarifying information and ambiguous situations.

The Group of Governmental Experts recommended that stronger coordination and interaction be established among participants in outer space activities, including national space agencies, international organizations with specific mandates and commercial operators.

The deliberations in the Group demonstrated that many issues of relevance could be resolved through interaction and dialogue. It was also concluded that the Group itself served as a good vehicle of confidence. For me personally, it was an opportunity to see the diversity of missions — political, technical and scientific — that are being carried out by different organizations and United Nations bodies in addressing space security issues. I came away with a strong conviction that a lot could be accomplished if we just achieved synergy among them.

My fellow experts always stressed that, while being ambitious, we must be realistic if we want the study to be considered seriously by Member States. With that in mind, we tried to put forward proposals that were practical and implementable and did not undermine sovereign rights or the security of States. From that perspective I shall once again stress that the measures contained in the report are of a voluntary nature, and many are part of existing instruments.

I shall now turn to the conclusions and recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts.

The Group encourages States to review and implement the proposed transparency and confidence-building measures through the relevant national mechanisms. I call on the delegations of the First Committee and missions to the United Nations to bring this report to the attention of their national space authorities and administrations.

The Group recommends universal participation in, and adherence to, the existing legal framework relating to outer space activities. I call on States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of space to consider ratifying or acceding to those treaties.

The Group recommends that the General Assembly decide how to further advance transparency and

confidence-building measures in outer space. I call on the delegations of the First Committee to decide on the appropriate venue or venues for the universal consideration of, and support for, the transparency and confidence-building measures. I understand that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its respective working group will consider the guidelines. I also know that a draft resolution is being prepared on the outcome of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts. It provides for universal consideration of the transparency and confidence-building measures and refers the recommendations of the report to the Conference on Disarmament. I call on delegations to support that approach and adopt the draft resolution by consensus. I am very glad to know that, for the first time, the draft resolution was proposed with the three initial sponsors — Russia, China and the United States — and I understand that the number of sponsors is growing.

As recommended by the Group, I call on delegations to consider that the First and Fourth Committees may decide to hold joint ad hoc meetings to address challenges to space security and sustainability. I believe the Fourth Committee today will also be discussing space issues, and many of the issues that will be discussed in the Fourth Committee are of relevance to space security and to participants in the First Committee.

I shall reiterate the call by the Group to the Secretary-General and to the Secretariat to circulate the report to all the relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system so that they may assist in effectively implementing its conclusions and recommendations.

Allow me to conclude by expressing my deep appreciation to my fellow experts and friends who worked as one team and came up with the meaningful consensus result. I also appreciate the strong interest in the work of the Group by many States and the community of non-governmental organizations. My warm thanks go to the staff of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which served as the secretariat of the Group, and to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which served as consultant to the Group.

The Acting Chair: I thank Ambassador Vasiliev for his statement.

In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to have an interactive

discussion with Mr. Vasiliev through an informal question-and-answer segment.

The meeting was suspended at 10.15 a.m. and resumed at 10.20 a.m.

The Acting Chair: I will now open the floor for the remaining speakers on the list with regard to “Disarmament machinery”. Before doing so, I would like to remind all delegations once again to kindly keep their interventions short to enable us to proceed expeditiously. As representatives would have noticed, we are already running behind the schedule outlined in our programme of work and timetable.

Mr. Kim Ju Song (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to commend the Chair on his election as Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-eighth session.

I would like to express the unwavering support of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and our solidarity with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

Nuclear weapons remain the main factor that seriously threatens the existence of humankind. The world still vividly recalls the nuclear disaster caused by the United States 68 years ago.

In January 1946, the General Assembly adopted its first resolution (resolution 1(I)), on the elimination of nuclear weapons, and proposed nuclear disarmament as its primary task, firmly upholding that position to prevent future disasters.

Currently, the number of active nuclear weapons has increased to a level that is more than sufficient to destroy the entire world several times over, and the threat of the use of nuclear weapons has become our reality. To date, the nuclear offensive waged against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has continued at an extremely high level. The nuclear threat that the United States began during the Korean War, between 1950 and 1953, became an even more direct threat in 1957 with the introduction and installation of nuclear weapons in the southern part of Korea.

In 2002, our country was included among the pre-emptive nuclear attack countries, and every year military exercises on a massive scale are carried out against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Also, at the start of 2013, the United States again

flagrantly violated our right to launch a satellite for peaceful purposes, and it has continued with its nuclear threat by introducing ultra-modern weapons that were accompanied by three nuclear attack measures against our means to protect the sovereignty of the country.

That is why, through the Non-Aligned Movement's initiative on nuclear disarmament, the General Assembly's High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) underscored that nuclear disarmament was the fundamental task of the international community. As was clearly expressed at the Meeting, no measure can resolve at their roots the problems posed by the use and threat of nuclear weapons and their proliferation other than the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is time to take action for nuclear disarmament. Without doubt it is the United States, as the biggest user and possessor of nuclear weapons, that must be the first to take action. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will also depend on the action that the United States takes.

Once again, we wish to underscore our position with regard to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which can be achieved once there is a complete elimination of the nuclear threat against our country by the United States, so that the entire Korean peninsula can become an area completely free of nuclear weapons.

Although the nuclear and military threat of the United States remains, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will safely check the situation of the Korean peninsula with utmost patience, while at the same time undertaking unwavering efforts to protect peace and security in North-East Asia and the world.

Mr. Levon (Israel): The region of the Middle East is undergoing significant, historic changes. The current turmoil in the Arab world is a clear demonstration of the fragility and instability of the region. At the same time, the positive implications of the democratization process in some Middle East countries may offer an opportunity for a better atmosphere and dialogue, which could in turn be conducive to the building of trust and confidence among regional parties.

Several alarming proliferation developments have occurred in the Middle East in recent years, caused mainly by countries that violate their obligations and commitments towards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and international

law. Among those is the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its own civilians. It should be noted that this is the same Syria that previously stated, in its report submitted in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), that it did not possess chemical weapons. Syria is also under investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) due to its clandestine pursuit of nuclear weapons. That practice of deceit by Syria amply reflects the challenge of enforcement and compliance by States in the region with their arms control obligations and commitments.

Perhaps more alarming is the continued progress on Iran's nuclear programme. The ever-expanding capacity for uranium enrichment, the construction of a heavy-water research reactor designed for the military production of plutonium, and multiple activities related to the design and testing of nuclear weapons components all testify to the fact that Iran is determined in its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. An Iran with military nuclear capabilities would threaten world peace and stability, as well as the security of countries across the Middle East, including Israel.

Israel's approach and policy in the field of regional security and arms control has always been pragmatic and realistic. It is rooted in its belief that all the security concerns of regional members should be taken into account and realistically addressed within the regional context.

Israel's vision on the long-term goals for the regional security and arms control process in the Middle East underlines lasting peaceful relations, reconciliation, good neighbourliness, open borders and trust among regional parties as key milestones towards a joint regional endeavour that could result in the establishment of a mutually verifiable zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. That vision is anchored in a decision of the Government of Israel of 4 November 1992.

International experience has proven that such a zone can emanate only from within a region through direct negotiations. The Middle East region is no exception.

The disturbing realities in the Middle East call for a practical step-by-step approach, bearing in mind the goal of achieving peaceful relations and reconciliation among all the States in the region. That process is inherently an incremental one. It can begin only with modest arrangements for confidence- and security-

building measures in order to build the necessary trust for more ambitious cooperative security undertakings.

Regrettably, at present no direct security dialogue exists in the Middle East, nor is there a forum to develop confidence-building measures and defuse tensions. The countries of the Middle East have no regional forum in which all can directly communicate with one other and have a dialogue on core issues that affect their security.

Israel, for its part, has responded positively to numerous initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and confidence-building through direct, multilateral consultations. Those include the IAEA Forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle East, in November 2011, and the European Union seminars on confidence-building measures in July 2011 and November 2012, in which Israel participated. Israel has also conducted several meetings with the Under Secretary of State of Finland, Ambassador Jaako Laajava, to discuss issues related to regional security. It participated in multilateral consultations in Vienna in August 2013 and replied positively to the proposal to conduct direct consultations among regional parties in Geneva based on the principle of consensus.

In the past two days, authorized representatives of Israel have been taking part in another meeting organized by Ambassador Laajava in Glion, Switzerland. We hope that our Arab neighbours will support a direct dialogue with Israel, based on consensus among all the parties involved, instead of insisting on submitting one-sided draft resolutions that distance the prospects for a better security environment in the Middle East region.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): As this is the first time I take the floor, let me, at the outset, congratulate the Chair on his election as the Chair of the First Committee and to assure him of the full support of my delegation for his work.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union earlier (see A/C.1/68/PV.10). Let me, however, make the following short comments in my national capacity.

Germany shares the concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. That is one of the reasons that achieving a world without nuclear weapons is a top priority of German policy.

Nuclear arsenals have been reduced dramatically over the past two decades, but there is no reason for complacency. Therefore, Germany welcomes the proposal by the United States to start a new round of disarmament talks with the Russian Federation. That is an opportunity that should not be missed. In our view, new talks should also include strategic and substrategic, deployed and non-deployed, nuclear weapons.

Besides, the nuclear-weapon States have issued negative security assurances to all States in compliance with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The role of nuclear weapons has been reduced in many security doctrines, for instance in NATO's. Those are all contributions on which we can build our efforts to achieve our joint goal — a world without nuclear weapons.

The risk of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons or nuclear devices has, unfortunately, increased. That is one of the reasons that it is so important to equally strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to redouble our efforts to implement the NPT action plan.

In Germany's assessment, the best path towards Global Zero is to pursue realistic, verifiable and irreversible steps. Germany calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It will take sustained, high-level political will and commitment to achieve our common goal of Global Zero. Germany is fully committed to that goal. Therefore, Germany also aligns itself with the well-balanced statement on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons presented by the representative of Australia (see A/C.1/68/PV.13).

Mr. Al-Kuwari (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to align myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group and the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

This meeting comes after the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), on 26 September. Qatar very much welcomes that initiative and sees it as an indication of the increasing importance that the international community

attributes to disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, I would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to the Secretary-General for his initiative in organizing that important meeting. It underscores the importance he gives to the process of nuclear disarmament and his keen awareness of the importance of expediting the implementation of Member States' commitments with regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

However, that optimistic vision should not cause us to forget that the international community's mechanisms experienced a setback last year when depositary States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to hold a meeting in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

We are aware of the efforts undertaken by Arab States and other international parties for the conclusion of that conference in the time frame specified. However, it was not convened because one single State in the region refused to do so and refuses to create the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We are still keen on finding the genuine political will of all stakeholders in order to implement the international commitments on the ground and to contribute to identifying an alternative time to convene the conference as a soon as possible.

One of the outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was the adoption of a final document that included specific steps to implement the resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. At the time, that decision was a prerequisite for the indefinite extension of the Treaty, among other steps, including entrusting the Secretary-General with coordinating with the depositary States and the States in the region to nominate a host country, facilitator and a specific date for the conference.

In that respect, we would like to underscore that establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is not possible as long as Israel fails to accede to the Treaty. In that regard, Qatar and the Arab Group reiterate their firm position with regard to the need for Israel to sign the Treaty and subject its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Given the setbacks experienced by the international multilateral nuclear disarmament regime, the question that is raised now is how the international community can create a world free of nuclear weapons in which peace, security and the denunciation of the arms trade prevail, and in which there is serious willingness to help developing countries to achieve development and political stability, as well as economic and social stability.

The countries concerned should exert their utmost efforts to that end. Perhaps one of the most important steps in achieving that goal is to call on the nuclear-weapon States that have not signed the NPT to accede to it. The second step would be to call on the non-nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty, because there are 44 States that have not yet ratified the Treaty.

Qatar is keen to be become a signatory to all the international instruments related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Like all the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Qatar is concerned about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the negative consequences that might have on the region, including providing non-State actors with access to those weapons, which is one of the major challenges to peace and security in the world.

In that respect, Qatar has joined international instruments on nuclear disarmament, including the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty. In addition, we are taking steps to halt any attempts to smuggle nuclear weapons. In that regard, we have an arrangement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to organize preventive activities in Qatar.

In Qatar an observatory to monitor border points and ensure the country's security impedes any violation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Qatar would like to see the NPT enhanced and its pillars implemented, namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In that respect, we stress the importance of the right of all States to maintain their sovereignty and their inalienable right to have access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Qatar reiterates its position and that of the Arab Group regarding the proposal at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons

and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as soon as possible, as well as to set a new date for the conference in that regard. We would like to highlight the fact that postponing the conference would raise suspicions about the good faith of the nuclear-weapon States as to establishing such a zone in the Middle East, and it would have negative ramifications for the NPT.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to thank the Chair once again for his able leadership at this session.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to align itself with the statement of the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

Syria welcomes the holding by the General Assembly of the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), on 26 September. We hoped that the Meeting would truly be a launching point for an international process towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and guaranteeing the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Syria also reaffirms its support for the global goal of creating an international community where the use of force, or the threat of use of force, is not a possibility, be it the use of nuclear weapons or conventional weapons.

We reiterate that the full elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee of their non-use or threat of use. We therefore acknowledge the importance of the relationship between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The two are fundamental for upholding international peace and security, in particular because our world faces a number of challenges. The risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, vertically and horizontally, is the primary challenge. That risk is exacerbated when some States threaten the use of such weapons to achieve their own political ends. In that connection, we would like to point out that, after more than four decades since the adoption of the NPT, it is necessary for the nuclear-weapon States to implement article VI in order to seriously work to free the world of that threat.

We underscore the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, held here in New York. The Conference called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East based on the 1995 resolution. It also called on the international community to work to achieve those goals by bringing pressure to bear on

Israel to ensure that it joins the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State party, just like all the other States of the region, and that it also place all of its nuclear facilities and nuclear activities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and IAEA resolution GC(53)/RES/17, of 2009, as well as the dozens of other relevant resolutions adopted at the United Nations, so as to maintain international peace and security.

The Committee is of course aware that Israel is not party to any of the treaties or conventions concerning the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including biological or chemical weapons, including the NPT.

The Israeli nuclear programme is under a public agency founded by David Ben-Gurion near the city of Dimona. In the early 1960s, France provided a reactor to produce uranium. Other States also took part in providing assistance to the programme. Ever since, Israel has adopted a policy of nuclear ambiguity. Nevertheless, according to estimates of the production capacity of the Dimona reactor, Israel has produced more than 840 kilogrammes of uranium for military purposes — enough to produce more than 200 nuclear warheads.

The unknowing might say that Israel is merely prospecting for minerals — phosphate — in mines in the occupied Palestinian territories at the Arad, Oron and Zin mines in the Negev. The Israeli company Rotem Amfert is at the forefront of that research. Heavy water is also produced.

Stockpiling takes place in the area of Eilabun, Sdot Micha, Sde Dov and Tirosh in military bases. Nuclear warheads are equipped in the Soreq Nuclear Research Centre and the town of Yodfat.

It crucial to highlight the fact that the centres and sites that I have just mentioned are not under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the Agency; they are uncontrolled. They are also not reported upon in the international press or United Nations reports on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Any observer of issues related to the Israeli nuclear programme will certainly recall the case of Mr. Mordechai Vanunu. He was an engineer at the Dimona Nuclear Research Centre who provided

information on the Israeli nuclear programme in the British *Sunday Times* in 1986. The publication of that fact certainly was not something that Israel liked; therefore, Mr. Vanunu was kidnapped from Italy and transferred to Israel, where he spent 18 years in prison, 11 of them in solitary confinement. After being conditionally released in 2004, he said he had suffered brutal treatment at the hands of Israeli authorities.

Nevertheless, Mr. Vanunu is not the only person who has publicly stated that Israel has a developed nuclear programme. The former Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Ehud Olmert, during an interview with a German television station in December 2006, acknowledged that Israel had nuclear weapons. All of those very clear statements on the Israeli nuclear programme were not enough for those States that allegedly have the Non-Proliferation Treaty at heart to require Israel to renounce its nuclear programme, which threatens the security of our region, our countries and the peoples of the world.

Many States of the world harboured great hopes regarding the holding and success of the proposed conference on the establishment of a zone in the region of the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The conference was to take place at the end of 2012 in Helsinki; yet the announcement of Israel during the General Conference of the IAEA to not participate in it caused it to fail.

We reiterate the need to hold the conference as quickly as possible and to bring pressure to bear on Israel to ensure that it participates, as it is the only nuclear party in the region that continues to not accede to the NPT. Even worse, Israeli politicians feel that it is their right to criticize the States parties to the NPT, while Israel continues to remain outside that framework. Nevertheless, that behaviour is something not only criticized, it is even worse because the policy has a double standard.

That has occurred at a time when we reiterate the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT, under article IV, to acquire nuclear technology and its use for peaceful purposes in cooperation with the IAEA, as the IAEA carries out its mission to provide aid and cooperation to States peacefully using nuclear energy. In spite of all of that, some Member States continue to attempt to interpret the NPT so as to undermine or create obstacles to that right. It would seem that the integral right enshrined in the NPT is not favoured by

some organizations that close their eyes in regard to Israel's nuclear programme, which is known to all, and in a blatant manner, they also apply policy with double standards. All States are called upon to act in line with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, except Israel. It would seem that Israel is above the law and does not act in accordance with the Charter.

Many Member States in their statements in the First Committee have stressed the importance of Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those countries have felt that the initiative could serve as a launching pad for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is a clear signal to Israel and its supporters that the policy of nuclear ambiguity is known to everyone today, and they must speak out. It is crucial for all States protecting the nuclear ambiguity of Israel to realize that it is useless. Those States must start to seriously bring pressure to bear on Israel to ensure that it accedes to the NPT and submits all its nuclear facilities to the IAEA supervision system. That crucial element is the only one that can ensure the creation of a zone free of any nuclear threat in the Middle East.

Mr. Shishechiha (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

The existence of thousands of nuclear weapons still continues to threaten international and regional peace and security and the very survival of human civilization. Moreover, the nuclear culture of certain nuclear-weapon States and the 2010 NATO strategic concept, which justify the use of or threat of use of nuclear weapons, are clear cases of non-compliance with the relevant legal obligations, and therefore must be abandoned.

In the same vein, the modernization of nuclear weapons and the construction of new nuclear facilities undermine the very objective and purpose of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its integrity and credibility. As for cases of non-compliance with obligations under article VI of the Treaty, they must end. We strongly call upon the nuclear-weapon States to honour their obligations under the NPT, to immediately cease any kind of development and research on nuclear weapons, to stop the modernization of nuclear weapons and their facilities, to refrain from threatening non-nuclear-

weapon States with nuclear weapons, to withdraw their nuclear weapons from the territories of other countries and to stop maintaining their nuclear warheads in the trigger-alert situation.

It is a source of grave concern that not only hundreds of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery have been and are still being deployed in Europe, in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States — in violation of obligations under article I of the NPT — but also that the air forces of certain nuclear-weapon States have been trained to deliver those weapons.

While the nuclear-weapon States have committed, under article I of the NPT “not to transfer, to any recipient, nuclear weapons”, and non-nuclear-weapon States have also committed, under article II, “not to receive, from any source, nuclear weapons”, there remains no doubt that those are clear cases of non-compliance with the explicit legal obligations of those countries under the NPT, and therefore must immediately be stopped.

The deeds of a country like Canada, which was one of a few nations voting against a General Assembly resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, and its continued deadly silence on the danger of Israel’s nuclear arsenals — and, more important, a country that is under the nuclear umbrella of NATO and thus in clear non-compliance with its legal obligations under the NPT — prove how hypocritical and inconsistent its position on nuclear disarmament is.

Furthermore, transferring nuclear technologies and weapons-grade materials by certain nuclear-weapon States to some non-parties to the NPT has contributed to the emergence of new nuclear-weapon possessors, in particular in the volatile region of the Middle East. That is a clear violation of obligations under the NPT and must immediately be stopped.

Nuclear arsenals, clandestine nuclear facilities and the nuclear programmes of the Israelis, which are not safeguarded, are the most serious threats to the region and beyond and the only obstacles to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The expressions of deep concern over this issue and the strong calls for the early convening of such a conference voiced by the overwhelming majority of political groups, States and civil society during the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, the General Conference

of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the High-level Meeting and the general debate of the General Assembly, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Article XIV Conference and here in the First Committee have made it crystal clear that the establishment of such a zone, as proposed by Iran in 1974, continues to enjoy strong international support.

The failure to convene such a conference in 2012, due only to Israel’s objection, is yet further proof of that fact. To avoid further negative repercussions of not convening the conference for the integrity and credibility of non-proliferation regime, the only non-party to the NPT and other States in the region should be in a position to participate in the conference without any preconditions.

Israel should also positively respond to the strong call by the international community and accede without further delay or preconditions to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party and place all its nuclear activities and installations under comprehensive IAEA safeguards in order to pave the way for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

In our view, non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. Non-proliferation efforts are therefore legitimate and credible only when there are acceptable parallel achievements on nuclear disarmament that go beyond the mere decommissioning of nuclear weapons or a reduction in their numbers while preserving their destructive power.

We should therefore promote a balanced, non-discriminatory and comprehensive approach towards non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament leading to a world where not only the development, possession, stockpiling and use and threat of use of nuclear weapons are totally banned, but also such weapons are totally eliminated.

I should stress in that regard that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, all nuclear-weapon States must give, through a universal, legally binding instrument, effective, unconditional, non-discriminatory and irrevocable security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

As we mentioned in previous occasions, nuclear disarmament is both a right and a responsibility. It

is the right of present and future generations, and its fulfilment is the responsibility of States. However, nuclear disarmament is a common but differentiated responsibility, and, as reaffirmed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (resolution S-10/2), nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility in abolishing nuclear weapons.

The recent increased focus on the humanitarian aspects of the use of nuclear weapons proves that international efforts should increase for the complete elimination of these inhumane weapons, which, indeed, is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat thereof.

In order to take forward multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, we should take advantage of the momentum generated by the first-ever High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament. The extensive participation by Heads of State and Government and other dignitaries in the Meeting was indeed a success in further consolidating the efforts of the international community towards advancing the noble objective of nuclear disarmament. Likewise, the strong expressions of support for nuclear disarmament voiced at the Meeting indicated that it continues to remain the highest priority of the international community. It also proved that all States must invest further political will to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world as a matter of urgency.

We are glad that the three-point action-oriented proposal presented by President Rouhani on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries gained broad support both at the High-level Meeting and here in the First Committee. We look forward to the strong support of Member States for the Movement's draft resolution on the follow-up to High-level Meeting.

We fully support addressing genuine non-proliferation concerns. However, we reject equating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with developing nuclear weapons. As has been stated time and again by Iranian officials at all levels, in addition to our international obligations, Islamic teachings also oblige us not to pursue a nuclear-weapon programme. In addition, we believe that such inhumane weapons have never and will never bring about security. Accordingly, nuclear weapons have no place in the defence or military doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran. All

Iranian nuclear activities are, and have always been, exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Iran continues to fully cooperate with the IAEA, and all its nuclear activities are carried out under surveillance cameras of the Agency and its inspectors, who regularly visit all nuclear sites and measure and seal enriched uranium containers. Iran has cooperated with the Agency to an extent beyond its legal obligations, with a view to building even greater trust and confidence. As a result, all IAEA reports, including its latest report, dated 28 August 2013, have always confirmed the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran.

Despite those facts, some countries still express concerns about the peaceful Iranian nuclear programme. At the same time, there exist a deep mistrust and concern in Iran regarding the policies and intentions of those countries. There is therefore a need to build mutual trust, which is possible only by resorting to diplomacy

For its part, to ensure that its nuclear programme will continue to remain exclusively peaceful, Iran has already expressed its full readiness to faithfully engage in a meaningful, time-bound and results-oriented negotiation. Accordingly, Iran genuinely engaged at the recent talks between Iran and the P5+1 group in Geneva and presented a practical proposal to serve as a road map to guide the negotiations. That round of talks ended on a positive note, and the next round of negotiations will take place on 7 November.

Negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 is a serious test for our counterparts, especially Western parties, to prove that they are genuinely interested in resolving this issue by acknowledging the inalienable right of Iran to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — for electricity production and other industrial, medical and agricultural usages, in accordance with article IV of the NPT, including a full national nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes — and addressing Iran's concerns by lifting all multilateral and unilateral sanctions.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that nuclear weapons are the greatest threat to all of us. Before they consume us all together, let us consume them altogether. To that end, the full and effective implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT and its successive Review Conferences is imperative. For that reason, the Islamic Republic of Iran has once again this year submitted a draft resolution in the

First Committee. It is entitled "Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (A/C.1/68/L.11). The draft is based on resolution 66/28, with only technical updates. We look forward to broad support from all delegations for that draft resolution.

Mr. O'Reilly (Ireland): I would like to align Ireland with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/68/PV.10), and with that by New Zealand concerning the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons (see A/C.1/68/PV.13). To those, I would add the following comments in a national capacity.

Since the last General Assembly meeting, I believe there has been a new sense of focus, priority and purpose in our collective discussion on nuclear weapons. For decades, this discussion had regrettably blurred somewhat our shared vision of a world completely free of nuclear weapons and of all other weapons of mass destruction.

It is our view that we allowed ourselves to become sidetracked by the suggestion that before we can begin to contemplate a world without nuclear weapons, we must first achieve the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons. That is despite the fact that we have no clear, shared understanding of what those conditions might be or of how and when they might be put in place. While recognizing and commending the efforts made thus far to reduce nuclear arsenals, we recall the collective decision made by many, more than 40 years ago, to forgo nuclear weapons entirely.

We undermine our message about the importance of eliminating nuclear weapons now with discussions about no-first-strike policies, minimum deterrents and credible deterrents. Is deterrence not simply another way of describing the outdated and invalid notion of mutually assured destruction? Using the threat of mutual destruction to achieve peaceful coexistence among nations turns logic on its head. Ireland has never accepted the validity of any doctrine of nuclear deterrence, nor can we understand how such a doctrine, asserted by some, could sit alongside the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, aspired to by all.

We have failed to balance the irreducible requirement of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that we prevent the spread of those inhumane weapons against the Treaty's equally

irreducible imperative that we eliminate the same weapons completely from existing arsenals. The logic of the NPT is absolute and requires consistency and balance across each of its pillars if it is to achieve its purpose.

We have rightly condemned the provocative and dangerous decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to persist with its weapons programme and conduct a further nuclear-test explosion, which has in fact isolated that country further and threatened stability on the Korean peninsula with potentially wider repercussions. Yet the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's use of language on nuclear deterrence has a depressingly familiar ring to it. It is nuclear-weapon-State language reflected back at the nuclear-weapon States. Ireland again asserts that nuclear deterrence has no place in any blueprint for national or international security. We call again on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to full compliance with its obligations under the NPT, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Security Council.

We have demanded of Iran assurances about the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. We welcome recent indications of possible progress in that respect. It is for Iran to resolve concerns about its nuclear programme. If any State comes to the NPT asserting its rights under the Treaty, then, like all States, it must also recognize its obligations.

Ireland supports the tireless efforts of Ambassador Laajava of Finland to convene a conference on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). We call on all parties to participate.

We have all correctly expressed our complete revulsion at the recent use in Syria this year of another class of WMD, chemical weapons. But we have not adequately reconciled that very clear international message about chemical weapons with a less-than-clear message about nuclear weapons. They are both weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons differ from chemical weapons only in that they are more indiscriminate and more devastating.

The renewed focus and purpose in the discussion on nuclear disarmament owes much to the re-emergence of a narrative on humanitarian consequences. That offers us a means by which we can step beyond the constraints of traditional treaty discussions to return

to first principles and examine, first and foremost, the devastating consequences for men, women and children that would flow from any nuclear weapon's detonation.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has clearly established those consequences as unmanageable on any terms. It can speak with professional authority on the subject, and we should listen to it. In 1945, ICRC delegates witnessed the scenes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki at first hand. Their reports convey clearly the sense of sheer helplessness that confronted those attempting to respond to the unfolding humanitarian disaster. As the representative of Japan underscored on Thursday, that must never be repeated (see A/C.1/68/PV.10). The very useful discussion in Oslo in March showed how Governments and international organizations would be absolutely overwhelmed by the recurrence of a detonation involving modern weapons. We thank Norway for hosting that meeting and Mexico for offering to host a follow-up meeting in February.

The imperative of achieving a world without nuclear weapons, precisely because of the appalling consequences of using any of them, is written into the DNA of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is why we oppose any attempts to acquire or proliferate such weapons. It is why we insist on the elimination of an existing global arsenal that today stands at more than 17,000 nuclear weapons. It is why we demand of any State asserting its right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy that it must demonstrate the exclusively peaceful nature of its programme through complete cooperation with the IAEA safeguards system. In short, it is why we have a nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Yesterday, the representative of New Zealand delivered a statement on the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear-weapon detonation on behalf of a majority of United Nations Members (see A/C.1/68/PV.13). Its core message is practical, not political or legal, in content. That vital debate cannot be dismissed as a distraction from the work of negotiating the elimination of nuclear weapons; on the contrary, it must count among the foremost precepts informing and guiding the disarmament process. It does no more than assert a simple truth — that any nuclear-weapon detonation, by accident, miscalculation or design, would be utterly devastating for human life. The inescapable conclusion is that such a detonation must never, under any circumstances, be allowed to happen.

Last November, at its sixty-seventh session, the General Assembly expressed very clearly its dissatisfaction with the lack of progress to date and established two new initiatives to facilitate discussions on nuclear disarmament: a Group of Governmental Experts to examine possible aspects of a fissile material treaty, and an Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The Assembly also decided to convene the first-ever High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, which took place last month (see A/68/PV.11). Those were clear signals from the Assembly that time cannot stand still on nuclear disarmament. The initiatives were entirely consistent with the action plan agreed on by consensus at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, action 1 of which obliges States to pursue policies that are fully compatible with the NPT and with “the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons”. The NPT is an enabling instrument, not one that seeks to inhibit initiatives aimed at promoting the Treaty's own fundamental object and purpose.

At the meeting this year of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) set aside matters of process and decided to establish, consistent with article VI of the NPT, a series of essential elements without which any future instrument aimed at achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons could not fulfil its objective. They are, first, the complete elimination of all existing nuclear weapons, coupled with, secondly, a series of prohibitions against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, the possession, stockpiling, development or transfer of nuclear weapons, the production or use of already existing fissile material for weapons purposes, and the testing of nuclear weapons.

Ultimately, the NAC is concerned with progress on nuclear disarmament, not process, and those elements offer a basis for achieving progress. Any instrument or set of instruments that might elaborate them further will be entirely consistent with the NPT because article VI of the Treaty requires the pursuit of effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The Chair took the Chair.

It could not be clearer: what we do or do not do in disarmament forums will have a very real impact on people's lives. We all know what is asked of us. We will be judged accordingly.

Mr. Masalla (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

The United Republic of Tanzania is in full support of nuclear disarmament. We believe that the only assurance against the use or the threat of nuclear weapons is their total and complete eradication. The United Republic of Tanzania is a signatory to regional and international treaties, conventions and programmes of action on nuclear disarmament, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Africa Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty — the Treaty of Pelindaba. To date, Tanzania has ratified the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Treaty of Pelindaba.

The United Republic of Tanzania is highly committed to the NPT and emphasizes its balanced and fair implementation. In order to achieve the purpose of the Treaty, we stress the vital role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in assuring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the creation of an environment conducive to nuclear cooperation. We therefore call on that organization to ensure that education on nuclear technology is provided equally to all Member States in good faith without discrimination, and we urge countries with nuclear arsenals to comply with the provisions of the NPT.

My delegation commends the essential contribution of some non-nuclear-weapon States to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Such initiatives are a valuable contribution to international peace and security. In that regard, the United Republic of Tanzania supports the call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-Free zone in the Middle East.

For a long time, non-nuclear-weapons States have voiced their concern and called for assurances by the nuclear States that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We regret the reluctance on the part of nuclear-weapon States to offer such assurances. In that regard, my delegation calls on the nuclear-weapon States to honour

their obligations and to conclude a legally binding agreement.

Tanzania remains committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We also call on all States to adhere to the three main pillars of the NPT, namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In meeting that challenge we can save the world from the danger of another nuclear catastrophe.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The First Committee has already heard many interesting national statements at today's meeting with respect to the cluster "Nuclear weapons". As we can all see, there is a broad spectrum of views. It is encouraging that the majority of States assign a priority role to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT is indeed the foundation upon which, for many decades now, our contemporary global security system is being built. The unity of the three fundamental principles of the NPT — non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear disarmament — is of the utmost importance.

Russia's position on the nuclear cluster was stated earlier in the work of the First Committee (see A/C.1/68/PV.4). I shall not repeat it. However, I would nonetheless suggest that many delegations are awaiting a more detailed explanation from Russia with respect to its approach to the question of nuclear disarmament. Indeed, Russia's experience is certainly illustrative and could even be considered instructive. In order to objectively assess the prospects for further nuclear disarmament, let us simply recall how it all began.

In the middle of the twentieth century, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was caught in an unimaginably vast, full-scale arms race. The possession of nuclear weapons in the 1950s and 1960s essentially saved our State from nuclear annihilation and allowed the threat of nuclear conflict to be turned into a Cold War, based on the principle of peaceful nuclear co-existence. Of course, the end of the Cold War gave rise to hope with respect to the possibility of building a world free of nuclear weapons on the basis of new democratic principles of equitable and undiminished security for all.

Russia courageously embarked upon an unprecedented path regarding nuclear missile disarmament. In a relatively short period, Russia

reduced its nuclear missile stockpiles dozens of times, essentially lowering them to minimally sufficient levels in the middle of the past century. We have no intention of repeating the mistakes of the past, nor will we allow ourselves to be dragged into new arms races.

However, reality today is such that with the end of the Cold War, the world has hardly become safer. If anything, the opposite is true: today's world seems to be increasingly characterized by ambiguous strategic stability and regional turbulence. The foundations of traditional institutions of international security are being shaken. In essence, double standards are being applied. Sometimes, even within the United Nations, forceful actions or approaches are being taken that run counter to Security Council decisions.

International relations are being trampled upon and the very basis of inter-State relations is being ignored. A number of countries even attempt to rewrite the history of the very bloody Second World War. However, we all recall that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics itself bore the major burden of that terrible war. As a result of the fascist aggression, our State suffered the loss of 30 million people's lives. We will never forget that. Moreover, we all recall against whom the first and, I hope, only nuclear attack was directed in 1945 and what followed up to the end of the century, namely, the nuclear stand-off.

Unfortunately, this statement could continue with more examples. That is the reality of the world in which we live together. Such a situation, frankly speaking, no longer surprises us. But it is a matter of great concern that one European democracy and centre of international policy today in the twenty-first century is flagrantly violating international law, the basis for diplomatic relations. Once again, many act as if nothing were occurring.

Let us return to the issue of nuclear disarmament and ask ourselves a simple question. Is it worth naively agreeing on nuclear disarmament with those that engage in the very activities that I have enumerated? I will not answer that now. Let each participant honestly answer that for himself.

The only thing that I can say for certain is that Russia will weigh any further steps in nuclear disarmament in consideration of the actual events taking place in today's world. If anyone wishes to indulge in illusions and decide on early, total and comprehensive disarmament, we will certainly not impede such a decision. It is of

course useful to dream, but of much greater importance to set forth achievable goals and effective measures in order to achieve them.

In that context, I would once again underscore the obvious. Further steps in the area of nuclear disarmament are possible only on the basis of the principle of a fair and indivisible security for all by strengthening strategic stability and eliminating clear obstacles. Such impediments include the unilateral and unlimited stepping up of strategic anti-ballistic missile systems, a lack of will not to place weapons in outer space, a failure to move forward in ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the current imbalance in conventional weapons in Europe and, unfortunately, many other obstacles.

That is why the Russian Federation would like to propose to all the relevant parties not to waste effort and time on pointless topics such as, for example, the humanitarian impact of using nuclear weapons. Children at school already understand that any full-scale use of nuclear weapons would mean the end of human civilization. Let us move beyond such illusions and consider what is truly important, that is, the establishment of the international conditions conducive to genuine nuclear — and not only nuclear — disarmament to the benefit of all humankind.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/68/L.1 and A/C.1/68/L.2.

Mr. Aboul-Enein (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, as this is the first time that I speak in the First Committee, I would like to express our appreciation for the way in which you, Sir, are leading the Committee's work. We fully support you in reaching positive outcomes in the Committee's work.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements to be made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group (see A/C.1/68/PV.3) and of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group, as well as the statement of the New Agenda Coalition on nuclear weapons aspects in the Committee's work (see A/C.1/68/PV.10).

Our discussions on nuclear weapons convene this year against the backdrop of a growing interest in activities to eliminate nuclear weapons. In that regard, I would like to underscore the General Assembly High-

level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, the first of its kind, 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, the convening of the Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and the preparation for the forthcoming conference in Mexico. In that regard, I would like to note the following.

First, the Non-Aligned Movement put forward a comprehensive proposal for the achievement of that goal through the draft resolution (A/C.1/68/L.6) on the follow-up to the outcome of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (A/68/PV.11) by designating an international day for nuclear disarmament and by requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report on the views of countries on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in particular by means of a international convention to prohibit the acquisition, use and development of nuclear weapons to be negotiated within the multilateral nuclear disarmament mechanism.

Secondly, this year's meetings of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations have now taken place. Egypt actively participated in the Working Group and proposed a working paper on the New Agenda Coalition so as to identify the elements required to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The working paper underscored the importance of achieving a legally binding and comprehensive framework containing such elements within a set time frame.

Moreover, Egypt played the role of facilitator to assist the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working group in enabling it to adopt a final report to be submitted to the General Assembly. In that connection, I would like to pay tribute to Ambassador Manuel Dengo for his chairmanship of the Working Group.

Thirdly, Egypt associates itself with the statement made by the representative of New Zealand on behalf of a large number of countries on the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons (see A/C.1/68/PV.10). The statement underscores the inadmissibility of using nuclear weapons under any circumstance. Egypt also played a leading role in drafting the working papers on behalf of NAM that were submitted to the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference

of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). They contained NAM's clear position, which underscores the fact that the acquisition and possession of nuclear weapons violates the principles of international humanitarian law, as such weapons would not differentiate between military and civilian targets and cannot be used militarily in an appropriate way.

That international momentum, supporting disarmament at the global level, and demonstrating that there is no place for nuclear weapons in the world today, strengthens our resolve that the Middle East should become a zone free of nuclear weapons, given the priority that the General Assembly accorded that goal in launching an initiative back in 1974 to establish the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the international consensus as embodied in the framework of the NPT, with the adoption in 1995 of the resolution on the Middle East, which formed the basis for the NPT's indefinite extension. The conclusions on the Middle East adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference outlined the steps for implementing the 1995 resolution by mandating that the Secretary-General and the three countries sponsoring the resolution convene a conference on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction by 2012.

The postponement of that conference by the convening States was a flagrant violation of the clear obligations laid down in the conclusions of the 2010 Review Conference. Egypt calls for the conference to be convened without further delay, in accordance with the mandate of the 2010 Review Conference's conclusions, in order to preserve the credibility of the NPT regime. In that regard, we warn of the consequences of an indefinite postponement of the conference and its impact on the preparatory process for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

In that context, the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt in the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.18) included an initiative, first, inviting all the States of the Middle East, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council, to deposit formal letters with the Secretary-General supporting a declaration of the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, States in the region that have not signed or ratified any of the international treaties relating to

weapons of mass destruction were asked to commit, before the end of this year, to adhering to all the relevant treaties and to deposit assurances to that effect with the Security Council. The Secretary-General was also asked to coordinate all those steps as a prerequisite for the initiative's success.

Specifically, what that means is, first, Israel's adherence to the NPT, as a non-nuclear State, and to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and its signing and ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and on Their Destruction. Secondly, it means Syria's ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention and completion of the steps it has undertaken relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Thirdly, it means Egypt's ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention and its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, in return for all Middle East countries' completion of the measures required to accede to the international instruments aimed at prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, as well as to multilateral treaties and arrangements.

Egypt calls on all States in the region to respond to that initiative and invites the Secretary-General to coordinate the steps proposed for its implementation. Egypt will give all the support necessary to ensure the success of the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard.

Every year, Egypt introduces two draft resolutions in the First Committee. The first is entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East", which is adopted without a vote. The second, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", is submitted by Egypt on behalf of the Arab States and enjoys wide support among Member States. It is my honour to officially introduce those two draft resolutions in the First Committee today.

The draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (A/C.1/68/L.1) has been technically updated and includes the following points. First, it urges serious consideration of taking all practical and urgent steps required to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and invites the countries concerned to adhere to the NPT.

Secondly, it calls on all countries of the region that have not yet done so to place all their nuclear activities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime, pending the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Thirdly, it invites all States in the region, pending the establishment of such a zone, to declare their support for the establishment of that zone and deposit their declarations with the Security Council. Fourthly, it asks those countries, pending the establishment of the zone, not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices or permit their stationing on their territories or territories under their control. Fifthly, it invites nuclear-weapon and other States to help to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and at the same time to refrain from any action that runs counter to the letter or spirit of the draft resolution. Sixthly, it requests the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other interested States.

In that connection, I am pleased to say that for the first time the Arab Group has submitted a joint report on the implementation of this draft resolution that reflects its commitment to contributing to its implementation. We hope that the Arab States' views on their contribution will be included in the introduction to the report prepared by the Secretariat. I invite all Member States to submit their reports on this occasion, as requested by the draft resolution.

I am also honoured, on behalf of the member States of the League of Arab States, to submit a draft resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation (A/C.1/68/L.2), containing the following points. First, it welcomes the conclusions on the Middle East reached by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Secondly, it reaffirms the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and of its placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in order to realize the goal of ensuring that all countries in the Middle East adhere to the NPT. Thirdly, it calls on Israel not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, to renounce possession of nuclear weapons and place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards, as a confidence-building measure among all States of the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security.

I would like to highlight that the draft resolution has been technically updated and thematically developed through the addition of a preambular paragraph

expressing regret that a conference on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was not convened in 2012 and urging that it be convened without further delay. Also, in paragraph 1, there is a reference to a call for the speedy and full implementation of the commitments set out in the conclusions on the Middle East in the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The corresponding resolution at the previous session of the General Assembly (resolution 67/73) enjoyed overwhelming support from 167 Member States, and we hope that the draft resolution before us today will garner even greater support. We call on all States that did not join the overwhelming majority to reconsider their position and support the draft resolution this year.

Egypt will continue to work tirelessly to achieve nuclear disarmament. Egypt has reaffirmed that any initiatives to move forward multilateral negotiations must be based on disarmament. That applies to the conditions for starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which must include previously produced fissile materials and practical measures for their elimination within a binding time frame. Our position is shared by the many countries that truly believe in nuclear disarmament. We hope that the group of governmental experts will take all the necessary concrete steps in order to implement the 13 practical measures approved by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Egypt stands ready to contribute effectively to the discussions of the group.

Egypt fully supports efforts to foster universal adherence to the NPT, to see the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enter into force and to conclude negotiations on an FMCT concurrently with the realization of the obligation to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, including through the negotiation of a nuclear-weapons treaty, as called for by the Non-Aligned Movement.

We trust that under your leadership, Sir, the First Committee will make an effective contribution to achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament, and thereby to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): This year, the First Committee is meeting at a time of extraordinary opportunity. In the past few weeks, we have seen vivid

action taken in the long struggle to rid the world of chemical and nuclear weapons.

The recent unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2118 (2013), on Syria's chemical weapons, is of historic importance. However, in that regard, as the Secretary-General noted, "a red light for one form of weapons did not mean a green light for others". He therefore called for a complete stop to all violence and for all weapons to be silenced.

Another hopeful opportunity that has presented itself was the day-long unprecedented High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament in the General Assembly, on 26 September (see A/68/PV.11). From nearly every corner of the world — Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America — Heads of State and Government and other high officials called for action to begin comprehensive negotiations to ban all nuclear weapons. It was impressive to see such an outcry of concern at what are aptly called the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

The willingness of the world as a whole to move forward in a constructive manner to eliminate nuclear weapons has never been more evident. Yet a very small number of States stand in the way, trying to block progress and efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the problem that goes on year after year, in paralysis and obfuscation.

It was clear at the High-level Meeting that States around the world want to see the implementation of the 2010 decision of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to convene a meeting to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The progress made on the Syrian conflict and the prospect of a political solution on the horizon set the stage for the holding of the Middle East conference. That process dates back to 1995, when the Review and Extension Conference adopted a resolution to address all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The failure of the international community to fulfil that promise has jeopardized the credibility of the Treaty and the future of the region. With the 2015 Review Conference quickly approaching, it is imperative that steps be taken to set a firm date for the holding of the conference.

It is sadly ironic that States vociferous in their condemnation of chemical weapons are silent on the continued possession of nuclear weapons. The international community must appeal and act with one voice to ban all weapons of mass destruction.

The prospects for cooperation among all States on a new agenda for peace have suddenly taken an upturn. That work requires continued advocacy and cooperation by all. A better world awaits us if we reduce excessive military spending and set aside part of military expenditures for a world fund to relieve the needs of developing and least-developed countries. The First Committee, dedicated to reducing armaments worldwide, must always be conscious of what is truly needed for us to achieve sustainable international peace and security. We must end myopic militarism and concentrate on the long-term needs of the human family.

As was stated on behalf of the Holy See at the recent High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, it is time to counter the logic of fear with the ethic of responsibility, fostering a climate of trust and sincere dialogue, capable of promoting a culture of peace, founded on the primacy of law and the common good, through a coherent and responsible cooperation between all members of the international community.

Our world has never been so interdependent and interconnected. Now more than ever, we cannot risk falling into a globalization of indifference. It is illusory to think that the security and peace of some can be assured without the security and peace of others. In an age like ours, which is undergoing profound social and geopolitical shifts, awareness has been growing that national security interests are deeply linked to those related to international security, just as the human family moves gradually closer together and people everywhere are becoming more conscious of their unity and interdependency.

Peace, security and stability cannot be gained by military means alone or by increasing military spending; they are multidimensional objectives, which include aspects that are not linked only to the political and military spheres, but also to those of human rights, the rule of law, economic and social conditions, and the protection of the environment. Those are subjects whose principal purpose is the promotion of true, integrated human development, where wisdom, reason

and the power of the law must prevail over violence, aggression and the law of force.

Peace is an edifice in continual construction. Its foundation is based on trust, confidence-building, respect for obligations assumed and on dialogue rather than on force. Without those fundamental elements, peace and the very existence of the human family are at risk. The field of disarmament and arms control constantly demands the use of wisdom and goodwill.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker on nuclear disarmament.

We shall now proceed with the speakers on the list under the cluster "Disarmament machinery". There are 33 speakers on this list. Before I give the floor to the first speaker, may I appeal to all delegations to be as brief as possible in their statements so that we can finish our work as scheduled.

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

NAM remains concerned at the continuous erosion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Movement is determined to continue promoting multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in those areas and as the only sustainable method of addressing such issues in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

NAM stresses the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery, as consisting of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Committee as a universal deliberative body and subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, and the First Committee. The Movement emphasizes the significance of preserving and strengthening the nature, role and purpose of each part of the machinery, including the First Committee.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery is a shared objective. Based on its existing rules of procedure and methods of work, the machinery has produced landmark treaties and guidelines. NAM believes that the main difficulty lies in the lack of political will by some States to achieve progress, particularly on nuclear disarmament.

NAM reiterates its call on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. In

that regard, the Movement notes the CD's adoption of the programme of work for the 2009 session (CD/1864), on 29 May 2009, which was not implemented. We welcome the efforts made during the 2013 session on the programme of work, as well as on the decision CD/1956/Rev.1 to establish an informal working group. NAM also notes the deliberations of the working group at its meetings during the CD's 2013 session.

The Movement encourages all States to demonstrate the necessary political will so that the CD fulfils its mandate. For its part, NAM stands ready to engage constructively in the United Nations disarmament agenda and in finding ways and means of strengthening the disarmament machinery. NAM reiterates that a special session of the General Assembly should be convened to address those issues.

NAM reaffirms the importance attached by the Charter of the United Nations to the principles of the equality of all States and equitable geographical distribution. Taking into account the importance of groups of governmental experts in the field of disarmament and international security, NAM emphasizes the need for giving due consideration in the appointment of the members of such groups, as well as to equitable geographical representation.

While expressing concern at the regional imbalance and at the inadequate and under-representation of Non-Aligned Movement countries in the current memberships in some groups of governmental experts, NAM believes that the mere reflection of the principle of equitable geographical representation in the resolutions establishing such groups is insufficient. Accordingly, NAM underlines the need for the strict application of that principle in the actual composition of the groups so as to ensure a more balanced membership therein. NAM urges the Secretary-General to take concrete steps to ensure more balanced membership in future groups, which would contribute to the effectiveness and participatory nature of their work. The Movement will closely follow the application of that principle with regard to the composition of such groups. We express the hope that the principle will be applied, *inter alia*, through an expansion in the size of the groups' membership.

Finally, NAM would like to emphasize that it is high time for all countries to work together, cooperate more and bring to bear their respective political capital to revitalize the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Mr. Hasan (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain delivers the following statement on behalf of the Arab Group, and we align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group emphasizes that the solutions agreed under the multilateral framework under the Charter of the United Nations provide the sole sustainable means to address disarmament and international security issues. The Arab Group therefore calls upon all Member States to renew and implement their individual and collective obligations by collaborating at the multilateral level. We also stress our belief in the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that connection, the Arab Group reaffirms the feasibility of the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee as multilateral frameworks on disarmament according to the mandate specified by the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Group stresses that the current deadlock in the work of the Conference on Disarmament is not due to any shortcoming or deficiency in the Conference itself. Rather, it is due to the lack of political will on the part of the main member States at the Conference. Once again, the Group reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole negotiating framework, as well as the importance of enabling it to assume its role while not diluting its efforts by establishing other parallel entities. The Group of Arab States hopes that the efforts by the informal working group on the programme of work of the Conference will lead to an agreement that will enable the Conference to proceed, as soon as possible, to take up the substantive issues on its agenda.

The Arab Group believes in the power of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery, to provide recommendations on important issues in the field of disarmament. The Commission should be an inspiring source of new ideas and initiatives. For the Commission to be able to achieve its goals, political will on the part of all Member States, is required. We hope that the Commission will, in its upcoming meeting, reach consensus on the important issues on its agenda.

In conclusion, the Group reiterates that legal obligations and multilateral frameworks can play their role only in full if adequate political will to fulfil such obligations in the real world is in place.

Ms. Sweeb (Suriname): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The efforts of the international community in favour of promoting international peace and security make it essential for there to be a strong multilateral mechanism within the United Nations framework for addressing disarmament and non-proliferation issues. In that sense, UNASUR renews its commitment to the mechanism established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, which introduced a set of bodies with different but complementary functions, constituting what is known as the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, with the objective of strengthening the role of the Organization in the disarmament and non-proliferation spheres.

In that framework, UNASUR wishes to highlight the achievements by the disarmament machinery, as reflected in several international instruments that constitute important milestones of international law, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention. UNASUR believes that any attempt to reform the multilateral disarmament machinery should be done in a comprehensive manner, in the context of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on Disarmament.

We are very concerned that, for the past 15 years, the Member States of the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, have failed to reach agreement on a programme of work for the substantive treatment of the items on its agenda. UNASUR urges all members of the Conference on Disarmament to show greater political will to ensure the commencement of substantive work with the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in order to start negotiations and to make progress on the items on its agenda, especially those related to nuclear disarmament.

In that context, UNASUR calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to overcome the prolonged impasse and to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, in order to start negotiations on a programme with a defined time frame for the complete

elimination of nuclear weapons that includes a nuclear weapons convention. In that context, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament and his support for a nuclear weapon convention backed by a strong system of verification. In that regard, UNASUR welcomes the establishment within the Conference on Disarmament of an informal working group co-chaired by Ecuador with the mandate of producing a robust and progressive programme of work.

UNASUR is convinced that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Until that goal is met, non-nuclear-weapon States must receive unequivocal, unconditional and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by States possessing them.

We note with concern the possibility of an arms race in outer space. For that reason, we reaffirm the importance of negotiating a legally binding instrument in the field, in order to prevent the placement of weapons in that environment. We also reaffirm the importance we give to strict compliance with the current regime on the use of outer space, which recognizes the common interests of humankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

UNASUR expresses its willingness to advance negotiations on a multilateral and non-discriminatory treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that includes an international verification regime and meets the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

While acknowledging Peru's efforts, as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for the 2012 substantive session, to reach agreement on the agenda for the next three-year cycle, UNASUR regrets the lack of progress within the UNDC and that substantive recommendations have not been reached in the respective working groups on nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We welcome the fact that the 2013 session of the Disarmament Commission met with greater political will, flexibility and cooperation from all States. In that regard, UNASUR calls on Member States to exhaust all efforts in order to allow the United Nations deliberative body to make substantive recommendations on issues in the field of disarmament.

Finally, UNASUR would like to highlight the work being carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research as an autonomous institute designed to undertake independent research on disarmament and related problems and to promote States' informed participation in disarmament efforts. We also recognize the importance of greater interaction and participation on the part of civil society in efforts in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Kos (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

We are a strong supporter of the United Nations and effective multilateralism. We consider that the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the different international treaties and regimes in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing.

The existence of new threats to international security makes it more important than ever to have a properly functioning disarmament machinery. Since global security problems require cooperative and multilateral solutions, it is time to reinforce and revitalize the United Nations disarmament machinery, the role of which remains central and irreplaceable. Deliberative and negotiating bodies set up under the auspices of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament need to improve their performance and reach results in line with their agreed mandates. Progress made in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, with the successful Arms Trade Treaty negotiating process constituting the most recent example, demonstrates that deliberations and negotiations on those issues can yield results.

We believe that the First Committee should concentrate its efforts on the most pertinent and topical issues, rather than maintaining the practice of proceeding in a formalistic manner and simply updating

resolutions previously adopted. It should serve as a forum for open and relevant exchanges, should be able to deal with contemporary challenges to our collective security and should develop concrete measures to that end.

Each year, several draft resolutions are adopted without substantial discussion. In order to alleviate the heavy agenda of the Committee and make it more relevant, we believe that the possibility of biennializing or triennializing more draft resolutions, in a balanced manner, should be contemplated. We also suggest reviewing the practice in the First Committee whereby the Secretary-General is requested to prepare a report on the implementation of a given resolution. In some instances, not even the sponsors of the resolution provide the Secretariat with the necessary information. All Member States share responsibility for maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of the Committee.

We welcome that fact that in 2013 a more substantive and active debate took place in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Nevertheless, overall participation still remained regrettably low. In April 2014, the UNDC will continue elaborating recommendations on the basis of working papers issued by the two Working Group Chairs. The next session will also be the last one in the current three-year cycle. We think that it provides a good opportunity for us to demonstrate our will to make the UNDC once again a relevant body and to let it fulfil its true potential.

For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, remains a clear priority. National security concerns, while legitimate, can and should be addressed as part of the negotiation process, rather than as a prerequisite. We appeal to delegations to show flexibility. We call on all CD Member States to start negotiations on such a treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on the agenda, in line with the programme of work adopted in document CD/1864. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. All States members of the European Union supported resolution 67/53. We look forward to the meetings of

the Group of Governmental Experts established by that resolution, scheduled to take place in 2014 and 2015.

The CD, in accordance with its mandate, has a crucial role to play in negotiating multilateral treaties. Its ongoing stalemate remains deeply troubling. Adopting and implementing a programme of work is more urgent than ever. We express our hope that the informal working group established under document CD/1956/Rev.1 will lead to concrete and tangible results in that regard.

In line with our long-standing commitment to the enlargement of the Conference, we strongly support appointing a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership. Consistent with our engagement with civil society, we look forward to enhanced interaction between civil society and the CD as a means to strengthen the contribution of non-governmental organizations and research institutions to the work of the Conference.

Resolution 65/87 reiterated that UNIDIR should continue to conduct independent research on problems relating to disarmament and security and to undertake specialized research requiring a high degree of expertise. In our view, the Institute is a trusted element of the disarmament machinery that has been vested with a unique role. The European Union and its member States highly value UNIDIR's activities in conducting independent research on disarmament and security. We have, on several occasions, financially supported the important work of the Institute, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the work of the groups of governmental experts on cybersecurity and on transparency and confidence-building measures. As confirmed by resolution 65/87, it is important for UNIDIR to maintain its autonomy as established by SSOD-I.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to assist the United Nations disarmament machinery to deliver tangible results and we underline the need to promote strategic synergies and coordination among the relevant United Nations institutions.

Mr. Aljowaily (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement by the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to express our full support for the existing United Nations disarmament machinery as established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I). While the Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the absence of political will to reach a balanced outcome that reflects the interests of all remains the main obstacle preventing the Conference from adopting a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. The solution lies in addressing all the issues on the Conference agenda through an integrated approach that should, most important, include negotiations on disarmament, on negative security assurances, on a treaty to ban fissile material, including stockpiles for military purposes, and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Egypt contributed its part to efforts aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament during its presidency of the Conference by presenting draft decision CD/1933/Rev.1. While that draft decision was regrettably not adopted, it provided a base upon which subsequent efforts could be pursued. All such efforts should be geared towards reinforcing the ability of the CD to deal effectively with disarmament issues within its substantive and procedural frameworks. Egypt welcomes any collective action by Member States aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference, so long as such efforts do not affect either its rules of procedure or its priorities.

Nuclear disarmament remains our top priority, as established not only through SSOD-I but through the very first resolution of the General Assembly, in 1946 (resolution 1 (I)). In the draft resolution (A/C.1/68/L.6/Rev.1) introduced by the Non-Aligned Movement as a follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Disarmament held on 26 September 2013, the Conference on Disarmament is called upon to shoulder its responsibility in that regard by launching negotiations on a convention that prohibits the possession, development and use of nuclear weapons.

While the revitalization of the Conference represents an important dimension of the efforts to revitalize the disarmament machinery as a whole, Egypt believes that there is a need for similar efforts to revitalize the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole

specialized deliberative body within the Organization's multilateral disarmament machinery.

We believe in the potential of the Commission. Through the Disarmament Commission, some key guidelines and norm-setting consensus frameworks have evolved, including the 1999 guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Christopher Grima, the Commission issued a working paper entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". Egypt was proud to be a member of the Bureau during that session, and we believe that it is a positive development that should pave the way for adopting the agreed recommendations in 2014, at the end of the current three-year cycle.

As part of the established United Nations disarmament machinery, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has enjoyed sustained support from Egypt, aimed at realizing its potential in furthering nuclear disarmament. We have engaged with all the parties concerned regarding the Secretariat's proposal on "the consolidation of the research, training, learning and library services", which would include UNIDIR. We continue to examine the proposals and study the relevant documents as they become available in the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations. Allow me to highlight the parameters that we think are necessary in any examination of those proposals.

First, any decision to restructure the relevant institutions should be consistent with their mandates, which emanate from the relevant intergovernmental machinery. The decision to undertake any restructuring should be taken by the appropriate intergovernmental body.

Secondly, activities by the United Nations research centres and training institutions should conform to the priorities set out by the governing bodies. In the case of disarmament and international security, nuclear disarmament remains the priority as set out by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. That priority to nuclear disarmament should guide the activities of UNIDIR.

Thirdly, the reliance by the United Nations research and training centres on voluntary funding should not alter the priorities agreed upon by the governing bodies

or those set out by the relevant intergovernmental machinery. Trust funds that pool extrabudgetary funding and free up their utilization according to the priorities set out collectively could provide useful examples in that regard.

Fourthly, priority should be given to collaboration with experts, researchers and training and research institutions from developing countries. That would achieve the dual benefit of diversifying expertise and contributing to capacity-building in the developing world. Cooperation with institutions in the developing world should be institutionalized, instead of relying excessively on consultants and experts almost solely from institutions in developed countries.

Those are the four parameters that form the yardstick against which we will measure and evaluate all current proposals on the consolidation of research and training institutions. We are confident that the Secretariat's plans will take those parameters into consideration in our collective effort to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations research, training and library services.

The importance of revitalizing the United Nations disarmament machinery requires efforts to be collective and not individual, complementary and not contradictory, consensual and not divisive. We are hopeful that the First Committee, under your leadership, Sir, will be able to inject much needed momentum into such efforts.

Mr. Buck (United States of America): In the interest of time, I have shortened my remarks, but the full United States statement will be 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.

Last year at the sixty-seventh session of the First Committee meeting, the so-called "Sandy rules", very sensibly promulgated by the then Chair, Mr. Percaya of Indonesia, caused our delegation to submit our comments on disarmament machinery for the record. This year, we are pleased to speak to some of those issues. We would like to share the United States perspective on disarmament machinery, as well as to address the process of change management in the United Nations.

At the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I), in 1978,

the international community took decisions on the disarmament machinery that, in our view, are still relevant and valid today. We should not blame the wise visions of our predecessors and the machinery they created for the present-day persistent deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva. Nor should we blame them for the fact that consensus recommendations and conclusions continue to elude us at the United Nations Disarmament Commission. That regrettable state of affairs is not the fault of the machinery itself. It is true that modest adjustments to the machinery and established practice over time might be helpful. In fact, some interesting ideas have been put forward over the past few years. One of them, the informal working group established this past summer at the Conference on Disarmament to assist in developing a programme of work, we hope will succeed. Still others, such as longer rotations for the CD presidency, might also facilitate our work.

However, I think we all know that those ideas alone do not offer a panacea. What is needed is a willingness among all States to use that machinery as it was initially intended and to recognize that the special features of the machinery are designed to allow States to protect their national interests. Circumventing existing machinery in ways that do not provide such a fail-safe, or establishing instead some new conference — such as a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament or an international conference on nuclear disarmament — do not offer a fruitful way forward. Rather, we believe those ideas could actually contribute to slowing down progress. The bottom line is that those alternatives are not likely to offer remedies to the challenges confronting us.

We should not focus only on our disappointments. There are also many success stories involving the disarmament machinery. The success of the General Assembly in negotiating and concluding the Arms Trade Treaty shows that progress can be made when the political will is there. On 17 October, we heard from a panel of representatives from disarmament and non-proliferation organizations, all of whom shared success stories — from the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, recently singled out for the Nobel Peace Prize, to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), also a recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize for its work to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

While much smaller and more modest, another part of the disarmament machinery, first proposed by France at SSOD-I, has also prospered: the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). Established in 1980 by the General Assembly as an autonomous research institute, the UNIDIR Board of Trustees is the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, which was established by SSOD-I. The United States values UNIDIR's impartial, action-oriented research and has worked closely on several important projects with UNIDIR, including its annual space security conference and the recent Cyber Security Conference 2012: The Role of Confidence-Building Measures in Assuring Cyber Stability.

The United States would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Kim Won-soo for again coming before the First Committee to brief it on the efforts aimed at change management. We would like to offer some comments on his presentation and the change management plan contained in document A/68/485, issued last month. We offered these comments at Mr. Kim's briefing in Geneva on 16 October and would like to share them with our New York colleagues today.

The United States views change management as an important initiative that can promote our overarching goals of greater efficiency, streamlined operations, reduced costs and improved transparency within the United Nations system. It is incumbent upon us, of course, as Member States, to work with the United Nations to ensure that those objectives are in the overall plan. Those efforts are key to maintaining the credibility of the Organization and in garnering strong support among publics and parliaments, including the United States Congress, for continued full funding for participation in international organizations at a time when there are many competing demands for limited resources. The United States is reviewing the proposals with that in mind.

In particular, the United States welcomes the opportunity to review the change management proposal related to knowledge, research and training institutes. We especially value the idea of integrating the library services and institutional memory of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the United Nations Office at Geneva Library into a single function.

We do have questions about parts of the report that have not been fully outlined to date. For example, the

proposal references the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), which called for a more efficient and effective use of financial and human resources and closer coordination among the training and research functions of the Organization. We would like to better understand how the proposal achieves that goal, as it seems to separate research and training into separate functions.

We are also very interested to learn more about how the proposal would realistically generate meaningful long-term cost savings. It argues that some of the savings would be realized as opportunities for shared administrative support in all of the functional areas identified. The proposal specifically cites administrative support as a possible area. However, some of those entities, such as UNIDIR, already benefit from shared administrative services through the United Nations Office at Geneva.

We are also interested to hear more about the establishment of the research coordination network and support hub. What is its composition, precise functions, level of staffing and annual cost? We are pleased that the proposal does not appear to invent new permanent positions beyond the new Assistant Secretary-General mandate, which needs further clarification, to support the research coordination network. But we would want to make sure that the envisioned support hub adds value to the existing work and products of the research institutes and enhances partnerships, rather than establishing a new mandate without clear direction, as that would contradict the argument for consolidation and streamlining.

Consistent with the previous point, we note the multiple references throughout the document on maintaining the existing governance mechanisms of the research institutes, and therefore we want to better understand the role of the new Assistant Secretary-General position as it relates to his/her responsibility for coordination of the network. UNIDIR, for example, has an autonomous role, carries out independent research within the United Nations structures and reports to a board appointed by the Secretary-General. A clear statement as to the role and responsibilities of this new Assistant Secretary-General function — and UNIDIR's continued autonomy — would help alleviate concerns about those entities' independence.

Finally, we note the reference that some institutions are experiencing financial difficulties owing to the

current global financial climate. We see great value in the possibility of promoting sustainable funding through a strategic plan. We would like to better understand how a common strategic fundraising document could be formulated, as the relevant research institutions often obtain their funding from many different sources with differing expertise and interests.

In conclusion, we appreciate the consultations that the change management team has already engaged in with the relevant stakeholders. We hope that as we go forward, we will obtain further clarification about the details of this proposal. The United States continues to be supportive of ideas and proposals that can demonstrate actual efficiency gains while ensuring that the work products of the various technical entities and their abilities to continue such work are not comprised.

Mr. Gailiunas (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (EU) on behalf of the EU and its member States members. Let me now elaborate on some matters of particular importance to Lithuania.

We believe that the multilateral approach to non-proliferation and disarmament is essential for developing, maintaining and further strengthening fundamental international norms. As a firm supporter of effective multilateralism, Lithuania regards the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the relevant international treaties and regimes in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament as important and mutually reinforcing elements of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

We regret that, despite clear calls by the General Assembly, the countless other forums and a number of high officials who addressed the Conference, the Conference on Disarmament has not yet been able to break its long-standing impasse and commence substantial work at its 2013 session. Since the successful negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996, multilateral disarmament treaties, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, have been negotiated outside of the Conference on Disarmament, thereby undermining its authority. The stalemate remains troubling, making the adoption and implementation of a programme of work more urgent than ever. We hope

that the informal working group established under decision CD/1956/Rev.1 will lead to concrete and tangible results in that regard.

Given the continuing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, the international community needs to reflect on its options and, if necessary, identify other ways to ensure progress. Therefore, we welcome the initiatives aimed at exploring the way forward, since we regard them as an extra impetus that could eventually lead to the start of negotiations on at least the most substantive pending issues on the Conference's current agenda.

The enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament has been an outstanding issue for more than a decade and needs to be addressed without delay. This call is in line with the rules of procedure of the Conference, which provide for the review of the membership question at regular intervals. In line with its long-standing commitment to joining the Conference on Disarmament, Lithuania adds its voice to other countries' calling for the appointment of a special rapporteur or a coordinator on the expansion of the membership, who would facilitate the discussion on the matter in the Conference of Disarmament without prejudging its outcome.

Last, but not least, resolution 65/87 reiterates that UNIDIR should continue to conduct independent research on the issues of disarmament and security and proceed with the specialized research requiring a high degree of expertise. The Institute is a trusted element of the United Nations disarmament machinery and is vested with a unique role. We highly appreciate UNIDIR activities in conducting independent research on disarmament and security, and therefore underline the importance for UNIDIR to maintain its autonomy as established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and confirmed by resolution 65/87.

Mrs. Ledesma Hernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established the disarmament machinery of the United Nations system, wherein each and every organ plays a fundamental role, with specific functions that we believe should be preserved.

Cuba attaches great importance to the need to achieve tangible progress in negotiations and deliberations in the field of disarmament and arms control. We attach

the highest priority to the international commitment to achieving nuclear disarmament. In that context, we reiterate the need for multilateralism as the basic principle for negotiations in the field of disarmament. We believe that solutions that are agreed upon in a multilateral manner, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, are the only sustainable method to address disarmament and international security.

We stress the importance and relevance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, a specialized deliberative body of universal membership that allows for detailed discussions of the most relevant topics. We are pleased that the Disarmament Commission has agreed on the agenda for its substantive work for the upcoming three-year cycle and that it includes the issue of recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Cuba fully supports the work of the Disarmament Commission and hopes that all States will demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility in order to reach agreements on substantive recommendations.

The Conference on Disarmament plays a unique role as the only multilateral negotiating forum for treaties in the field of disarmament. We are concerned by the idea, advanced by some, of sidelining the Conference on Disarmament since, they claim, it is a useless body. Cuba is not of that view. We reiterate that preserving and strengthening the Conference on Disarmament remains our shared responsibility. The Conference must promptly adopt a broad and well-balanced programme of work that takes into account real priorities in the field of disarmament, starting with nuclear disarmament.

In that regard, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) will submit a new initiative to the First Committee aimed at providing follow-up to the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (A/68/PV.11), held successfully on 26 September. NAM will submit a draft resolution that will recommend, inter alia, designating 26 September as the international day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That NAM draft resolution will propose a new approach to addressing the urgent need to promptly launch negotiations on nuclear disarmament within the Conference on Disarmament.

As part of that new initiative, we propose combining three topics on the agenda of the Conference

on Disarmament, namely, nuclear disarmament, fissile material for the manufacturing of nuclear weapons, and negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. That would be covered by a comprehensive convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons that would include a prohibition of the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of such weapons and would also call for their destruction. That is a good-faith initiative, which also seeks to put an end to the impasse within the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that all Member States, in particular those States that have expressed their concern regarding the deadlock in the disarmament machinery, will support the draft resolution.

Furthermore, we would like to highlight that the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament was a very helpful example of the effective and proactive role that the General Assembly can and should play in defining and promoting tangible actions to meet the primary goal of nuclear disarmament.

In addition, I would also like to highlight a general concern with regard to the proliferation of initiatives establishing groups of experts of restricted or limited membership to deal with disarmament and arms control issues, which are highly sensitive and of interest to all Member States. We believe that the establishment of groups of experts should be the exception, not the rule. Rather, more should be done to promote transparent and inclusive processes where all Member States can be included, under equal conditions, in the bodies established for the United Nations disarmament machinery and where discussions can be held instead of being held only in those groups of experts.

Allow me to conclude by stating that Cuba supports efforts made to enhance the United Nations disarmament machinery. We continue to believe, however, that the stalemate that is affecting a large part of that machinery is primarily due to a lack of political will on the part of some States to make real progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. We believe that all States must continue to do more in order to meet the expectations of the international community in the field of disarmament.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We have almost exhausted the time available to us. I will therefore now give the floor to delegations who would like to make statements in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Yoo Yeon-chul (Republic of Korea): I would like to speak in response to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in his statement in Spanish this morning (see A/C.1/68/PV.13), in which he said that North Korea had faced nuclear threats. In that regard, I would like to recall several objective facts concerning the serious and frightening manner in which North Korea has threatened South Korea and the United States.

First, on 7 March, North Korea threatened to launch a nuclear strike on United States soil. Four days later, it was also North Korea that unilaterally declared the nullification of the Armistice Agreement. In addition, North Korea produced and disseminated a bizarre and disturbing propaganda video on YouTube depicting New York in flames. Furthermore, it was North Korea that cut off a key military hotline with the Republic of Korea and declared that it had entered a state of war through its State media. In April, North Korea also threatened all foreign companies and tourists in the Republic of Korea and told them to evacuate, stating that it is on the verge of nuclear war. From those facts alone, it is quite clear who was truly responsible for creating and escalating tensions last spring in the region.

Contrary to the argument of the North Korean delegation, the joint Republic of Korea/United States exercises are purely defensive in nature and have been conducted for decades now. They have actually played a role in ensuring peace and stability in the region against the backdrop of the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm and emphasize that there exist no nuclear weapons on our territory. The Republic of Korea maintains its unchanged policy to observe and implement the 1992 Joint Declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, to which North Korea is also a party.

Mr. Kim Ju Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have just heard the most absurd statement possible by the South Korean delegation. I knew from the outset that they were going to comment on the military exercise that they carry out every year, which is of a defensive nature. Allow me to once again underscore that United States and South Korean aircraft carriers, including the *USS George Washington*, which are known as floating military bases and war machines, have been navigating as they

please in the eastern, western and southern waters off Korea. That demonstrates that they have already gone too far. That venture and those manoeuvres by the United States and South Korea seek to provoke nuclear war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, thus threatening the Democratic People's Republic of Korea militarily.

Our delegation entirely rejects the — once again — absurd comments that have been made. As we said earlier, we would have the South Korean delegation know that the South Korean Government should act prudently, paying close attention to the way the situation is developing and understanding who is chiefly to blame for the threats posed to peace and the situation on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Yoo Yeon-chul (Republic of Korea): I would like to speak briefly in response to the claim made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea just now.

I would like to say that, if there were no threat from North Korea, there would be no joint defensive exercises by the Republic of Korea and the United States.

I would also like to draw attention to two aspects. First, North Korea exercises the right of reply as a Member State of the United Nations. If North Korea is a Member of the United Nations, it has not only a right but also a duty to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Security Council. I therefore strongly urge North Korea that before it exercises its right of reply as a Member of the United Nations, the first thing it should do is to carry out its obligation to abide by the Charter and all Security Council resolutions, such as resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013), to name just a few. Also, Article 4 of the Charter clearly restricts

membership of the United Nations to peace-loving States that accept and carry out their obligations under the Charter. The Charter is not an à la carte menu; North Korea cannot accept one while rejecting the other.

Secondly, if North Korea desires peace and stability through the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the thing it must do urgently is to accede as soon as possible to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to adhere to its safeguards agreement under the International Atomic Energy Agency, with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner. After that, and only then, North Korea can talk about the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Kim Ju Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I think it is a very bad habit for the delegation of South Korea to raise issues that really have nothing to do with the right of reply it has just exercised. They have changed what they say on several issues on various occasions. I am in fact in a position to ask them once again to explain themselves clearly, since I did not really understand what the representative of South Korea actually meant to say in response to the comments we just made.

First, I totally reject — although it was difficult to understand or catch what exactly he said — the comments the representative of South Korea just made. Secondly, we have made our position clear several times regarding the nuclear issue in the Korean peninsula. South Koreans should learn how to speak and should put themselves in a position to actually mention the nuclear issue to the country that originated it, which is the United States, not the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.