



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

First Committee

3rd meeting

Monday, 7 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Dabbashi (Libya)

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

Introductory statements

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to make a brief statement in my capacity as Chair of the First Committee at this session and to thank the First Committee for electing me to the Chair. I promise that I will do my utmost to conduct the work of the Committee as effectively as possible. I would also like to warmly welcome all delegations to the Committee. I am very pleased to see a large number of friends and many familiar faces in this room.

I am quite sure that we all understand that the agenda items before the First Committee are extremely important to international peace and security. We all recognize the importance of our collective work and cooperation in undertaking the task entrusted to us in the area of disarmament and international security and in creating a more peaceful and prosperous world for us, for our children and for generations to come.

This session once again gives us the opportunity to tackle issues of disarmament and international security, and we must take the best possible advantage of it. Weapons of mass destruction are, overall, the greatest danger facing humankind and its future. That is why we must work together and avail ourselves of any initiative that could help us to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, or at least to contribute to reducing them. I believe that the current international political climate is very favourable to the possibility of eliminating nuclear and other weapons of

mass destruction. At the end of August, the open-ended working group in Geneva finished its work on preparing suggestions to advance multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament; here in New York, the General Assembly held its first High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, at the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Concerning the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, the agreement that has been reached offers an excellent chance of enabling us to tackle the issue of eliminating nuclear weapons in the Middle East in a more serious and thorough manner. We must address this issue in a way that serves international peace and security as a whole. I believe that there is no better moment than now for holding the special conference on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction, a meeting that has been postponed for too long. In my view, the continued inability to hold the conference will have a negative effect on the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, especially in the light of the delay in the implementation of the programme of work and the post-2010 agenda.

In the area of conventional weapons, a huge step forward was taken last April in the form of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which has been signed by 113 States. With the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession of 50 States, for which we are hoping, the Treaty will go into effect. The Security Council's recent adoption of resolution 2117 (2013) was the first to deal specifically with small arms and light weapons, a notable achievement in the area of international peace

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-50249 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



and security, to which the acquisition of small arms and light weapons is a threat, particularly in Africa.

We also still have a great deal of work before us in dealing with the issues of the Internet and outer space, and the Committee must pursue its efforts to bring safety to both arenas.

There are huge challenges ahead of us. They cannot be dealt with by single countries or even by small groups of countries, regardless of those countries' size. These are challenges that require the cooperation of all countries within a framework of mutual respect and trust, and with an exhibition of political will on the part of every leader. We must all share in the responsibility if we are to deal with the challenges and dangers we face. We must be flexible and ready to agree to meet each other halfway. In order to achieve genuine progress, we must find common ground and parameters on which to base our agreements. The Chair and the Bureau will be ready to help members to reach consensus, not to reproach them for their views. And I welcome members' advice and suggestions, especially about the Committee's methods of work. I hope that I can rely on everyone's cooperation, and I hope to be able to help everyone also.

I now have great pleasure in welcoming the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, who will make a statement.

Ms. Kane (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I welcome this opportunity to address the First Committee, and I am especially pleased to greet members of delegations who are joining us for the first time.

It is my honour to congratulate the Chair of the First Committee on his election to guide our work. Ambassador Dabbashi's extensive diplomatic experience will serve the Committee well. I also wish to recognize the members of the Bureau and to assure them and all delegations of the fullest cooperation of the Office for Disarmament Affairs throughout the work of the Committee.

One of the curious ironies about the United Nations is that it is located on the banks of the East River, which flows daily — with the tides — in two directions. The past work of the Committee has followed a similar course, resembling in many ways a river with counter-currents. On one level, its deliberations have been characterized by polarized debates on past

setbacks, disappointments, unfulfilled commitments and common frustrations. Yet there is another current flowing in the opposite direction, representing the growth of global solidarity behind principles, standards and norms regarding both disarmament and the regulation of armaments. That is the current that led to the adoption this year of the Arms Trade Treaty. As it opens its 2013 session, the Committee is once again confronting those two currents. Yet we have seen many positive developments and our work now appears to be flowing in the right direction.

Consider the outpouring of international recognition this year of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. That was a featured theme of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo in March, and of two special United Nations initiatives focused on nuclear disarmament: the Open-ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, which met in Geneva, and the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament at United Nations Headquarters. The theme has also been stressed at the Article XIV Conferences of States parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Most of the world is now looking at nuclear weapons through the same lens, and that offers an auspicious sign for future progress in disarmament.

The counter-current — representing those who still view nuclear weapons as an indispensable insurance policy and a status symbol — is hardly likely to alter the flow of the river. The general and growing abhorrence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is setting the stage for future progress in many related fields. It helps to clarify the vital need for progress in establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. I hope that that current will soon flow to a great hall where an international conference is being hosted on establishing that zone, as decided at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Shared concerns about nuclear weapons have served to expand cooperation among members of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones and cooperation in common multilateral arenas such as the sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Those concerns extend to the

proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, as well as the danger that they will be acquired by non-State actors. The Office for Disarmament Affairs has long been assisting States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) throughout the Treaty review process. And, through our assistance in implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), we are also helping to prevent the proliferation of such weapons to non-State actors. We view such work not as ends in themselves, but as part of a wider global effort to delegitimize and eliminate all weapons of mass destruction.

My Office has also been very active this year in implementing the Secretary-General's mechanism that has been activated to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Once again, international recognition of the terrible humanitarian effects of those weapons has helped to provide a common foundation for collective action to address such uses. While its tragic civil war continues, Syria's decision to abandon its chemical-weapons arsenal and join the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) were welcome developments. They may well have positive repercussions throughout the region, indeed the world. As of today, the same number of States — 190 — have joined the CWC as have joined the NPT.

In the field of conventional arms, the highlight of the year was undoubtedly the adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty in April. By establishing common standards for the regulation of international trade in such arms, the Treaty will help enormously to prevent destabilizing arms flows to conflict regions. It will help ensure that arms trade policy is more responsible in order to limit and prevent the humanitarian consequences currently surrounding that unregulated industry. In so doing, it will also create an environment more suitable to achieving economic and social development objectives. Already 113 States have signed the Treaty, and that number will surely continue to grow. In short, we are witnessing a new flow in the current towards universal norms governing the arms trade.

Another highlight this year was the Security Council's adoption in September of resolution 2117 (2013), its first-ever resolution devoted to the question of small arms and light weapons. The resolution underscores the vital need for cooperation and the exchange of information between United Nations peacekeeping operations, United Nations missions in the field, the relevant Sanctions Committees, groups

of experts and Member States. The costs of the illicit trade in small arms have included the prolongation of armed conflicts, the setting back of social and economic development, the aggravation of threats to peacekeepers, as well as regional instability.

Another aspect of that small-arms resolution deserves attention in the Committee, namely, its welcome recognition of the impact of armed violence on women and girls, and the necessity of addressing their needs in planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities. As has tragically been the case, the highest costs of both weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms are borne by the people, either through the destruction resulting from the use of such weapons or through the social and economic opportunity costs of massive military expenditures. For that reason, Member States have long recognized the importance of disarmament education, and it continues to be one of the core activities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament has trained nearly 900 public officials, mainly from developing countries, and this year another 25 diplomats are benefiting from what United Nations auditors have said is one of the most successful United Nations training programmes. I wish to express my appreciation to China, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan and Switzerland for hosting visits by the Fellows this year.

We have also focused our efforts on building up the technical skills of Government officials. For example, we conducted numerous workshops across Latin America and the Caribbean on stockpile management and small-arms and ammunition destruction. They were based on the international ammunition technical guidelines mandated by the General Assembly, as well as the International Small Arms Control Standards.

In addition to our training activities, we have produced 25 fact sheets written for the public on practically every issue we confront in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The fact sheets are excellent information tools that clearly explain the issues, provide historical context, explain the current status and describe the role of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in addressing them. We believe those and other such publications will be useful to civil society as they continue to make their own important contributions in the field of disarmament.

On 23 October, the World Future Council, in partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, will announce at United Nations Headquarters the winner of its Future Policy Award, which honours disarmament policies that contribute to peace, sustainable development and security. That is another constructive way to recognize progress in that field.

Much of the progress is taking place at the regional level, including through the work of the three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament — in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, and in Asia and the Pacific. Those regional centres reach out to local communities to help meet their needs, especially with respect to such priorities as combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as in security sector reform.

With respect to efforts to reform the United Nations disarmament machinery, I welcome the establishment of an informal working group in the Conference on Disarmament to focus on achieving an agreed programme of work.

Meanwhile, the recent adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty will also open up an opportunity for the Committee to reduce the number of its resolutions, especially with respect to various transparency measures in connection with the arms trade that will now be covered by the Treaty. Additionally, a group of experts on fissile material will soon help in identifying a path to open negotiations for the long-awaited treaty in that field. Expert advice is not in short supply in the Committee.

This year alone marked the conclusion of the work of three groups of governmental experts. The Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security agreed, *inter alia*, that international law, especially the Charter of the United Nations, was applicable in cyberspace. That is an important affirmation of the rule of law in that very sensitive field. The Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities was also able to produce a consensus report (see A/68/189), with recommendations focusing on transparency and confidence-building measures. The Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms offered some consensus

recommendations on ways to expand participation in the Register (see A/68/140).

Concerning those various groups, I have noticed a trend of reducing their size and the duration of their mandates while substantially limiting their resources. I view those trends as representative of a current in the Committee's work that is flowing in the wrong direction. I have seen similar currents at work elsewhere in the disarmament machinery, especially with regard to the limitation of expert-level meetings focused on the various protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. At the very least, the meeting of the First Committee during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly presents a good opportunity to affirm the value of experts in advancing disarmament objectives.

While those and other currents and issues will become increasingly apparent as we commence the work of the First Committee, I can only urge members to recall the words of William Shakespeare: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune". I have every confidence that the work of the First Committee will benefit from the rising tide of expectations throughout the world for progress both in disarmament and the regulation of armaments.

Please accept my best wishes in all the Committee's deliberations.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the High Representative of Disarmament Affairs for her statement.

Before opening the floor for statements in the general debate, I would like to remind delegations of the need to adhere to the Committee's practice of limiting statements to a maximum of 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. To assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, I will introduce a timing mechanism, by having a red ring around the speaker's microphone that will begin to blink when the speaker reaches the time limit. As warranted, I will gently remind speakers when they exceed the allotted time.

As mentioned at last week's organizational meeting (see A/C.1/68/PV.2), I encourage representatives who have longer statements to deliver an abbreviated version when speaking in the room and to provide their full statement to be posted on the First Committee web

portal, QuickFirst. I would also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed so as to allow for adequate interpretation.

At this point, I should remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed tomorrow, Tuesday, 8 October, at 6 p.m. Therefore, all delegations intending to take the floor that have not yet inscribed their names on the list are encouraged to do so promptly and before that deadline.

I would also like to take this opportunity to urge delegations to submit to the Secretariat, as soon as possible, the names of their respective members, for inclusion in the official list of participants in the sixty-eighth session of the Committee, which should be issued by 18 October. The deadline for submitting the information is Friday, 11 October, at 6 p.m. The names of participants submitted after that deadline can be included in an addendum to be issued after the conclusion of the Committee's work this year.

Delegations interested in monitoring media reports on our activities may wish to note that Press Officers from the Secretariat's Department of Public Information will be providing daily coverage of our proceedings, based on which they will issue press releases in English and French that will be posted on the United Nations website a few hours after each meeting.

Agenda items 89 to 107

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other Committee members on their election and to assure you of the Non-Aligned Movement's full cooperation.

NAM reiterates its positions on the entire range of disarmament and international security issues as contained in its summit and ministerial documents, including the 2012 Tehran Summit. In that context, I would like to highlight the Movement's views on some important issues.

This year's session is unique, as it takes place against the backdrop of the General Assembly's High-level on Nuclear Disarmament. NAM welcomes the reaffirmation by the Meeting that nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The high level of participation and strong

expression of support for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons was a clear manifestation of the critical importance of nuclear disarmament to international peace and security.

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 those issues, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

NAM reiterates its deep concern over the greatest threat to peace, namely, that posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States and NATO that set out rationales for the use or threat of use of such weapons.

The Movement also expresses its concern over the lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon States in accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. NAM once again renews its strong call upon the nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons without further delay, in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner.

The Movement also calls on the nuclear-weapon States to immediately cease their plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Until that goal is achieved, NAM reaffirms that all non-nuclear-weapon States should receive effective, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

While noting the convening of the International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, NAM recognizes the growing importance of humanitarian considerations as being among the fundamental global concerns in the context of deliberations on nuclear weapons. Ultimately, the highest priority of the international community is nuclear disarmament.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and reiterates its call on the

Conference to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. In order to impart a fresh impetus to global nuclear disarmament efforts, NAM calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament aimed at the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons prohibiting their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use, and providing for their destruction.

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

While welcoming the efforts made during the 2013 session of the Conference on Disarmament on its programme of work, as well as the Conference's decision to establish an Informal Working Group (CD/1956/Rev.1), NAM has taken note of the deliberations of the Working Group in its meetings during the 2013 session of the Conference. The Movement encourages all States to demonstrate the necessary political will so that the Conference on Disarmament may fulfil its mandate.

For its part, NAM stands ready to engage constructively on the United Nations disarmament agenda and the ways and means of strengthening the disarmament machinery. NAM reiterates its view that a special session of the General Assembly should be convened to address those issues.

NAM believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation reinforce each other and are essential for strengthening international peace and security. The legitimacy of nuclear non-proliferation measures stems from nuclear disarmament. Pursuing non-proliferation alone, while ignoring nuclear disarmament obligations, is both counterproductive and unsustainable. NAM emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

In the context of resolutions adopted by the Security Council in the areas covered by multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction, including resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011),

NAM underlines the need to ensure that any action by the Security Council does not undermine the Charter of the United Nations, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction, and international organizations established in that regard, or the role of the General Assembly. NAM cautions against the continuing practice by the Security Council of utilizing its authority to define the legislative requirements for Member States in implementing its decisions. In that regard, NAM stresses that the issue of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors should be addressed in an inclusive manner by the General Assembly, taking into account the views of all Member States.

NAM States that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) call for the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Treaty and the final documents of its Review Conferences. In that context, they express their determination to continue pursuing, during the 2015 review process of the Treaty, the realization of their priorities, in particular nuclear disarmament.

NAM is of the firm belief that non-proliferation policies shall not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, have access to, import or export material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. The Movement once again reaffirms the sovereign right of each State to define its national energy policies. NAM stresses that any decision on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle shall be made by consensus and without prejudice to the inalienable right of each State to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle.

NAM strongly rejects and calls for the immediate removal of any limitations and restrictions on the export to developing countries of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. In that regard, NAM stresses that the technical cooperation and assistance provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in meeting the needs of its Member States for material, equipment and technology for peaceful uses of nuclear energy shall not be subject to any conditions incompatible with its Statute.

NAM once again reaffirms the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities and the fact that any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities, whether operational or under construction, poses a great danger to human beings and the environment, and constitutes a grave violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the resolutions of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

NAM recognizes that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety and nuclear security rests with individual States. Any multilateral norms, guidelines or rules on nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the IAEA. The Movement emphasizes that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and nuclear security must not be used as a pretext or leverage for violating, denying or restricting the inalienable rights of developing countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

NAM calls on all nuclear-weapon States to ratify related protocols to all treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations incompatible with the object and purpose of those treaties, and respect the denuclearization status of such zones.

NAM strongly supports the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Pending its establishment, NAM demands that Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so, renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without precondition or further delay, and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Movement also calls for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources or devices and of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel. NAM also supports the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their serious concern over the long delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex) and urge the sponsors of the resolution to take all necessary measures to fully implement it without any further delay.

NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was to have been held in 2012, has not yet been convened, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The continuing delay in the convening of such a conference runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution. It also violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 Review Conference. We strongly reject the alleged impediments presented by the conveners as a reason for not convening the conference on schedule, and we urge them to seek credible assurances regarding the unconditional participation of Israel and to convene the conference without any further delay so as to avoid any further possible negative repercussions on the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT, its 2015 review process and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole.

NAM also stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which should, inter alia, contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Movement reiterates that if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all States signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to nuclear disarmament is essential. In this context, the ratification of the CTBT by Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq is welcome.

NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) note with satisfaction the effective operation of the CWC as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. They call upon all concerned possessor States parties to ensure the complete destruction of their remaining chemical weapons within the final extended deadline. They call for the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, without any discrimination or restriction. They also welcomed the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention.

NAM States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention consider that the Convention represents an important component of the international legal

architecture related to weapons of mass destruction. They recognize that the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention. They call for the resumption of negotiations to conclude a legally binding verification protocol and, in that regard, urge the party rejecting negotiations to reconsider its policy. They further underline the importance of facilitating, without restriction, international cooperation and assistance in the biological field, without discrimination, in conformity with the Convention.

NAM remains concerned at developments related to anti-ballistic missile systems and the threat of the weaponization and militarization of outer space, and calls for negotiations to begin in the Conference on Disarmament on a universal, legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. NAM calls for a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach within the United Nations to the issue of missiles. Any initiative on this subject should take into account the security concerns of all States and their right to peaceful uses of space technologies.

As information and communications technologies have the potential to endanger international peace and security, countering such emerging security challenges and reducing their risk is essential. The development of a legal framework to address these issues should be pursued within the United Nations, with the active and equal participation of all States.

NAM continues to affirm the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs. NAM expresses its concern about unilateral coercive measures and emphasizes that no undue restrictions should be placed on the transfer of such arms.

NAM remains deeply concerned over a wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons. NAM calls on all States, in particular major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited only to Governments or to entities duly authorized by them. NAM also underlines the need for the balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Tracing Instrument, and, in

this regard, stresses the key importance of the elements of international cooperation and assistance.

NAM stresses the importance of the reduction of military expenditures by major arms-producing countries, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and urges those countries to devote these resources to global economic and social development, in particular in the fight against poverty.

I wish to share with the Committee that NAM will introduce a draft resolution as a follow-up to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament. Its primary purpose will be to build on the universal support for nuclear disarmament. The draft resolution will contain the following three elements, among others: negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, the designation of 26 September as the international day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in 2018. In addition to this draft resolution, NAM will be submitting others, for which it counts on support from all countries.

Finally, the Movement emphasizes that the exercise of political will by all States is necessary for achieving concrete results. It is confident that with political courage and by working together cooperatively the First Committee can contribute tangibly to building a more secure world.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the 14 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of the full cooperation of our delegations. We also wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia. May I take this opportunity as well to express our appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, and the staff of her Office for their commendable work.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

A few days ago, our leaders gathered in the General Assembly for the general debate under the theme "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", as the international community commenced deliberations

on crafting a new global development agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals, which will expire in just under 1,000 days. Those discussions, which are of high priority for the small island developing States of CARICOM, served as a powerful reminder that peace and security are prerequisites to development.

The United Nations has no greater duty than to maintain international peace and security, thereby creating a stable and peaceful enabling environment for lasting development. The progressive reduction of armaments and the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament are of utmost significance in realizing those objectives. That confers particular importance to the work of the First Committee and injects a sense of urgency into our deliberations.

We are mindful, however, that progress in the area of disarmament continues to be less than ideal, and if we were to succumb to a pessimistic view, we would say that our progress to date has been discouraging. The reports before us record yet another year of unfulfilled commitments and stalled action on all matters relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization pointedly states:

“[n]uclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain high priorities. Yet there are no disarmament negotiations, no fissile material treaty, no entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty” (*A/68/1, para. 57*).

We acknowledge the complexity of the security environment and the impact it has on the disarmament agenda. The challenges of international terrorism, the rise of non-State actors, new proliferation threats and the persistence of conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, and of regional rivalries and disputes all have complicated our disarmament efforts. In the face of those challenges and in the pervading climate of mistrust, we cannot allow inertia to take root. We must find new ways to minimize the daunting challenges and continue to pursue disarmament efforts relentlessly, with perseverance and greater political will.

That political will was observed last April when, through concerted action, the General Assembly adopted the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (resolution 67/234 B). CARICOM States are pleased to begin this sixty-eighth session with the knowledge that 113 Member States have signed the Treaty since its opening for signature on 3 June, and seven

have ratified the instrument to date. We take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the coalition of Governments, international organizations and civil society that succeeded in delivering the ATT, as well as to Ambassador Peter Wolcott of Australia and Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina, who ably led the process of negotiations. We remained convinced that the Treaty can contribute significantly to reducing the suffering of many of our citizens and countless people around the world, especially women and children, who are living daily under the deadly and devastating impact of the unregulated trade in conventional weapons.

That conviction underpinned our active engagement throughout the negotiating process. We are also proud of the fact that 13 of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community have signed the Treaty and that three are among the seven States that have ratified it to date. CARICOM is committed to working with our partners, including civil society, to ensure the early ratification, entry into force and full implementation of the Treaty. International cooperation, particularly the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building, is of vital importance in the ratification and implementation phase, and we are therefore gratified at the ongoing efforts in that regard.

We have long held the position that the real success of the ATT lies in its effective implementation. To that end, we strongly supported and promoted the inclusion in the Treaty of a secretariat to oversee its implementation. We therefore reiterate the desire and readiness of our fellow member State — Trinidad and Tobago — to host the ATT secretariat and request the support of the global community for that candidature.

The illicit trade in small arms and their associated ammunition continues to be a major concern for CARICOM. Such weapons continue to fuel armed violence in the region and undermine the sustainable development of our countries. We therefore welcome recent positive developments in fighting those phenomena, including the outcome of the 2012 Review Conference and the inclusion of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the ATT.

We also take special note of the recent high-level meeting of the Security Council on small arms (see S/PV.7036) and the adoption of a resolution on the matter (resolution 2117 (2013)). At the same time, we are mindful of the need to sustain the political will and momentum to achieve significant progress in our

efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Our delegations are convinced that strengthened international assistance and cooperation, border controls and the sharing of best practices should be emphasized and that full account should be taken of the link between security and development.

As such, we look forward to the convening of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms in June 2014. While CARICOM States continue to address the problem, we welcome initiatives at the bilateral and multilateral levels that have assisted us. In that context, we acknowledge and commend the valuable work being undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which, as we heard earlier from the High Representative, supports and assists CARICOM States with capacity-building measures, including in the critical areas of stockpile management and destruction operations.

The issue of nuclear disarmament is important to all States regardless of their size or military or economic status. Simply put, the implications of nuclear catastrophe are troubling to all States because of the capacity for global annihilation that the arsenals of nuclear weapons represent. We remain convinced that it is only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that international peace and security can be guaranteed.

Our delegations therefore call on nuclear-weapon States to respond to the desire of the overwhelming majority of States for prompt and effective measures to pursue the goal of full and verifiable disarmament in a time-bound framework and as a matter of urgency. As we prepare for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we join in calling on those States to enhance transparency on all nuclear weapons as an essential confidence-building measure and stress the need for the full implementation of the concrete actions leading to nuclear disarmament in the conclusions and recommendations adopted at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT.

We welcome the historic High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, which was both timely and opportune in generating momentum and greater public awareness around the issue. Our delegations support the calls made during

the meeting of the convening of a follow-up high-level international conference in five years, as well as for the commencement of negotiations on a convention banning nuclear weapons.

CARICOM member States regard the NPT as the bedrock of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime; and we make no distinction between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under article VI of the NPT. By the same token, while underscoring the right of all States to peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with article IV of the NPT, we insist that the right must be accompanied by the commitment and obligation to comply with the verification and safeguard provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We reiterate the importance of the universality of the Treaty and call on the States currently outside the NPT framework to accede to the Treaty and place their facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

A practical step in building confidence in the non-proliferation regime is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, under the Treaty of Tlatelolco, has served us well in our region. However, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to withdraw the reservations made based on the interpretative declarations they issued when they signed the additional Protocols to the Treaty.

We believe that the establishment of such zones should be replicated in other parts of the world where none currently exist. We are indeed disappointed that the conference mandated for 2012 on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons was not held. We urge all parties to take the steps necessary to ensure the early convening of the conference. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) constitutes a major plank in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We welcome the recent ratification by Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq, bringing us closer to the entry into force of the Treaty. The success of the Treaty depends on its universality and verifiability, and in that context, we urge ratification by the remaining annex 2 countries to enable its entry into force.

For us in the CARICOM region, the CTBT is not only an instrument aimed at promoting the disarmament agenda, but one which has tremendous capacity,

through the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization's programme of assistance to develop our capacity in the areas of seismography and early-warning signals to detect earthquakes and tsunamis.

We are deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation, intentional or unintentional. The consequences would be global, long-term and truly calamitous for human health, our environment, our development, security and/or food resources, which underscores the urgent need for a ban on those weapons. We welcome the growing global attention to the matter, including the first-ever meeting of Governments to discuss the issue, held earlier this year in Oslo. Our delegations look forward to participating in the follow-up conference in Mexico in February 2014.

Our delegations remain supportive of actions to improve nuclear security and safety. The Fukushima Daiichi incident has served as a wake-up call, as a reminder of the importance of ensuring the highest standards of nuclear safety and ensuring effective and well-coordinated responses to nuclear incidents. Bearing that in mind, CARICOM reiterates its strong opposition to the shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea. Notwithstanding the assurances given with regard to those shipments, we remain concerned about the devastating and long-term impact that any incidents relating to such shipments could have on the region. The dialogue, within the context of the IAEA, on measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation and waste safety is timely and important.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses a threat to global peace and security. CARICOM believes that access by non-State actors to weapons of mass destruction is best avoided through the total elimination of those weapons, as well as the strict adherence of the international community to the three non-proliferation regimes — the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

As States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, CARICOM member States condemn unreservedly the recent use in Syria of chemical weapons, which is a gross contravention of international law, including the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

CARICOM countries have benefited from IAEA support to strengthening our capabilities through the

sharing of best practices and transfer of technology; help from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in providing specialized training in emergency response to deliberate or accidental use of chemical agents; and assistance from the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs and the BWC Implementation Support Unit in improving detection and diseases surveillance capabilities in the region — all in support of our national and regional efforts to fulfil our obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

CARICOM attaches high importance to the participation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and, in particular, to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict. We are fully supportive of the annual resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (see resolution 67/48), an initiative originally piloted by Trinidad and Tobago, and we look forward to its adoption this year by consensus, as in previous years. We also welcome the Secretary-General's first report (A/68/166) on that important initiative. Special note is taken of the actions being pursued at the national and regional levels, as well as within the United Nations system to promote the participation of women. The inclusion of strong provisions for gender-based violence in the Arms Trade Treaty is of particular significance.

We find ourselves with a fortuitous opportunity to redirect our dialogue and to jump-start our negotiations to make meaningful progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, bearing in mind that without peace and security, the international community's efforts to secure meaningful socioeconomic development will be stymied.

We therefore welcome the report (A/68/514) 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 and hope that the contributions of that group will assist efforts aimed at breaking the 16-year deadlock in the multilateral disarmament machinery. As we deliberate during the coming weeks, let us keep at the forefront of our actions the Secretary-General's words of wisdom from last week's High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament that "success would strengthen international peace and security. It would free up vast and much-needed resources for social

and economic development. It would advance the rule of law” and “remove a layer of fear that clouds all of human existence” (see A/68/PV.11, p. 3).

Mr. Bylica (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, for taking up this important post and pledge our full support. I would like to highlight a couple of issues of key importance for the European Union.

Effective multilateralism, prevention and international cooperation are the three main goals of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The EU remains committed to treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and promotes universal adherence to and full implementation of all non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions.

Recently, we have witnessed positive developments underlining the importance of the United Nations as a fundamental framework for effective multilateralism and international cooperation.

In this context, the EU warmly welcomes the adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly (resolution 67/234 B). It is the outcome of a comprehensive and inclusive seven-year process within the United Nations. The Treaty sets robust and effective common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms and provides a new multilateral framework for transparency and accountability in that trade. It will prevent arms from reaching those who want instability and conflict, who commit atrocities and violate human rights and international humanitarian law. When effectively and globally implemented, the ATT will contribute to more responsible and transparent international arms transfers. By signing and ratifying the Treaty, States can sustain the international momentum generated by the ATT.

EU member States are playing their part. They are all signatories to the Treaty and national ratification procedures are either complete or well under way. Regulating international arms trade is a global undertaking. Therefore, it is crucial to turn the ATT into a truly universal treaty. The EU, for its part, intends to continue to play an active role in promoting the early entry into force and effective implementation of the Treaty, inter alia by enlarging its assistance portfolio

with a dedicated ATT implementation assistance programme for third countries.

We welcome the fact that the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in The Hague in April 2013, took place in a positive atmosphere. It conducted a thorough review of the functioning of the Convention and adopted a consensus report containing an ambitious and substantive forward-looking agenda for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The final report included a reference to Syria in the political declaration. The first-ever presence of a Secretary-General of the United Nations at a review conference underlined the high interest of the international community in the issue of chemical weapons, disarmament and non-proliferation. Having allocated 12 million euros thus far, the EU will continue to support the activities of the OPCW.

The European Union continues to attach high importance to the further strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention and its full implementation. Through its Council decision adopted last year, the EU actively promotes the universality and national implementation of and full compliance with the Convention.

We remain deeply concerned that the international community continues to be faced with major proliferation challenges by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Those challenges must be addressed in a resolute way. In this context, the EU underlines the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, including in cases of non-compliance.

The EU welcomed the investigation launched by the Secretary-General into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria, and its report on the events in Damascus on 21 August 2013, which presented reliable evidence confirming that a large-scale chemical attack was perpetrated on that day with the use of sarin gas. The investigation illustrates the viability of the Secretary-General's mechanism as an important instrument.

The European Union welcomes Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the OPCW Executive Council decision of 27 September 2013 on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, as they represent a major step towards a robust, sustainable and unified international response to the crisis in Syria. These important

decisions provide for the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria, impose a binding declaration and verification regime on the Syrian Arab Republic and demonstrate the will of the international community to respond to threats posed by these weapons of mass destruction. Legally binding and enforceable, resolution 2118 (2013) qualifies the use of chemical weapons as a threat to international peace and security, urges the regime to comply with its obligations, condemns the attacks of 21 August, calls for accountability for that crime and envisages a forceful international reaction in the event of non-compliance. We reiterate our readiness to support actions foreseen under the resolution of the Security Council and the decision of the OPCW Executive Council. The EU remains in close contact with the respective secretariats in order to stand ready to receive requests for EU support with resources and funding.

The EU deeply regrets that, despite the resolution of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Syrian pledge of May 2011 to the Director General to respond positively and without delay to the Agency's request to resolve all outstanding questions and the renewed calls by the Director General, Syria has yet to provide the necessary cooperation. We call upon Syria to fully comply with the resolution. The EU is deeply concerned that the Agency has had to postpone the 2013 physical inventory verification and urges Syria to enable the Agency to carry out the verification as soon as possible.

The EU strongly condemns the third nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, conducted on 12 February 2013, which is an outright violation of its international obligations under Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2087 (2013). The EU deplores the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's decision to choose the ill-advised path of provocation and isolation, in defiance of the international community's united condemnation of its use of ballistic-missile technology on 5 April and 12 December 2012, in direct violation of Security Council resolutions. We remain seriously concerned about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's uranium-enrichment programme and the ongoing construction of a light-water reactor at the Yongbyon site. The EU stresses that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is bound by its international obligations, as set out in several Security Council resolutions, and by its IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement. We urge

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with them fully, unconditionally and without delay. The EU demands that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, including its uranium-enrichment programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and refrain from any further provocative actions and statements. Those activities represent a threat not only to regional but also to international peace and security.

The EU remains deeply concerned about Iran's nuclear programme. The recent report by the IAEA Director General illustrates once again that Iran persists in violating IAEA Board of Governors and Security Council resolutions by, inter alia, continuing to significantly expand its enrichment capacity, continuing to accumulate enriched uranium and continuing its heavy-water activities. At the most recent meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, the EU expressed its deep concern that, owing to the continued failure by Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues, in particular those related to the possible military dimensions, the Agency was unable to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities, and therefore was not able to conclude that all nuclear material in Iran was in peaceful activities.

The EU noted that November 2013 will mark two years since publication of the annex entitled "Possible Military Dimensions to Iran's Nuclear Programme" in the report of the Director General in document GOV/2011/65, and that two years will be an important juncture at which to assess substantive progress on this issue and to consider what further action could be needed from the Board, should no progress have been made by that point. In that context, we take note of the remarks by the Iranian President (see A/68/PV.6) related to greater cooperation, and we hope to see that translated into concrete actions.

Our objective remains to achieve a comprehensive, negotiated, long-term settlement that would build international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, while respecting Iran's legitimate right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in conformity with the NPT and in compliance with Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors resolutions. The EU fully supports the ongoing efforts of the E3+3 Governments, led by the High Representative, to seek a diplomatic solution to the

Iranian nuclear issue. The EU urges Iran to demonstrate its commitment to resolve the long-ongoing nuclear issue by constructively engaging with the E3+3 during the talks in Geneva on 15 and 16 October.

The EU reaffirms its resolve to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The EU continues to regard the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT, and as an important element in the further development of nuclear-energy applications for peaceful purposes. The EU emphasizes the importance of universalizing the NPT and calls on States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and, pending their accession to the Treaty, to adhere to its terms and pledge commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament.

The EU reaffirms its commitment to and stresses the need for concrete progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and arms control, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the NPT. We welcome the considerable reductions made so far, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest arsenals, and encourage those States to achieve further reductions.

The EU reiterates the priority of upholding the NPT. Our objective for the whole NPT review cycle is to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and to achieve tangible and realistic progress towards the goals enshrined in the Treaty. With a view to attaining that goal, the EU will continue to promote a comprehensive, balanced and substantive implementation of the forward-looking 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan, which is our common road map to the 2015 Review Conference.

The EU strongly supports the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference with regard to the Middle East and has made concrete efforts aimed at its implementation. In addition to sponsoring two seminars on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in 2011 and in 2012, we stand ready to further support the process. We regret the postponement of the conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East,

which was scheduled to take place in 2012. The EU continues to fully support the ongoing preparations for a successful conference, particularly the tireless efforts of its facilitator, Ambassador Laajava of Finland, and his team. We call on all States in the region to urgently and proactively engage with the facilitator and the co-conveners with the aim of enabling the conference to be convened as soon as possible this year, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between the States of the region.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and is a top priority for the European Union. We reaffirm our strong support for the rapid entry into force of the CTBT. We welcome the final declaration adopted on 27 September 2013 at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT and underline the importance of the implementation of the concrete measures that were identified in it. The entry into force of the CTBT is a crucial practical step for systematic and progressive efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, we call on all States to uphold a moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty. We reiterate our call for action by those States that have yet to sign and ratify it, in particular those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty.

Strengthening the safety, security and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space is a key priority for the European Union. The EU thus welcomes the study by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189), pursuant to resolution 65/68. We express our gratitude to its Chair, Mr. Viktor Vasilev of the Russian Federation, for his efforts and leadership.

In 2007, the European Union launched an initiative for an international code of conduct for outer space activities. The proposed code promotes transparency and confidence-building measures consistent with the study by the Group of Experts. In May 2013, in Kiev, the EU and the Government of Ukraine co-hosted open-ended consultations on the draft Code of Conduct, which enabled an extensive exchange among participants, who put forward their comments and suggestions. Following those consultations, the EU has prepared a

revised draft, which is proposed for further discussion at the next round of open-ended consultations, to be held from 20 to 22 November in Bangkok. The EU calls on all interested States to continue to engage in the process towards an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.

Another clear priority for the European Union is the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of 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. Such a treaty constitutes an urgent necessity in the field of nuclear disarmament as a complement to the NPT and the CTBT. National security concerns, while legitimate, can and should be addressed as part of the negotiation process rather than as a prerequisite. All EU member States supported resolution 67/53 of the General Assembly.

The Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with its mandate, has a crucial role to play in the negotiation of 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 CD/1956/Rev.1 will lead to concrete and tangible results in that regard. The EU reaffirms its commitment to engage in substantive discussions on all the core issues on the CD agenda. In line with our longstanding commitment to the enlargement of the CD, we strongly support appointing a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership.

Last year several initiatives were launched in the General Assembly concerning nuclear-disarmament negotiations, including its decisions to convene a High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, which took place in New York last month, and to establish an open-ended working group under resolution 67/56.

The European Union stresses the need to do everything possible to prevent the risks of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. In that context, we call for full compliance with obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009) and improved nuclear security for high-activity radioactive sources. The EU emphasizes the essential role of the IAEA in that context, particularly through its Nuclear Security Fund, to which the EU makes significant contributions.

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

I apologize for going a couple of minutes over the allotted speaking time.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the members of the League of Arab States, I would first like to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on chairing the First Committee at its sixty-eighth session. We are certain that your outstanding experience and qualities will make a significant contribution to the success of our work. And I would like to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his remarkable efforts, as well as the members of the Bureau.

At the outset, I would like to express the support of the Arab Group for the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Arab Group would like to reiterate its position on disarmament and international security, and our belief that lasting peace, security and stability cannot be achieved globally so long as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that threaten our world exist. We must therefore ensure that humankind is delivered from such weapons and devote the huge sums that are released as a result to development instead. We believe that decisions agreed on within a multilateral framework, under the Charter of the United Nations, are the only sustainable way of dealing with disarmament and international security issues. The Arab Group therefore reiterates its appeal to all States to renew and implement their individual and collective commitments to multilateral cooperation, and its conviction as to the role the United Nations should play in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament.

We also reiterate our belief in the importance of the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee as the essential multilateral forums on disarmament under the mandate established in 1978, at the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament (see S-10/2), at which nuclear disarmament was considered to be our top priority. In that regard, we commend the holding of the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament

on 26 September, and we hope that the Meeting, and the support for nuclear disarmament reiterated in the various statements made during the Meeting, represents a first step towards a convention banning the acquisition, possession and use of nuclear weapons. In order to achieve our common goal of nuclear disarmament, we reiterate our support for the proposal made by the Non-Aligned Movement, calling for 26 September every year to be designated international nuclear disarmament day. We likewise support the appeals for the adoption of a global treaty banning the possession of nuclear weapons and for the holding of a high-level conference to consider progress in that area.

The Arab Group will continue to participate positively in the international nuclear-disarmament movement. We have begun taking an active part in all the multilateral forums that deal with that issue. It should be noted in that regard that all Arab States have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and submitted their nuclear installations for examination under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Arab Group believes that the NPT is the fundamental basis for the international multilateral disarmament regime. We reiterate that, in order to maintain international peace, the three pillars of the Treaty, including the inalienable right of all States to conduct research and development and acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, as stated in article IV of the Treaty, should be considered on an equal footing. The Group reiterates that this right should conform to States' legal commitments and with their agreements with the IAEA.

The Arab Group's appeal for a treaty with a universal ban on nuclear weapons is based on its commitment to the principle of nuclear disarmament, since such a ban is a top disarmament priority, as asserted at the first special session of the Assembly on disarmament. In that regard, we reiterate that the United Nations disarmament machinery should consider the special sessions on disarmament as a point of reference and one that cannot be modified or amended except through the convening of another special session. The Arab Group supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that calls for the holding of a fourth special session on disarmament.

Once again, the Arab Group calls for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world, including in the Middle East. The Committee

will recall that the States parties to the NPT agreed unanimously at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on the need to organize, before the end of 2012, a conference aimed at denuclearizing the Middle East and making it a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, as also provided for in Security Council resolution 1985 (2011) and many General Assembly resolutions, so that the Middle East might be on a par with other regions of the world. The Arab Group reiterates the urgency of implementing that decision on the Middle East as soon as possible, so as to achieve regional and international peace and security. This is integral to the Arab States' national security, particularly in the context of Israel's continued refusal to take part in the Conference or even to accede to the NPT and submit all of its nuclear activities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system.

Making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is a collective responsibility. The Arab Group has made its contribution in that regard. On behalf of the Group, Libya has submitted a report to the United Nations Secretariat on the efforts being made by the Arab Group in this area. Other responsible parties should call for the holding of a conference on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which has been postponed a number of times for very feeble and unjustifiable reasons. Those parties must therefore play an active role in ensuring that this frequently postponed conference finally takes place in 2013, with no further delay and with the participation of every country in the region, so that a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction can be established in the Middle East in the framework of the plan of work established at the last NPT Review Conference, which will be reconvened in 2015. The responsibility of parties is reviewed and monitored by Member States, since everybody is responsible for guaranteeing the implementation of international agreements.

International civil society, non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, researchers and scientists should also play their role in mobilizing international public opinion regarding the need to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The Arab Group reiterates that it has the necessary political will to ensure that the conference on that issue will be successful. We also reiterate that the situation currently prevailing in the Middle East should not be a pretext for further postponing the holding of such a conference.

That would be a step backwards and would block all efforts to make the region non-nuclear. We believe that linking the denuclearization of the Middle East to the peace process as a precondition is illogical. Rather, making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone is a necessary precondition for regional peace, stability and security. It is also a vital basis for ensuring that there is trust between the parties. It would be in line with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the issue, including Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991), and would put Israeli nuclear installations under IAEA safeguards.

We welcome all initiatives and efforts being made to support and accelerate the process of making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, particularly the Egyptian initiative that was announced recently, during the current session of the General Assembly. It calls upon States of the Middle East and the five permanent members of the Security Council to submit official letters to the Secretary-General stating their support for the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and an appeal to the States that have not yet done so to adhere to the relevant international instruments and agreements.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral forum for negotiations in this area, should be able to play its role. We reiterate the belief that the current situation is due not to any shortcomings in the Conference itself, but to an absence of political will. Thus, we call for maintaining the vital role that is played by the Conference on Disarmament. It is our hope that the ongoing efforts that are being made to establish parallel mechanisms and the unofficial work of the Conference will lead to a consensus that will allow the Conference to begin work as soon as possible on the four issues on its agenda, namely nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. These are all interrelated parts of a single agenda on nuclear disarmament and cannot be dealt with individually.

We firmly believe that the uses of outer space should be limited to civilian activities. International agreements in this area have played a positive role in that regard. They also play an important role in prohibiting the use of weapons of mass destruction and military activities in outer space.

There is a recognition, however, that the current legal instruments are no longer sufficient. We would therefore like a committee to be set up within the Conference on Disarmament that can deal with this issue in the context of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The Group would also like to draw the Committee's attention to the diligent efforts made by Ambassador Wolcott to secure the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The Arab Group worked effectively in the context of the Conference at which the ATT was adopted. The brotherly country of Morocco dealt with the working group that drafted the preamble to and goals of the ATT. We support the control of the arms trade in order to maintain national, regional and international peace and security and reiterate that the implementation of the ATT must be in line with the legitimate rights of States to self-defence and to preserve their territorial integrity, as well as with the inalienable right of people living under occupation to free themselves and determine their own future.

In conclusion, the Arab Group would like to highlight what it considers to be the priorities among the issues to be discussed in the First Committee during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We do understand that our programme of work is extremely difficult, but that should not limit our ambitions. On the contrary, it should lead us to make further efforts to ensure respect for the principles of justice and non-selectivity. Those principles are essential to ensuring the necessary political will for the success of the Committee's work. The Arab Group reiterates its commitment to work alongside the other members of the Committee to deal with all the issues relating to disarmament and international security. Thank you, Sir, and I do apologize for my lengthy statement.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group.

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the First Committee for the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The African Group is particularly delighted to have you steering this meeting. We believe your vast experience on the issues before us at this session will guide our debates and negotiations. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. The African Group remains committed to the

work of this Committee, and we want to assure you of our full cooperation in the course of our deliberations on disarmament and international security.

The Group aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia.

During the General Assembly's sixty-seventh session, there were renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of disarmament and international security issues. Indeed, the Group notes that the period between 2012 and 2013 contained two Conferences on the Arms Trade Treaty, two meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the process that led to the recently concluded High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11).

Aside from regular statutory actions by the General Assembly, those meetings and events — including next year's fifth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention — all serve to remind us of the growing challenges to issues of disarmament and international security. We must therefore seek an appropriate multilateral approach to address those issues through constructive debates, deliberations and negotiations, the acceptable norms established by the Assembly.

The Group continues to underscore the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security and restates that there are no substitutes for a multilateral approach to addressing global disarmament issues, in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, the African Group welcomes the opportunity to express its views regarding some of the issues affecting global security.

The African Group reiterates its support for complete nuclear disarmament as the ultimate prerequisite for world peace and security. No Member State in the

African Group is a nuclear-weapon State. The Group recalls the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba in 2010, which makes Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African territory by, *inter alia*, preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of nuclear explosive devices.

The African Group acknowledges the useful purposes served by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT and by addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in its region and in other regions of the world. We reiterate that the continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons does not necessarily guarantee security but affirms the probability and risks of their future use. Our world, including outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The presence of nuclear weapons on the planet constitutes an existential threat to global peace and the survival of the human race. The Group commends NAM's initiatives on that critical challenge to international security and welcomes the just-concluded High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, held on 26 September 2013 (see A/68/PV.11).

In the light of the foregoing, the African Group endorses the road map proposed by NAM as follows. First, we should endorse the early commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, and use or threat of use, and on their destruction. Secondly, we should designate 26 September every year as an international day to renew our resolve to completely eliminate nuclear weapons. Thirdly, a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament should be convened in 2018 to review the progress made pursuant to the High-level Meeting. We invite all Governments and civil society, academia and media to join hands in making this road map a reality.

Nuclear-weapon States should support the goal of nuclear disarmament and work for the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in fulfilment of the relevant multilateral legal obligations and the agreed global norm of a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. To ensure that, the Group stresses the need for the nuclear-weapon States to cease further modernization, upgrading, refurbishment and extension of the lives of their nuclear weapons

and related facilities, with a view to prohibiting their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling and transfer, all with a view to working to achieve the complete elimination of those weapons.

The Group continues to reaffirm that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The African Group also supports, as a high priority, the call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Group calls on nuclear-weapon States to de-emphasize dependence on nuclear weapons for security and considers unacceptable any doctrine justifying their use. While measures such as de-targeting, de-alerting, decreasing operational readiness and reducing the current number of nuclear weapons are steps in the right direction, it needs to be stressed that those concepts alone should not be mistaken as a substitute for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The African Group notes the concern expressed during the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference about the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 2010 action plan. We reiterate the need for all of us to abide by the spirit and letter of the Treaty.

The African Group strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Pending its establishment, the Group urges Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT nor declared its intention to do so, to renounce any possession of nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT without precondition or further delay.

The Group expresses deep concern at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, due to have been held in 2012, has not yet been convened, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The continuing delay in convening the conference runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The group urges the unconditional participation of all States in the Middle East, including Israel.

The African Group calls on the remaining States that have not ratified the Biological Weapons

Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so without delay. The States that have not ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention as an arms-control agreement that outlaws the production, stockpiling and use of such weapons should immediately commence the process and ensure speedy ratification.

The African Group stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States in that regard. The CTBT hopes that further development or proliferation of nuclear weapons will be halted. The Group therefore welcomes the convening of the eighth ministerial Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held on 27 September 2013, but regrets that the Treaty has not yet entered into force, almost 30 years after the conclusion of negotiations. The Group supports the international community's ongoing commitment to promoting a treaty that could serve as a threshold for promoting the process of nuclear disarmament. We encourage annex 2 States, in particular those that have yet to accede to the NPT, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

The African Group joins other Member States in reaffirming the importance of the Conference on Disarmament, not only as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, but one which could be useful in unlocking the impasse in nuclear-disarmament negotiations. We wish to reiterate the urgent need for the Conference to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. In that regard, the Group notes all the efforts and proposals in the Conference, as well as the adoption by the Conference of the programme of work for the 2009 session (CD/1864), on 29 May 2009 — which was not implemented. A reinvigorated Conference on Disarmament should be supported so that it can deliver on its objectives.

We also need to work to enrich the level of deliberations in the Disarmament Commission and in the First Committee. The Group stresses the importance of the United Nations disarmament machinery and emphasizes the significance of preserving and strengthening the nature, role and purpose of each part of that machinery.

The African Group welcomes the Assembly's adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2013

“to elaborate a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the international transfer of conventional arms” (*resolution 67/234 A, third preambular paragraph*).

The Treaty should be implemented in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States, not just the major international producing and exporting States.

The full and balanced implementation of the Treaty is achievable with the cooperation of all. The Group recognizes and reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The Group acknowledges that an unregulated conventional arms transfer system fuels the illicit trade and, in some cases, leads to unfettered access and unauthorized use by non-State actors. No one is immune to their indiscriminate use by unauthorized individuals and/or groups. The Group urges major arms suppliers to ratify the Treaty and upholds such ratification upon its entry into force. The Group wishes to encourage Member States to address the gaps created by the unregulated transfer of conventional arms and calls for no undue restriction to be placed in the way of the sovereign right of States to acquire conventional arms for self-defence.

The African Group remains deeply concerned over the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa.

With the successful conclusion of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, we continue to emphasize the importance of a well-balanced, full and effective implementation of that Programme of Action. The Group stresses that international cooperation and assistance is essential to its full implementation. The Group looks forward to the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, in 2014, and promises its full support for the Chair-designate in ensuring a successful outcome.

Finally, the African Group wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and transparency

in addressing international disarmament and security issues. We believe our deliberations in the coming days should be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and enhance the course of peace. The African Group will submit two draft resolutions, that on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and the draft on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. For those, we seek the support of all delegations.

Mrs. Morgan (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on behalf of my delegation, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and the rest of the members of the Bureau on their election. We are convinced that under your leadership, we will successfully fulfil the work of this important Committee.

This Committee has the responsibility to more efficiently address the challenges facing the international community that threaten collective security. Our work begins in a worrying context and under the dark shadow of the terrible scenes of suffering caused by the use of weapons of mass destruction in Syria and the necessary consideration of the existence of those inhuman weapons.

Mexico supported the decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that established an unprecedented plan to destroy promptly the Syrian chemical stockpiles, under the control and supervision of that organization, in order to dismantle, neutralize and destroy such weapons in their entirety by the first half of 2014. It takes into account the existence of the norms prohibiting chemical weapons and strengthens the importance of multilateral mechanisms in the area of disarmament.

Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention is an important step that underscores the urgency for all States, without exception, be party to that Convention, complying with all the commitments and obligations contained therein.

Just as the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons is essential, so too is the elimination of nuclear weapons. For Mexico, the possession of nuclear weapons deserves the same condemnation and disapproval as the possession of chemical or biological weapons. Their very existence endangers humankind, and the lack of concrete progress on nuclear disarmament is a historical irresponsibility. We therefore welcome the recent holding, for the first time in the history of the

Organization, of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly dedicated solely to nuclear disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), on 26 September. The participation of high representatives of 70 nations is a sign of the international community's outcry urging the United Nations to make concrete progress in the area of nuclear disarmament.

We welcome the work of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which successfully met in Geneva and which will submit its report to the Assembly during this session. The existence and work of the Group demonstrates once again that the international community is not willing to be held hostage by the interests of a few when it comes to advancing nuclear disarmament.

We must reiterate once again that a collective global security system to ensure sustainable peace cannot be based on the threat of use or use of force or on the stockpiling and modernization of weapons of mass destruction, as is the case of nuclear weapons.

We will always underscore the fact that disarmament has a direct impact on humankind's peace and development.

In March, 127 countries met in Oslo to discuss the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons with representatives of international organizations, scientists and representatives of civil society. Mexico will host the second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, in Nayarit, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, on 13 and 14 February 2014. The meeting will allow us to continue deepening the knowledge of the disastrous effects of nuclear weapons, particularly the long-term humanitarian impact on the economic, health, environmental, food safety and human displacement spheres. We hope that all Members of the United Nations will participate in the conference at Nayarit.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest multilateral successes of the last five years, which Mexico welcomes, was the General Assembly's adoption in April of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (resolution 67/234 B) and its opening for signature on 2 June. As proof of Mexico's commitment to the Treaty, on 25 September we deposited our instrument of ratification. We welcome the fact that 113 countries have signed the ATT and seven have ratified it. Those figures are certainly encouraging. Mexico calls on all

countries to sign and ratify that historic Treaty as soon as possible to achieve its early entry into force and to make a declaration of provisional application in order to further its implementation.

Mexico urges all States to take advantage of the beginning of the new review cycle for the period 2014-2018 for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in particular the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to promote synergies that support the complementarity between the ATT, the Programme of Action and similar processes, and to strengthen regional and global measures for cooperation in the fight against the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. That will contribute to building a strong international institutional architecture to prevent the negative impact of the illicit trade and trafficking in such weapons on peace and security worldwide, especially on directly affected populations.

In closing, I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to an undeniable fact. There is a small group of States that are not part of the main international instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction or of indiscriminate effect. We all know that it is only a minority of States that are not part of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, that have not banned chemical weapons or biological weapons, that have not adhered to the Conventions on the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines or cluster munitions. They are a minority who seek to continue nuclear testing and a minority who are arguing in favour of the possession of those weapons. For them, Mexico makes an appeal to the entire international community to put an end to that irregular situation. I call on those States that have refused to take solid steps towards disarmament and non-proliferation to do it now, to do it today. The voice of the majority of States and of humanity should not be overshadowed by the interests of a few.

Mr. Sano (Japan): Mr. Chairman, at the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the important First Committee. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Last month, I was appointed to the post of the Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. It is my great pleasure

to come back to the disarmament community. I look forward to working closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and all other colleagues to carry out meaningful tasks.

The overall objective of disarmament is to achieve a safer world with fewer weapons, and I believe we can advance disarmament without hindering any State's national security. Although disarmament is not an easy task that can be achieved overnight, now is the time to combine our efforts to make progress in disarmament, for the following reasons. First, in the light of the current financial difficulties worldwide, disarmament merits fresh attention as a means for easing budgetary constraints on all States. Secondly, since disarmament itself is useful as a confidence- and security-building measure, progress would bring us to a higher state of mutual confidence. Thirdly, upholding the aspiration towards disarmament will allow every State to stand on high moral ground.

To advance disarmament as such, it will be of the utmost importance to generate political will. I believe that our leaders demonstrated strong political will last month during the General Assembly's High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). Both the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan participated in the meeting to demonstrate their firm political will in favour of disarmament. In the same week, the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, of which my country is a member, held its foreign ministers' meeting in New York and expanded its commitment with two new members, Nigeria and the Philippines, and wholeheartedly welcomed them.

We regret and share in the wide-ranging frustration stemming from the long stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. That disappointment can be understood as a cause behind several initiatives outside the Conference, such as the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, the Group of Governmental Experts on recommendations concerning a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and the Assembly's High-level Meeting.

Since Japan values the distinguishing characteristics that colour the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, we will undertake our best efforts to push the Conference forward as we assume the third presidency in 2014. I would like to stress that, as my Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, stated at the High-level Meeting,

the time has come for both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to overcome their differences and unite in their efforts as a whole to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That is fundamental, and I cannot imagine the Conference on Disarmament moving forward without such an approach.

While working on the Conference's impasse, we also need to keep up our efforts with respect to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of disarmament and non-proliferation. Building upon substantive discussions in the first and second sessions of the Preparatory Committee, in the third session we must consolidate our deliberations into a recommendation. We hope that we will receive constructive contributions from every State. Japan also looks forward with high expectations to the report of the five nuclear-weapon States on their nuclear disarmament efforts at the same session and urges them to continue their efforts in the run-up to 2014.

Based on our historical background, the people of Japan sincerely hope for and support the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. At the same time, I would also like to stress that disarmament should take into account, through a sufficiently practical approach, the impending risks that the international community faces. That is a point that my Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fumio Kishida, expressed in his statement at the time of the High-level Meeting. In that respect, Japan will once again submit to the First Committee its resolution entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". We strongly hope that our draft resolution gains as many sponsors and supporters as possible.

Japan also looks forward to the upcoming discussion to be held in the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which will commence its work next year. It will not only contribute to realizing this indispensable building block on the path to a world without nuclear weapons, but also give further impetus in the field of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

The nuclear and missile development programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including its work in uranium enrichment, are serious violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions. A nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is totally unacceptable, as it represents a

grave challenge to the international non-proliferation regime centred on the NPT, and seriously undermines the peace and security of North-East Asia and the international community as a whole. Furthermore, in April this year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced that it would readjust and restart its Yongbyon nuclear facilities. If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes such actions, it will be another violation of the agreements under the Six-Party Talks and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We risk the reversal of our efforts taken in favour of a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with all its international obligations and commitments, including Security Council resolutions and the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks. We once more strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to completely abandon all its nuclear weapons and missile development programmes in a verifiable and irreversible manner.

The Iranian nuclear issue is also of serious concern to the entire international community. Japan urges Iran to comply with the demands of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also call upon Iran to take substantive actions for the peaceful resolution of the issue. Japan expresses its expectation for meaningful negotiations with the E3+3 Governments and with the IAEA, hoping that the negotiations will soon lead to concrete results.

Japan expresses its deep concern over the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria, which wounded many and caused a considerable death toll that included innocent women and children. The use of chemical weapons is not permissible under any circumstances. To that end, we welcome the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), which reinforced the decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as a basis for concrete steps to eliminate such inhumane weapons. Japan strongly urges the Government of Syria to comply faithfully and fully with the chemical-weapons elimination programme set forth in the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW and the Security Council resolution. We will also continue to support the efforts that are being made by countries and organizations to ensure that chemical weapons will never be used again.

With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), it is important to implement the report of the

Third Review Conference and to adapt to the changing international security environment. Japan has played a constructive role to achieve the objectives of the CWC. In addition, Japan has committed to making the fullest possible efforts to complete the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China and has achieved significant progress.

As for the Biological Weapons Convention, Japan welcomes the successful convening of the Meeting of Experts held in June in Geneva under the effective leadership of the Chair, Ms. Judit Körömi. As a member of the JACKSNNZ — Japan, Australia, Canada, Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand — group, we will continue our efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Convention while taking into consideration developments in science and technology and dual-use issues.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (resolution 67/234 B) by the General Assembly on 2 April was undoubtedly an epoch-making success in the history of arms control. Now it is time to consolidate our efforts to bring the Treaty into force as soon as possible and to begin implementing its provisions in order to achieve our goal, which includes the reduction of human suffering. Japan is determined to continue its active role towards an early entry into force of the Treaty, the establishment of an effective secretariat and, above all, the promotion of international efforts to better regulate the global arms trade and combat the illicit transfer of conventional weapons.

Finally, I would like to conclude my statement by stressing that Japan has worked for a long time in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation education to raise awareness about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Based on our historical experience, we always bear in mind the humanitarian aspect of disarmament. Since this is a universal issue that affects every member of this community, we hope that it will be addressed in an inclusive and universal manner and that the process will remain open so that any State can follow it. We believe that the discussions will become a point of departure, and Japan will redouble its efforts in raising awareness of this issue.

Mr. Elshakshuki (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee as well as the members of the Bureau, and to wish you every success in your tasks.

Libya aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group and Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Libya reiterates its intention to continue honouring all its commitments, in accordance with the international instruments on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It cooperates transparently and with full credibility with the international community in support of the efforts deployed at the regional and international levels to implement the provisions and texts of those international agreements and protocols and to create an environment conducive to eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Following the adoption of the new Constitution and the formation of an elected Government that enjoys full legitimacy, Libya is fully committed to reconsidering some of the international instruments relative to disarmament to which it has not yet adhered and to take the necessary steps to do so.

There can be no doubt that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only certain guarantee against their use or threat of use. Pending the realization of that objective, Libya emphasizes the importance of initiatives leading to the voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapon programmes. In this respect, we recall that Libya, in 2003, voluntarily renounced its nuclear programme and its programmes for all other weapons of mass destruction. It is our hope that other countries will emulate Libya, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. Libya is working to complete the destruction of its chemical weapons within the time frame determined by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Libya takes this opportunity to call on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments, as stipulated in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT; the 13 practical steps listed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference; the action plan included in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference; and the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). The Millennium Declaration emphasized the intention of the international community to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open in order to realize that noble objective, including the possibility of convening an

international conference to determine ways of avoiding nuclear threats.

The NPT, the CWC and the Biological Weapons Convention are important international instruments to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The failure to adhere to those instruments still poses a great threat to global peace. Once again, we call on all States to abide by those instruments and to ensure that they are implemented effectively. By adhering to the CWC and showing its willingness to renounce all its chemical weapons, Syria will pave a path that would rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, it is about time that the international community put pressure on Israel to abide by the NPT, as the only nuclear State in the region that has not done so, especially since its nuclear facilities do not comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards.

We must intensify all diplomatic efforts, with the cooperation of all countries, in order to clarify the status of Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. We also emphasize the vital importance of the universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are all confident that implementing this convention in a tangible way will help create a world that is safe and free of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we stress the importance of abiding by CTBT criteria and maintaining the moratorium on nuclear tests or any other nuclear detonation until that Treaty comes into force. We call on all Member States to refrain from taking any measures that go against the provisions of the Treaty, to commit to abiding by the principles of the CTBT and to see to it that the Treaty does come into effect.

In accordance with articles I and II of the Treaty, Libya emphasizes the inalienable rights of all States parties to the NPT to research, develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. As stated in the Treaty, striking a balance between the duties and obligations of States is one of the most basic yet vital rules. Libya recognizes and supports strengthening the IAEA's important role and its safety measures and ensuring its effectiveness.

Libya reiterates its support for international efforts to establish more nuclear-weapon-free zones and other weapons of mass destruction, as a step in the right direction towards the speedy elimination of such weapons and the danger they pose to the world. In order

to ensure that, we urge the Secretary-General and other influential parties to undertake efforts to encourage all the States concerned to participate in the 2012 conference on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in an effective manner. We also encourage them to redouble their efforts towards implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That would ensure that the conference takes place before the end of this year, convincing all States in the region to take part fully in order to ensure that it is a success.

It is becoming more urgent for us to revive the multilateral mechanisms for disarmament, notably the Conference on Disarmament, which regrettably, has stalled, as a result of a lack of political will on the part of some member States. Libya calls for immediate measures to enable the Conference to carry out talks on nuclear disarmament by deciding on a draft nuclear-weapons convention and resuming talks towards a convention that would rid the world of all its nuclear stockpiles and fissile materials and establish a non-conditional and legally binding international instrument to provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States as to the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In accordance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, Libya supports the adoption of an international instrument to protect non-nuclear-weapon States from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Libya signed the Arms Trade Treaty on 9 July 2013 because it was convinced that, in accordance with international law, such weapons would not find their way to non-nuclear-weapon States, especially in conflict-affected areas of Africa.

Libya stresses that among the international principles that should be taken into account are the rights of States to self-defence, territorial unity and integrity, resistance against occupation, and self-determination. The application of double standards, for the purpose of exerting pressure or political blackmail, should be avoided. Libya would like to stress the importance of implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the necessity of working, on the basis of results already achieved, in order to implement fully the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, Libya emphasizes the fact that international and multilateral cooperation and serious political will are the two basic prerequisites for ensuring progress towards attaining the goals of disarmament and ensuring development, peace and prosperity for all.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Let me first of all join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in helping you fulfil your tasks.

The current session of the General Assembly is taking up its work against the backdrop of conflict in Syria. The United Nations Mission to Investigate Alleged Uses of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic has confirmed that chemical weapons have indeed been used on a relatively large scale. That constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law, which Switzerland condemns with the greatest firmness. It is vital to prevent new abuses and not to allow serious crimes to go unpunished, regardless of the alleged perpetrator. Therefore, in June 2012, Switzerland took the initiative to request that the matter be referred to the International Criminal Court, which request was supported by 57 States and remains entirely relevant today.

Switzerland considers the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Convention an important and promising step towards making that instrument universal. We welcome Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decision by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the destruction of the Syrian chemical arsenal, and we call for the swift implementation of the agreed measures.

Switzerland is also deeply concerned about the use of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines in Syria. It is crucial for all parties to the conflict to respect all of their obligations under international law, particularly the obligation to take all the necessary measures to protect the civilian population, as well as persons who are not or who are no longer taking part in hostilities.

The year 2013 has been marked by the conclusion of the Arms Trade Treaty (resolution 67/234 B). Adopted by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority, this instrument constitutes a significant success, crowning years of efforts to better regulate the international trade in armaments. It also fills a gap in the international legal system by establishing common

rules and principles in this area. It represents a major step in arms control, as States parties undertake to give a prominent role to international humanitarian law and human rights law with regard to authorization of arms transfers.

It is now essential that the Treaty quickly enter into force. Furthermore, achieving the objectives of the Treaty means that we must faithfully and effectively apply its provisions. Switzerland has prepared a model interpretative statement with regard to some of its provisions and would welcome the opportunity to study these issues in greater detail with interested parties.

Institutional support to the Treaty will also play an essential role in its implementation. The first meeting of States parties will have the prerogative to decide on the structure of the future secretariat. Regardless of its final form, responsibilities and configuration, Switzerland is convinced that establishing the secretariat in Geneva would yield significant benefits. Geneva provides an unrivalled network of United Nations offices, other international organizations, national representations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and university institutions with great expertise in security, disarmament, human rights, humanitarian work and trade matters. We are convinced that such proximity, together with the spirit of Geneva — which stands for peace, cooperation and innovation — would contribute to the successful implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. The recently launched ATT Network — a project led by NGOs and based in Geneva, whose purpose is to coordinate activities related to the promotion of the Treaty and to its implementation — underscores the role that Geneva plays in promoting this instrument.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieving a world free of such weapons remain the objectives that the international community must pursue with resolution and determination. Recent efforts have underlined that the use of nuclear weapons would have devastating, immediate and long-term effects that could not be effectively remedied. The humanitarian consequences would be unacceptable. We welcome the fact that the conference held in Oslo in March this year enabled the international community to deepen its understanding of the humanitarian consequences. The follow-up conference to take place in Mexico next year will provide the opportunity to explore the issue further.

It is clear from these discussions that nuclear weapons constitute a threat to both State and human

security. We continue to believe that we need to step up our efforts and take specific measures in the area of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. If nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation represent an imperative, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of joint endeavours in this area. Implementing fully the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and the outcomes of previous conferences, must therefore be a priority, particularly to ensure the success of the 2015 Review Conference. However, the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference, held earlier this year, has shown that numerous serious challenges remain. All States parties share an interest in moving resolutely forward in the coming months and in preserving the credibility of the NPT.

Meeting the challenges to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a shared responsibility of all States. The international community as a whole should stand firm in implementing the non-proliferation commitments and ensure compliance. The same collective effort is needed in nuclear disarmament. Non-nuclear-weapon States have a role to play in promoting and advancing nuclear disarmament. For their part, nuclear-weapon States bear the particular responsibility to step up their efforts in that area to ensure the long-term sustainability of the non-proliferation regime.

Finally, we welcome recent efforts to find innovative ways to find a solution to the paralysis affecting the United Nations disarmament machinery, which is blocking progress in the cause of nuclear disarmament. We especially welcome the positive results of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. We believe that deepening and developing some of the proposals put forward would bring additional value, and that such an exercise could complete and enhance other efforts being made in the area of nuclear disarmament.

We regret that the Conference on Disarmament has, again this year, failed to start negotiations, notwithstanding intensive agreed efforts and proposals drawn up by several Conference presidencies. At the same time, we welcome the furthering of the debate on revitalization that has taken place this year. The establishment of the informal working group mandated to produce a programme of work constitutes a promising development and demonstrates the willingness of the members of the Conference on Disarmament to emerge

from the stalemate. In that context, we encourage the Conference to act on the proposal to establish a subsidiary organ to improve its effective functioning by examining its methods of work.

We do hope that those efforts will be pursued and that they will yield positive results in terms of the revitalization of the disarmament machinery. We are convinced that it is crucial for the international community to have a functional Conference on Disarmament to address effectively challenges related to international security and disarmament. Switzerland will continue to actively follow the issue and to work for the revitalization of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We have just six minutes remaining before the end of the meeting. A delegation is asking to exercise its right of reply. I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to speak in right of reply.

Mr. Kim Jin Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Exercising the right of reply regarding the groundless comments made by the Japanese representative a few minutes ago, once again I would like to call the Committee's attention to the following matter regarding the nuclear issue — as the Japanese representative calls it — on the Korean peninsula.

First, we are a State party to the Outer Space Treaty and we have the legitimate right to the peaceful use of outer space. However, those legitimate rights, which we can exercise by launching our peaceful satellites, have been totally abused by the Security Council. After we launched our satellite, Japan also launched

a satellite, using ballistic-missile technology. The Security Council condemned our use of that technology in launching our satellite. As far as we know, that is the only way to launch satellites into outer space. Japan has also used such technology in launching its satellite, but the Council did not question or call any kind of attention to Japan, which is total nonsense.

Secondly, the representative of Japan has questioned our third nuclear test. That test was completely in exercise of our sovereignty in order to protect that sovereignty and the legitimate right to the peaceful use of outer space.

The Japanese representative also commented about the Six-Party Talks, saying we have to come back to those Talks and must comply fully with the agreements reached in the Talks. That is also complete nonsense. Japan has no moral or legal obligations to comment on the Six-Party Talks. States participating in the Talks have commented that Japan as a country has not complied with any of its obligations. The Six-Party members have put Japan aside from the Talks. The Japanese representative has also urged us to comply with our international obligations and commitments, including Security Council resolutions and the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. As we have recently clarified, those comments are in total violation of our sovereignty and independence and of our right to the peaceful use of outer space.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): Before closing, I wish to remind delegations that the list of speakers in the general debate will be closed tomorrow, 8 October, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.