



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

First Committee

4th meeting

Thursday, 9 October 2014, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Rattray (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 87 to 104 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

Mr. Maope (Lesotho): Mr. Chair, I congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of my delegation's full support.

I wish to align myself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

The resolve to form the United Nations was propelled by a determination to create a world of peace and prosperity. Whereas the regime of the Charter of the United Nations has so far done its part to prevent a third world war, thereby fulfilling one of the noble aspirations of our great forebears who converged on San Francisco in 1945, the world still faces security challenges beyond humankind's imagination. Warfare has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Loosely organized terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham continue to declare war on States and innocent civilians.

What is most disheartening is that terrorist groups and other non-State actors massacre people and wreak havoc and immense destruction, not with their bare hands, but using weapons that they do not produce or manufacture. How these weapons end up in the hands of non-State actors is a topic that is not often discussed. It is time critically to address that matter if we are to

make progress in the disarmament field. The ongoing merciless killings of innocent people in the Middle East and elsewhere are a stark reminder that we need to act collectively to discharge the moral responsibility that rests on us to ensure our people are safe, secure and free.

Our commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has not been translated into concrete action. The existing massive stockpile of nuclear weapons, as well as the modernization of such weapons, cast a shadow of doubt on our prospects for attaining a nuclear-weapon-free world in the immediate future. Nuclear weapons create a false sense of security. Their possession breeds mistrust and heightens tensions between States. For as long as they exist, the risk of their use remains. The enormous loss of life and catastrophic destruction to the environment that could be caused by the detonation of nuclear weapons is known to all.

The sixty-ninth session presents us with an opportunity to further make progress in our efforts to build a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the historic commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September is a manifestation of the increasing global efforts by Governments, international organizations and civil society to focus attention on nuclear disarmament. We should redouble our efforts during the current session and beyond to ensure that we rid the world of these horrendous weapons.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in 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-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

14-56318 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



It is in this context that we welcome the outcomes of the Oslo and Nayarit International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We look forward to the third Conference, which will be held in Austria later this year. We are optimistic that these Conferences will generate the necessary momentum to push for a legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons.

While working towards the goal of banning nuclear weapons and eventually abolishing them, we must emphasize that full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is critical. Accession to the NPT by countries that remain outside the scope of the Treaty should not be postponed any longer. By the same token, we call for the immediate holding of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons in accordance with the 2010 NPT Review Conference outcome.

Furthermore, we reiterate that all States are entitled to and must enjoy their right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as articulated by the NPT. However, this right must be exercised in a safe and secure environment and with due regard to the non-proliferation obligations of parties under the Treaty. Cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is absolutely essential. We must all accept the IAEA safeguards to verify that nuclear activities serve only peaceful purposes. At the same time, we must respect the independence and expertise of the Agency and refrain from politicizing it or unduly interfering in its activities. As we prepare for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, we must do so with a unity of purpose. The opportunity presented by that Conference should not be lost. Our deliberations at the Conference should be guided by a spirit of frankness and mutual understanding without the acrimony that often characterizes our intergovernmental deliberations.

It is 18 years since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), but it has not yet entered into force. There is no doubt that the entry into force of the CTBT will halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their modernization. We call for the universalization of the Treaty, and in particular, ratification by the remaining annex 2 States. While we welcome the pronouncements by some States that they are committed to ratifying the CTBT, we wish to emphasize that such pronouncements will be meaningless unless they are accompanied by concrete action towards ratification.

Humankind derives no comfort from the impasse in the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The time has come for these bodies to make progress. We call on the CD to agree a balanced programme of work and to implement it. Equally important is the need to review the membership of the CD in order to make it more representative. In the same vein, the failure of the UNDC to reach consensus during the past few cycles causes great concern to my delegation. We hope that Member States will rise above their individual interests and emerge with a consensual outcome in 2015 when a new cycle begins.

Conventional weapons continue to bring untold sorrow to us in the developing world. About a decade ago, we embarked on a path aimed at reducing humanitarian suffering by bringing the global conventional arms trade under control. We demonstrated a collective resolve to achieve that goal by overwhelmingly adopting the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in April 2013. Today, it is gratifying to note that the ATT will enter into force on 24 December, following the attainment of the required number of ratifications. The entry into force of the ATT will not be an end in itself. A fair, balanced, yet robust implementation of the ATT will be critical in order to transform the international arms trade and achieve the goals of the Treaty.

Despite the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, small arms and light weapons continue to claim scores of lives on a daily basis in Africa and elsewhere. Lack of predictable funding for the implementation of the Programme is a big impediment. Lesotho reiterates its call to give more attention to international cooperation in implementing the Programme for establishing a fund for such implementation.

Allow me to conclude by pointing out that the citizenry of this world is keenly interested in how we collectively map the way forward, reduce the divergence of the views and approaches that we harbour on varying issues, and consolidate our efforts in addressing the challenges that we face. We have common risks and common opportunities. Let us work together if we are to make the progress we hope for and need.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the

First Committee for this year, and the members of your Bureau. We are confident that with your experience and diplomatic talents, you will contribute to the successful conduct of our meetings. I assure you that our delegation fully supports you in your work.

Iraq aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2) .

My Government reiterates its serious commitment to supporting international efforts to achieve a world free of weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons, and the universality of the treaties and conventions relative to those weapons. Iraq firmly believes that it is our collective responsibility to respect and implement the conventions, agreements and international arrangements relating to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, because they are very important in strengthening international peace and security.

The Iraqi Constitution states:

“The Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq’s international obligations regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production, and non-utilization of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and shall prohibit associated equipment, materiel, technologies and communications systems for use in the development, manufacture, production and utilization of such weapons.”

Iraq deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material on 7 July, thereby becoming the 150th State party to the Convention. In addition, Iraq is a party to a number of major disarmament agreements and conventions. It was one of the first countries to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in 1969, and is party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system; the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel

Mines and on Their Destruction; and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has become an additional threat that is no less destructive than nuclear weapons. We must therefore seek firmly to implement all the relevant resolutions on combating the proliferation of those weapons because their negative impacts are clear to all. They hinder the development of communities and play a dangerous role in armed conflicts. Many countries are alarmed that these weapons so easily find their way to terrorist groups because of the weakness of export controls. In this respect, Iraq welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The matter of anti-personnel mines and remnants of war, such as explosives and cluster munitions, is a major problem that claims numerous victims in communities that have suffered conflicts. They also have a destructive effect on the environment and economic development. Iraq therefore calls for the intensification of all ongoing international efforts to provide support and assistance and for an exchange of experiences with the countries affected by such weapons. Iraq is one of the countries most affected by mines and cluster munitions and is making every possible effort to rid Iraqi cities of those remains. We deposited our instrument of accession to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its five Additional Protocols on 24 September, on the margins of the work of the General Assembly at its current session.

Iraq reiterates its support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Iraq calls for the immediate implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which called for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to the plan of action contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which is one of the main pillars in this respect. Iraq calls for the implementation of Security Council resolution 487 (1981). Security and stability in the Middle East require the removal of all weapons of mass destruction, and notably nuclear weapons, in accord with Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly annually

adopted by consensus, and the resolutions of the IAEA General Conference.

The failure of international efforts to convene the Helsinki conference in December 2012 to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction represents a flouting of the commitments included in the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It will impact negatively on the credibility of the NPT and on the review of the Treaty and the non-proliferation system in general. The delay in holding the conference *sine die* on unacceptable pretexts is the responsibility of the United Nations, the sponsoring States and the convening States in their capacity as depositaries of the Treaty. We therefore call on all concerned parties to fulfil their obligations by setting a date for the holding of the conference before the end of this year, and determining its agenda in accordance with the decisions of the Review Conferences of 1995 and 2010.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. Despite the increase in regional crises, terrorist threats and the danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, for more than approximately 17 years, the Conference has been unable to play the negotiating role assigned to it in the conventions on disarmament. We must therefore step up our efforts to reach an agreement on a balanced, comprehensive programme of work that will take the concerns of all member States into consideration. We express the hope that member States will reach an agreement on the programme of work at the 2015 session in order to attain the objectives to which we all aspire in the field of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, and which in the final analysis serve the purposes of international peace and security.

In conclusion, I wish the Committee every success and hope that it will achieve the results for which we all hope and consensus among all member States on the basic issues.

Mr. Eler (Turkey): At the outset may I congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. Rest assured that you have our continued cooperation.

Once again, the First Committee has started its work against a backdrop of myriad threats against international peace and security as violence and aggression continue to take their toll, mostly among

civilian populations. With an increasing common awareness that the human suffering in one part of the world will inevitably feed the sense of insecurity in other parts, I believe the Committee will also make great efforts this year to achieve tangible results.

As we have been faced with increasing global challenges to security and stability, often exacerbated by new technological advances, overall military spending continues to augment and there is a growing global trend to arm, whereas this Committee's primary and ultimate objective is disarmament, as well as non-proliferation. This stark contradiction further impedes the effective performance of the disarmament machinery.

We fully share the concerns regarding the danger posed by nuclear weapons to humankind and to nature. Our common aspiration remains a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Since the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, Turkey has continued to work with other Member States, international organizations and civil society to uphold this ultimate goal. We welcomed the first anniversary of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which was commemorated on 26 September, as an important event for awareness-raising.

Many representatives here have expressed or will express their respective countries' readiness to contribute further to a world without nuclear weapons. We concur with these strong expressions since they are encouraging this aspiration. Nevertheless, we believe that such expressions need to be complemented by concrete steps. The centrepiece mechanism towards that aspiration, namely, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), unfortunately does not function as effectively as we would wish. But we should keep our optimism and seek practical outcomes while sticking to our ideals.

Turkey believes that an equal and balanced treatment of the three mutually reinforcing pillars will solidify the integrity and credibility of the NPT regime. The extent to which the nuclear-weapon States are willing to fulfil their disarmament commitments impacts the NPT's success. At the same time, the strict adherence of all NPT States to their non-proliferation obligations also affects the credibility of the regime. We welcome in this respect the reports they have submitted to the NPT Review Conference and invite them to consider

measures to ensure further transparency without compromising security.

The right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy needs to be carefully upheld. Naturally, that right comes with relevant international obligations. On the other hand, some Member States still unfortunately remain outside the NPT regime. We support its universalization as well as its effective implementation in good faith and consistency.

We acknowledge the international safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency as the fundamental tool in global non-proliferation efforts. In this context, Turkey recognizes the need to further strengthen and universalize the Agency's verification authority. We regard the comprehensive safeguards and the Additional Protocol of the Agency as an indispensable verification standard, and call on all States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify and implement them as soon as possible. We believe that strengthening the safeguards system and promoting the Agency's role and finances are also essential for the sustainability of the NPT regime in the long run.

In this understanding, Turkey actively participated in the fifty-eighth General Conference of the Agency last month. It is our firm belief that States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology, as provided for in the NPT. In our view, that would also contribute to the further strengthening and universalization of the NPT regime. We must also ensure that all requisite steps are taken so that there will be no diversion of nuclear programmes from peaceful to military uses.

On the other hand, Turkey strongly believes that the cessation of all nuclear weapon tests constitutes an indispensable measure to achieve both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, we stress the centrality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in achieving these objectives. We welcome the ratification of the CTBT by Iraq, Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Niue. The international community has spent enough time waiting for the Treaty to enter into force. We once again encourage all States, especially the annex 2 States, to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

Creating conditions for a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a major investment towards a safer world and

undiminished security for all. Turkey remains deeply concerned by the possible humanitarian catastrophes for humankind should these lethal weapons ever be used, intentionally or accidentally. We therefore supported and actively participated in the Oslo and Nayarit International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We look forward to making further contributions at the third meeting, in Vienna in December.

Turkey is part of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), along with 11 other countries from around the globe. The NPDI is proving to be a true middle-Powers initiative that promotes the implementation of the consensus outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We continue to make our contribution towards the advancement of the goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

As the current NPT review cycle is coming close to an end, we share the frustration of many Member States as well as international civil society concerning the non-implementation of the consensus action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Up to the next Review Conference in 2015, we should have been able to build on the existing Treaty basis, but commitments have been overlooked and promises for the present review cycle have not been upheld.

I am specifically referring to our promise to the world to hold an international conference in 2012 for the establishment of a Middle East zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. Turkey supports the establishment of internationally recognized and effectively verifiable zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction wherever feasible. In this respect, we welcome the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia by five nuclear-weapon States, providing legally binding assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Treaty parties. We encourage full ratification of the treaties and protocols of all five regional zones.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has a special responsibility in the contemporary disarmament agenda. We should strive to maintain the relevance of the Conference by fulfilling its fundamental task. In this regard, we continue to hope that the Conference will resume substantive work as early as possible. The CD needs to be revitalized in order to reassume the unique negotiating role with which it is mandated. Turkey believes that the Conference possesses the

mandate, membership and rules of procedure to effectively discharge its duties.

We welcomed the re-establishment of the informal working group as an indication of a shared goal regarding the need to come up with a consensual programme of work urgently. Moreover, it is our firm belief that starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in Geneva will be a significant building block. It will further pave the way for parallel advances in other core agenda items, including nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction are important components of the global system against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Turkey does not possess any such weapons and reiterates its call for wider adherence to and effective implementation of these Conventions. We actively support efforts to promote the implementation and universalization of these instruments.

Bearing in mind that the CWC is the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, Turkey will continue to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), particularly in regard to the dismantling of the Syrian regime's chemical weapons inventory. Turkey condemns the systematic use of chemical weapons on civilian populations in Syria, which is an abhorrent violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law and a threat to international peace and security. We are extremely concerned that the second report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission indicates the Syrian regime's involvement in these chemical attacks. Therefore, Turkey believes that Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), on the verification and elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons inventory, will be fully implemented only when the regime's entire capacity, including non-declared chemical facilities, is dismantled.

Ms. Vlădulescu (Romania), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

Very often we speak about the threat posed by nuclear and chemical weapons. However, there is another type that is equally threatening, and that is conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons. Due to the mass suffering they cause, these weapons are even regarded as weapons of mass destruction in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa. In this context, the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries. There is a well-documented relationship between their illicit trade, terrorism and organized crime.

In that connection Turkey welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December. Turkey supported and actively participated in the process from its outset, and thereafter signed the ATT. The Treaty's real strength will be in its universalization and implementation. We therefore invite all States, in particular the lead exporters, to sign and ratify it.

Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the United Nations and other forums for the establishment of effective norms and rules aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Turkey remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We were therefore pleased that the 2012 Review Conference yielded results.

The First Committee is an important place for all of us to address the challenges, regrouped in seven clusters. Each cluster deserves particular emphasis, which is a common responsibility of us all together. We should uphold this responsibility. We hope that these deliberations will contribute to eliminating the obstacles standing in the way of a safer and more secure world. I wish to conclude by assuring the Chair of our delegation's full support and cooperation in bringing this session to a successful conclusion.

Ms. Golberg (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical, or biological, remain one of the most pressing challenges to global peace and security. The plain fact is that the price of an attack using one of those weapons — in human, political

and economic terms — is one which none of us can afford to pay. Working together to strengthen existing non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and norms is not so much a policy choice as a security imperative.

At the same time, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that all countries meet their international non-proliferation and disarmament obligations. The international community cannot and should not tolerate cases where States such as Iran, North Korea and Syria continually threaten regional and global security by failing to comply with their basic international obligations.

The upcoming year will feature a series of crucial challenges to the global non-proliferation and disarmament system. We must approach them with an unwavering commitment to concrete outcomes and progress. In a tense global context, this will require us to overcome our differences in order to advance our shared interest in preventing the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction and related materials, and therefore focus less on arms control and more on achieving disarmament objectives.

As at the 2012 and 2013 meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), our discussions in May took stock of progress in implementing the 2010 NPT action plan. It remains clear that significant work will be required in the coming months to ensure a successful outcome at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, but Canada remains optimistic that this is within our reach. Getting there, however, will require that all States make greater progress in implementing the 2010 action plan. This, combined with efforts to address outstanding cases of non-compliance, will be crucial to create the positive atmosphere required for a successful outcome at the 2015 Review Conference.

In this context, Canada continues to call as a matter of urgency for the commencement of the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Such a treaty would have significant value added for global security, including by formalizing existing unilateral moratoriums on fissile material production. We are pleased at the ongoing constructive work being done by the Group of Governmental Experts on this subject. It is an honour for us to serve as Chair. We look forward to the Group's final report, which will be submitted to the Secretary-General and General

Assembly next year. We believe that the report, drawing on the Group's substantive and technical discussions, will provide useful signposts for future negotiators.

(spoke in English)

Strengthening non-proliferation bodies and norms remains a priority. However, at the same time we cannot stand idle in the face of non-compliance that threatens to undermine these instruments and the security and stability they seek to guarantee. In this regard, Canada remains deeply sceptical of Iran's nuclear ambitions. We continue to believe that a nuclear-armed Iran would not only have devastating consequences for regional stability and security, but also undermine the integrity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is imperative that the international community take every diplomatic step required to ensure that Iran never acquires a nuclear-weapons capability.

Despite recent positive steps in the context of the P-5+1 joint plan of action, Iran's failure to engage in any meaningful way with the international community to address the long-standing concerns regarding its nuclear programme raises serious doubts regarding its true motives. Far greater assurances, in particular with regard to the military dimensions of the programme, are required from Iran to address the international community's legitimate concerns. These have been reflected in repeated findings by the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), notably in the latest IAEA Director General's quarterly report, of 5 September. We believe that any sustainable long-term solution will require neutralizing Iran's military nuclear capability and placing the strictest constraints on its nuclear programme.

The international community must also continue to put pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and refrain from all further provocations, including nuclear and missile tests. Unfortunately, over the past year we have witnessed continued proliferation activities on the part of North Korea, including recent missile tests and increased activities at the Yongbyon nuclear complex. These provocations threaten regional and global peace and security. We call on North Korea to cease its belligerent behaviour, resume adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and comply fully with its comprehensive nuclear safeguards agreement with the IAEA and with Security Council resolutions.

With respect to Syria, the destruction of the most dangerous chemical agents reminds us that the depravity of chemical warfare is still ever present. It remains incumbent on Syria to ensure complete compliance with its obligations under Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction by completing the destruction of its production facilities and clarifying the ambiguities that remain in its initial declaration.

The Chair returned to the Chair.

Finally, the use of sarin and chlorine gas by Syria against civilian populations constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law and cannot go unaddressed by the international community. Canada was pleased to co-sponsor the most recent draft Security Council resolution seeking to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. The international community must send a clear message to the rest of the world that those responsible for these and other serious crimes will be held accountable.

Turning to the issue of conventional weapons, we welcome the positive outcomes of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which under Mozambique's able leadership resulted in an ambitious forward agenda. More than 80 per cent of the world's countries are now bound by the Convention, the vast majority of States respect its norms, and casualties from anti-personnel landmines are at an all-time low. However, anti-personnel mines continue to be used in some regions of the world, so we cannot relax our efforts. We encourage all States that are not yet parties to join the Convention. Ending the era of anti-personnel mines is within our reach.

We also welcome the successful conclusion of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, in San José, Costa Rica. Canada firmly remains committed to the goals of the Convention and is in the process of ratifying it. Canada's implementing legislation, the proposed Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act, is currently under consideration by our Parliament. Canada has never used cluster munitions in its own military operations and has destroyed all of its stockpiles of these weapons. Our Government also remains fundamentally committed to addressing the humanitarian impact of these mines

and explosive remnants of war, contributing more than \$215 million towards this effort since 2006.

As technology evolves, and in the context of an uncertain global security environment, the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime is more important than ever. It is our hope that this session of the First Committee, within the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, will be productive and set us on a path towards meaningful progress in the year to come. Canada stands ready to support the Chair in this effort, and we are confident that under his able leadership we will succeed.

Mr. Al-Kumaim (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): May I congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the Committee at this session of the General Assembly. We feel sure that you and your team will give real added value to our work. May I also thank your predecessor, the representative of Libya, for his work in guiding us last year.

Yemen supports the statements made on behalf of the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

Overall, the world, the Middle East in particular, is suffering from instability. The economic and social situation is precarious. The failure of the goal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the weak implementation of other disarmament treaties have exacerbated the security and economic situation. Yemen believes that disarmament should be given top priority in the work of the United Nations, given its central role in the preservation of international peace and security. We confirm our support for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and we call for sustainable development for all peoples in the world.

Yemen deeply deplores the fact that we have not been able to have a conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as recommended in the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, despite the flexibility shown by Arab countries, which support the swift convening of such a conference. In view of its importance in making our area free of nuclear weapons, we call on the major Powers to redouble their efforts to ensure that such a conference is convened. The Middle East cannot live in peace and stability until we have ended the source of the main threat of nuclear weapons in the region. We call on Israel immediately to accede to the NPT and submit all its nuclear facilities to the

safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Yemen stresses the importance of General Assembly resolution 68/32, on the follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament. Yemen also supports the draft resolution to be submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement at this session. We call for implementation of the entire resolution, which calls for negotiations on a global treaty to prohibit the production, use and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, welcomes the designation of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and recalls the decision to convene an international high-level conference on nuclear disarmament, to be held by 2018 at the latest, to assess the progress made.

Yemen was one of the first States to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, given the impact of such testing on the environment and on people. In March, our Government agreed to ratify the Treaty and submit it to our Parliament for ratification. We call on all States that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so without delay. We reconfirm our full support for the great efforts made by the Preparatory Commission to speed up entry into force. We appreciate the support given to all States that have signed and are now ratifying the Treaty. Yemen adopted the Joint Ministerial Statement of Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in September.

Chemical weapons are some of the most devastating and destructive weapons for people and the environment. We must eliminate them. We thank the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for its work and assistance to Member States.

The adoption by the General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty was an extremely important milestone in achieving disarmament, but we are concerned about certain issues and, above all, about some of the ways in which it is being interpreted. It does not mean that countries should not be able to acquire conventional weapons in a proper manner. We call for universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty, and to that end Yemen has signed it.

There are also a number of instruments on conventional weapons. We want their goals to be achieved so as to ensure that social peace and sustainable development can be made possible for all peoples of the world. The Conference on Disarmament and the First

Committee are both extremely important in working towards disarmament in accordance with the mandates approved at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. We believe the Conference on Disarmament must be enabled to do its work. It is the sole multilateral negotiating forum to consider all the issues on disarmament. We trust that this session will lead to real successes.

Mr. O'Reilly (Ireland): First let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support throughout this session.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and with that delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/69/PV.2). I should like to add the following remarks in a national capacity.

I want to begin by welcoming a very positive development. This time next year when we gather again, the Arms Trade Treaty — the first legally binding instrument to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons — will be in force. We welcome its imminent entry into force. We have argued for a strong and robust treaty from the very beginning, working with other countries and with civil society to achieve that goal. Ireland remains committed to ensuring that irresponsible flows of arms, which destabilize States and contribute to violence, conflict and gross human rights violations, are stopped.

We are proud to be one of the first countries to sign the Arms Trade Treaty and among the first 50 States to ratify it, a year after the General Assembly voted by an overwhelming majority to adopt the Treaty. We must not be complacent, however. Entry into force is just the beginning. Effective implementation of the Treaty's provisions and universal membership are what will make a real difference and ultimately save lives. We would like to thank our New Agenda Coalition partner Mexico for hosting the first round of informal consultations on the necessary elements for a successful preparatory process leading to the First Conference of States Parties. We look forward to the second round of these important consultations, hosted by our European Union partner, Germany, next month.

The first-ever resolution by the General Assembly called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons and all weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The primary motivation behind that resolution was humanitarian — it

was recognition that weapons of mass destruction are a threat to the very survival of humankind.

The progress that has been made in relation to chemical and biological weapons has been significant. Through the determination and continued efforts of the international community, the overwhelming majority of States now agree that the possession and use of chemical and biological weapons in any circumstance are simply unacceptable and illegitimate.

It is precisely because of the success of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction that recent reports of the Fact-Finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons – which found compelling confirmation that chlorine was used systematically and repeatedly as a weapon in Syria earlier this year – are met with a sense of absolute revulsion and utter condemnation by the international community.

While welcoming as a positive step the fact that all of the declared Syrian chemical weapons have been destroyed, my delegation believes that these abhorrent crimes cannot continue and cannot go unpunished. We still recall the horrific images of children gasping for breath after inhaling sarin in August 2013 near Damascus – scenes that propelled the international community into action.

Just as the international community united to make chemical and biological weapons unacceptable and illegitimate and to halt the irresponsible trade in arms, Ireland believes that similar efforts must be pursued and that similar progress can and must be made in relation to nuclear weapons. After all, it is humanitarian concern that underpins the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the preamble of which recognizes

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

The obligation in article VI of the Treaty to

“pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control”

was clearly and unconditionally included in the NPT. It is an obligation that all States parties share. We believe that continuing failure to make progress on nuclear disarmament militates against our efforts to pursue non-proliferation. The legal obligation set out in article VI cannot be sidestepped and it cannot be ignored. It is unacceptable that 44 years after the NPT’s entry into force and 19 years after it was indefinitely extended, the parties to the Treaty have not yet elaborated the effective measures that article VI requires.

With this in mind, Ireland, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, submitted a working paper to the final Preparatory Committee meeting in an effort to promote long overdue discussions on those effective measures.

We wonder how the ongoing upgrading and modernizing of nuclear weapons can be seen as consistent with the commitment in the 2010 action plan to “pursue policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons”. (*NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol.I), Action I*)

Ireland welcomes the recent focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, which was of course the original motivation for agreeing the NPT. The Irish delegation has attended and participated in the fact-based discussions in Oslo and Nayarit, Mexico. These served to greatly increase our knowledge of both the consequences and the risks of a nuclear detonation.

Risks that are presented by the possible use of nuclear weapons, miscommunication, human error, increased launch readiness or systems failure are a major driver of our concern about nuclear weapons. That concern derives just as much from the ever-present threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons as from the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. Far from being a distraction for my delegation, the discussions have increased our knowledge about those effects and risks that are associated with nuclear weapons. We believe that the information and research on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons give rise to important policy considerations, given every Government’s duty of care in relation to the health and well-being of its citizens.

We look forward to the third international Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Vienna in December, and warmly commend Austria for taking this initiative in

such an open, transparent and inclusive manner. But more than that, the Vienna Conference, as we see it, is about strengthening the NPT. We hope that it will further promote the successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference next year.

My delegation believes that we must continue all efforts to fulfil our obligations under the three pillars of the NPT to make the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons a reality. We are frustrated that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force, and we call on the remaining annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. Last year, we welcomed the Open-ended Working Group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, as well as the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament. Ireland sees these meetings, which were mandated by a majority of States through the General Assembly, as a clear expression of a growing desire for progress on nuclear disarmament.

As we approach the 2015 NPT Review Conference, my delegation wishes also to express its support for the tireless efforts of Ambassador Laajava of Finland and all the stakeholders involved in discussions to convene a conference on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We strongly hope that the conference will take place soon as an important contribution towards the full implementation of the 1995 resolution.

Finally, in 1946 the international community recognized, for the sake of humankind, the necessity of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Nearly 70 years on, this necessity has not diminished. If anything, with increased knowledge of the risks involved, there exists a pressing duty of care for all Governments, especially given the impressive research carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research into the international response capacity in the event of a nuclear detonation. There is both a moral and a legal imperative to pursue collectively the interlinked goals of the NPT. For these reasons, my delegation will be looking to the 2015 NPT Review Conference with renewed ambition to ensure the obligations of the NPT and the 2010 Review Conference action plan are met. That includes real and tangible progress towards nuclear disarmament through the elaboration of effective measures under article VI, because later may simply be too late.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to begin my statement by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the

First Committee. I am confident that your diplomatic abilities and extensive experience will undoubtedly contribute to the success of the Committee's work and the achievement of its objectives. We reiterate our full cooperation to that end.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

International and regional disarmament efforts elicit hope and optimism for raising global awareness of the necessity to eliminate all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, which pose a primary threat to international peace and security. In view of our commitment to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international legitimacy as the fundamental pillars of our foreign policy, we attach special importance to strengthening the role of the United Nations in all fields, particularly with regard to issues related to international peace and security and disarmament. That is based on our belief that these issues are integral and that without them the world cannot enjoy peace and stability.

The promotion of international peace and security requires genuine political will and the strong determination of all States, particularly those in possession of nuclear weapons, to end their reliance on these and other weapons of mass destruction for the sake of their national security.

Despite the fact that many regions have succeeded in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, thanks to the cooperation of the countries of those regions and based on their belief in peaceful coexistence, we still find that the Middle East region defies all international and regional efforts to declare it a nuclear-weapon-free zone. That is due to the rejection by one State in the region, Israel, of any effort to that end. In spite of the successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly since 1974 on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as the resolution adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), no concrete action has yet been taken to implement the provisions of these resolutions.

In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expresses its deep concern at the continued postponement of the conference on the declaration of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East – which was supposed to be held in Helsinki in late 2012 –

because of Israel's rejection. We call for urgent action to convene the conference before the end of 2014, in view of its utmost importance and the commitment made thereto by the international community as a whole. Failure to hold the conference would run counter to the decision taken at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and cast strong doubt on the process of consensus in the field of disarmament. There is an urgent need for the declaration of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and Israel should not continue to reject the holding of such a conference against the will of the entire international community.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is of the view that it is imperative that the NPT States do not experience any doubts or concerns about the wisdom of accepting an infinite extension of the Treaty or even accession to it. These concerns will continue to arise as long as Israel remains a non-signatory of the Treaty.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses the importance of continuing the negotiations among the P-5+1 over Iran's nuclear programme, as well as the continuation of the negotiations between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran. A clear time frame should be set for those negotiations, and Iran should reassure the countries of the region and the international community that its nuclear programme is truly peaceful by allowing IAEA inspectors to carry out their mandate during their visits. On the other hand, my country reaffirms the inherent right of all States to obtain nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms the importance of the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in view of its continued efforts to reach a comprehensive disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. The Kingdom believes that the failure to eliminate all stockpiles of chemical weapons is a source of concern to all.

We have reviewed the report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme. The Kingdom greatly appreciates the efforts made by that organization and the United Nations mission and its group of experts on the ground in Syria, who all worked in exceptionally difficult circumstances. We greatly appreciate the

progress made in the transfer and destruction of the declared Syrian chemical arsenal.

However, this does not remove our concerns entirely, particularly in view of the ambiguity of the Syrian declaration of its chemical weapons. We have not yet been reassured that the Syrian regime is not in possession of remnants of these weapons. In addition, the persistent use of chlorine gas against the Syrian people further raises our concerns. We welcome the results achieved by the Fact-Finding Mission in its second report of 10 September on the chemical weapons attack that took place in Syria, which clearly indicates the systematic and repeated use of these weapons by helicopters, killing thousands of Syrians. This is strong evidence that the Syrian regime committed these actions, since it is the only party to the conflict in possession of helicopters. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urges the Committee to proceed with its mandate until the perpetrators responsible for these barbaric acts are brought to justice. Moreover, the Kingdom urges the Syrian regime to honour its obligations immediately and without procrastination, in accordance with the decisions taken in this regard.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia attaches great importance to the issue of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The Kingdom is of the view that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a starting point and basis for further efforts. These weapons are extremely harmful to the stability of countries and undermine their security. That has prompted us to take preventive and precautionary measures aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures and cooperation mechanisms among all countries to face this great danger.

It would be remiss of me not to express my appreciation of the efforts made by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) to control and prevent the provision of any type of support to non-State actors attempting to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery. We reiterate in this regard the importance of implementing the afore-mentioned resolution with a view to preventing access to such weapons by terrorist organizations and of intensifying the control on nuclear service providers to ensure the

non-provision of such services or assistance to illegal entities.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is of the firm belief that strong international will is capable of reaching rational solutions to all the problems that face us, and we place our trust in your confidence and wisdom, Mr. Chairman, to help us to reach these solutions.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Please allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. The Chinese delegation assures you of its full cooperation.

The scourge and tragedies of two World Wars and the shadow of the Cold War in the past century make people all over the world treasure peace and security more than ever. Nowadays, peace and development have become the principal objectives of our times. The trend of globalization has been strengthened. Countries are growing more and more interdependent. The world has become a community of shared destiny. On the other hand, we are still facing serious security challenges. The traditional security threats are far from being removed. Various regional hotspot issues are erupting at the same time. Non-traditional security threats – such as terrorism, extremism, cybersecurity breaches and the Ebola epidemic – are becoming more prominent, calling for joint international efforts to respond.

Recently, China's President, Mr. Xi Jinping, pointed out that China must attach equal importance to addressing the issues of development and security. China will pay attention not only to its own security, but also to collective security. China will seek to build up a community of shared destiny and urge all parties involved to seek mutual benefits and interests and common security. President Xi has also launched an initiative to seek common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. These are China's response to various security challenges in the new circumstances and are the fundamental principle governing China's participation in international security affairs.

Arms control and disarmament are closely linked to international security. The international community should make joint efforts to promote international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, focusing on the following aspects.

First, it must promote nuclear disarmament in a step-by-step manner and eliminate the risks of nuclear proliferation. Countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to make drastic reductions

in their nuclear weapons. The development of missile defence systems by certain countries that undermine the global strategic balance and stability should be abandoned. Regional nuclear issues should be resolved through dialogue and negotiations. The international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction should be convened at an early date. International cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be promoted, and an international nuclear security system featuring fairness and win-win cooperation be established.

Secondly, immediate measures should be taken to develop international norms and to ensure that all humankind benefits from the global public domain. A peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyberspace should be built. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) should negotiate an international legal instrument on outer space at an early date to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space so as to ensure its lasting peace and security.

Thirdly, conventional arms control should be further promoted and relevant legal regimes improved. The necessary measures should be taken to regulate the international arms trade and to combat illicit arms transfers. Relevant international legal regimes should be enhanced on the basis of balancing the legitimate military security needs and humanitarian concerns.

Fourthly, the existing multilateral disarmament machinery should be safeguarded and the work of the CD and the Disarmament Commission revitalized. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the role and authority of the CD are unimpeachable. States members of the CD should build consensus and enable the Conference to start substantive work at an early date on the basis of fully accommodating the concerns of all parties. The role of the Disarmament Commission should be brought into full play so as to provide its valuable advice on the work of disarmament.

China is dedicated to maintaining world peace and security and has actively participated in global security governance by promoting international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. China is a major participant in global nuclear governance. China has consistently advocated the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. It adheres to a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and honours its commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-

weapon-free zones. China has strictly implemented its relevant international obligations in the nuclear field. At the Nuclear Security Summit at The Hague in March, President Xi Jinping articulated China's approach to nuclear security, thus making its contribution to advancing the nuclear security summit process.

China supports efforts to fully promote the purposes and objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in all aspects and submitted its national report to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. China hosted a conference for the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) in Beijing in April, at which the five nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the Treaty. Recently, China hosted another meeting of the P-5 Working Group on the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms, at which agreement was reached on the main contents of the glossary and the follow-up arrangements.

China participates in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and supports the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the CD in accordance with the Shannon mandate. Together with the other four nuclear-weapon States, China signed the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone in Central Asia.

China has actively participated in the negotiation process of the Iranian nuclear issue and made important contributions to the conclusion of the joint plan of action and the ongoing negotiation of the comprehensive agreement. The Six-Party Talks are the only practical and effective way to resolve the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. Efforts should be made to restart the Six-Party Talks as soon as possible.

China is a major contributor to the destruction of chemical weapons in the world. China firmly endorses the purpose and objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, faithfully implements its obligations under the Convention, and advocates the thorough destruction of all chemical weapons, including abandoned chemical weapons.

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council resolutions, China's naval ships participated in the joint action of escorting shipments of Syria's chemical weapons. China also contributed to the verification of the destruction

of Syria's chemical weapons by providing financing, expertise and equipment assistance, making significant contributions to the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and the promotion of a political settlement of the Syrian issue. China is an active advocate of establishing rules and norms for the emerging security domain.

China is dedicated to preserving the security, stability and prosperity of cyberspace and has actively participated in United Nations and other multilateral processes to promote international regulations governing cyberspace. In June, China co-hosted an international workshop on information and cybersecurity in cooperation with the United Nations and proposed that principles of peace, sovereignty, co-governance and universal benefit should be observed in cyberspace. China actively participates in the work of the current United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on information security and the United Nations Internet Governance Forum. China also donated \$200,000 to the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on cybercrime.

China stands for the peaceful uses of outer space and is opposed to the weaponization of or an arms race in outer space. In June, China and Russia jointly submitted to the CD an updated draft of the Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects. We welcome the participation of all parties in the discussion and look forward to an early start of negotiations in the CD on the basis of that updated draft. China also participated in the multilateral consultations on a draft international code of conduct for outer space activities in a constructive manner.

China is an active supporter of the conventional and biological arms control process. China earnestly implements its obligations under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols and is dedicated to international humanitarian demining assistance.

China has hosted demining training courses for Afghanistan and Cambodia this year and is working on the delivery of mine-affected victim assistance to Laos.

China actively participated in the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty and is carrying out a review of issues related to the signing of the Treaty. China stands ready

to work closely with all parties to establish orderly and reasonable arrangements regulating the international arms trade.

China values the important role of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction in eliminating the threats posed by biological weapons and their proliferation, as well as promoting the peaceful uses of biotechnology. China supports efforts constantly to enhance the Treaty's effectiveness, authority and universality.

China will continue actively and fully to participate in the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process and make its due contribution to safeguarding world peace and security.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election and wish you great success in leading the work of the Committee. We are honoured to see a Caribbean brother as Chair. We also wish to thank the outgoing Chair, Ibrahim Dabbashi, for the efforts and dedication with which he led the work of the Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2) and that to be made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Nuclear-weapon States currently have about 20,500 nuclear warheads, more than 5,000 of which are deployed or ready to be used, while 2,000 of these are on high alert. Due to technological developments, a great number of these have a capacity that is 8 to 100 times greater than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We must therefore make parallel progress in the process of general and complete nuclear disarmament and in meeting nuclear horizontal and vertical non-proliferation objectives.

Nuclear disarmament, especially the elimination of nuclear weapons, is a priority objective of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. In this respect, at the second CELAC summit in Havana we declared the region a zone of peace. This declaration consolidates a long-standing regional tradition under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Venezuela vigorously calls on all nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their security doctrines and military strategies on the use or threat of use of these weapons against those that do not possess them. We reaffirm our hope for the negotiation and conclusion of a universal, binding and unconditional legal instrument with security guarantees for all non-nuclear-weapon States, with a view to the complete elimination of these weapons regardless of their type or geographical location.

Venezuela reaffirms its conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens the non-proliferation regime and peace and international security as an important contribution to nuclear disarmament. In this respect, my country appeals for the soonest possible convening of the international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We are concerned that the failure to hold the conference, which is an important and integral part of the final outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), could undermine the upcoming 2015 Review Conference. We therefore urge parties to hold the conference as soon as possible. The agreements to be reached there will be an important contribution to achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and a momentous step in the peace process in the Middle East.

Venezuela welcomes the high level of the participation and clear expressions of support for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at the celebration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons this past 26 September. These are clear manifestations of the supreme importance of nuclear disarmament for peace and international security. In this regard, my country supports the start of negotiations for an international convention prohibiting the manufacture, possession, use and stockpiling of nuclear weapons under a strict multilateral verification system.

Venezuela claims the inalienable right of States to develop the research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in line with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT.

Venezuela is a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

We reject the use of these weapons in any circumstances by anyone. At the same time, we appeal to all States parties that still possess chemical weapons to guarantee the complete destruction of their remaining arsenals in line with the established timelines in order to preserve the credibility and integrity of that legal instrument. We also call on States parties to resume negotiations with a view to adopting a legally binding protocol for verification of the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

Venezuela reaffirms the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to multilateral, regional and national efforts to effectively combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which have a negative impact on various regions of the world. States bear the responsibility to prevent, combat and eliminate this illicit activity, in line with the provisions and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legal regime of each country.

Information technology should not be turned into a new field of battle among States. The time has come to establish conditions to prevent cyberspace being used as a weapon of war through spying, sabotage and attacks on the systems and infrastructures of other countries. To that end, Venezuela urges the adoption by relevant multilateral institutions of Internet standards, with an emphasis on cybersecurity matters, that guarantee the protection of communications, especially the sovereignty of States and the privacy of citizens.

To conclude, we wish to note that multilateralism is the most complete and effective way to reach nuclear disarmament and to control conventional weapons. It is therefore important to deepen the effectiveness of the disarmament mechanisms, which have been affected by the lack of political will of some States. We emphasize the need for this conference to address as soon as possible such priority issues as the negotiation of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security guarantees and a convention on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Let me begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to the other members of

the Bureau. While we look forward to your prudent leadership, I want to assure you of the full cooperation and assistance of my delegation.

It is an honour and a privilege to again address the First Committee — a forum that has long been dedicated to the quest for a safer and more predictable world — at this general debate and to share some of our thoughts concerning the threats and risks we all face today.

One of the most important roles of the United Nations is to build consensus and political support among the Member States over the threats we identify and the measures with which to counter them. Nowadays, the threats and challenges to our security are asymmetric, complex, dynamic and transnational in nature. As I speak, European security is once again being challenged by Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine. This latest worrisome pattern to forcibly alter international borders poses a serious threat to peace and stability and undermines the fundamental principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity. Georgia strongly condemns this direct military aggression and joins the international community in calling on Russia to withdraw all its military forces and hardware from Ukraine, including the Crimean region.

As a victim of invasion in 2008, Georgia knows all too well what military aggression and occupation means. We reiterate our call on Russia to abide by its international obligations and end its illegal occupation of sovereign Georgian territory, as it is also in breach of international law and international obligations and commitments, including the provisions of the August 2008 ceasefire agreement between Russia and Georgia.

As we turn to the Middle East, we are likewise deeply distressed by the violent developments and rapid deterioration of the security situation in Iraq and Syria. We condemn in the strongest terms all despicable acts of terrorism and violence against the civilian population. Terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) threaten not only the nations of the Middle East but also those of Europe, North America and all other parts of the globe. It is only with our joint efforts and commitment that we can stop, reverse and prevent such violent actions from happening.

The risk of nuclear terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials and technologies have become one of the major

challenges to our common security. In this regard, full compliance with the obligations under the relevant international arrangements – such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and so on – must stand out as main priorities for the international community.

In this light, I should like to reiterate that despite a wide understanding that nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat to humankind, the NPT, as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation system, still lacks significant elements to provide a comprehensive response to the challenges we all face. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as a vital instrument of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, must enter into force without further delay. For its part, Georgia continues to actively cooperate with the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBT Organization to strengthen the monitoring and verification system. Preventing the risk of nuclear terrorism and improving security by providing safe storage facilities for radioactive materials remain top priorities for Georgia. We have joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and strongly support consolidating the efforts of the international community to combat the illicit acquisition, retention, transportation, transfer and use of nuclear materials and radioactive substances.

We regret that the international disarmament forum, namely, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), continues to fail to fulfil its mandates. Undoubtedly, the Conference on Disarmament should exercise a significantly greater influence and make a larger impact in the field of its competence, especially in view of the current international security environment. To match this objective, we all must do our utmost in order to promote the revitalization of this unique forum for negotiation, which played a crucial role in elaborating several major international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. In that regard, we welcome the recent High-level Meeting aimed at taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations within the CD. Georgia supports the Secretary-General in his call for action to reinvigorate the multilateral disarmament frameworks. Further procrastination may

well lead to the dwindling confidence of the international community in the Conference on Disarmament.

Georgia fully shares the common approaches of the international community regarding the problem of the illicit trade in conventional arms. The uncontrolled dissemination and excessive accumulation of conventional arms and ammunition represent a serious threat to international peace and security. If we want effectively to handle this serious problem we should possess efficient export control mechanisms, including, most importantly, common export criteria. In this regard, I should like to inform the Committee that in December 2013, the Parliament of Georgia enacted a new version of the Law of Georgia on Export and Import Control of Armaments, Military Equipment and Dual-use items which entered into force on 1 October 2014. The harmonization of Georgia's legislation on strategic export controls with the European Union standards serves as an essential factor helping us to continue to fully comply with our international obligations and commitments.

We believe that the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), aimed at regulating international trade in conventional arms, is an historic diplomatic achievement and indeed a victory for the world's people. As a proud sponsor of the process that started in 2006, and as a signatory of the ATT as of September, Georgia is convinced that this binding legal instrument has real potential to eradicate the illicit arms trade, genuinely to contribute to the humanitarian objectives and, overall, to foster global peace and security.

In talking of our joining important legal frameworks, it is a great pleasure for me to announce that just a few days ago, on 1 October, the Parliament of Georgia ratified the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In order to facilitate the comprehensive management of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) related risks, in February Georgia's national CBRN strategy was endorsed as a result of inter-agency efforts directed towards elaborating a strategic document in the field of CBRN security.

Furthermore, Georgia actively cooperates with the European Union and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), within the framework of the CBRN Centres of Excellence, to promote an integrated CBRN approach across the area of South-East Europe, the Caucasus, Moldova and Ukraine. With the aim of contributing to the success of

this project, the CBRN Regional Secretariat was opened and is successfully functioning in Georgia. In this regard, I should like to announce a side event organized by my Government in cooperation with UNICRI, entitled “CBRN national action plans: meeting the challenges of international security”. It will be held on 29 October in the morning in Conference Room 8 in the General Assembly building. All United Nations Member States are invited.

In addition to the old threats that we have been facing for many years and decades, a new one - cyberattacks - has recently emerged and is evolving rapidly. I doubt that we have sufficient understanding of its potential impact on our interdependent world at this stage of globalization. Consequently, we lack the necessary instruments to respond adequately to the challenges posed by cyberattacks. We believe that it is the duty of the United Nations and the First Committee to delve into this problem and ultimately contribute to providing a relevant platform, mechanisms and instruments for eradicating the cyber threat.

In closing, may I go back once again to where I began and remind the Committee in more detail of the alarming security situation in my country's two regions that continue to remain under illegal military occupation. Against the background of Georgia's declared policy aimed at normalizing relations with the Russian Federation, and despite some tangible measures already undertaken by my Government in this direction, Russia continues its policy of escalating the security situation in the occupied Georgian regions and in the adjacent areas, and exercises discriminatory measures against the Georgian population residing in those territories. The already fragile situation caused by the incessant militarization of the occupied Georgian regions is being further exacerbated by intrusions into the rest of Georgia's airspace and frequent military exercises.

After the Sochi Olympic Games, the occupation forces resumed the installation of barbed wire fences and embankments along the occupation line in the Tskhinvali region. By now, the total length of installations has exceeded 50 kilometres. In certain segments, the barbed wire fences go far beyond the initial occupation line, intruding deeper into our territory. On the humanitarian side of the issue, the installation of artificial obstacles along the occupation line significantly affects the livelihoods of the local population, divides families and communities and

prevents people-to-people contacts. As a result, many families have had to abandon their properties left behind the barbed wire fences.

The set of discriminatory measures perpetrated against the ethnic Georgian population includes ethnically targeted violence, the destruction of property, indiscriminate shooting, a prohibition on education in the native Georgian language, and heavy restrictions on the freedom of movement. The population residing in the occupied territories are deprived of their minimal safeguards for the protection of their rights provided by international conventions. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has also mentioned the very same thing.

We are convinced that it is time for the international community to stand up for the timeless principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Hence, the First Committee, apart from being seized with elaborating initiatives and ideas to address the existing problems in the fields of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and non-proliferation, should do its utmost to remedy the conventional threats to international, regional and national security that could potentially undermine the existing international system of nation States.

Mr. Bristol (Nigeria): The delegation of Nigeria joins others who have spoken earlier to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Committee at this session. We have no doubt that our work will benefit from your tremendous experience, expertise and commitment. We assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia and with that of the African Group, read out by our own Ambassador U. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

At the sixty-eighth session, Nigeria joined other Member States in highlighting a number of daunting challenges confronting our world. Today, and sadly too, little has changed to provide confidence and reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security. In fact, the quandaries we face today justify the need to redouble efforts and stridently to pay more attention than we did one year ago. Building the right multilateral environment involves a concerted effort and a new plan of action to confront these challenges. The goals

are twofold: the elimination of nuclear weapons and the regulation of conventional weapons, including the non-militarization of outer space.

In 2013, my delegation highlighted the astronomical proportion of global defence budgets devoted to the maintenance and upgrading of nuclear arsenal systems by nuclear-weapon States, as well as the unfettered access to an array of conventional weapons by unauthorized non-State actors. From Africa to the Middle East, the unprecedented carnage and bloodshed unleashed by terrorists have left cities and communities destroyed or deserted, including the loss of precious lives, property and livelihood. These mindless forms of aggression are largely enabled and effectively supported by illicitly purchased arms sold to non-State actors.

Most telling is the fact that access to the acquisition of this wide range of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, is often denied to sovereign States under some guise or unfounded allegation. Sadly, these same weapons are illicitly procured and indiscriminately used by terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and the unprecedented massacre of innocent civilians, including women and children.

On 24 December, the Arms Trade Treaty will effectively enter into force. Nigeria signed and ratified the Treaty more than a year ago, on 12 August 2013, in the hope that its robust, effective and indiscriminate implementation would become an efficient tool in regulating the global transfer of conventional weapons. While encouraging further universal and broad ratifications of the Treaty by Member States, we must highlight the need to protect the Treaty's integrity by ensuring that the interests of all States are protected and not just those of major international producing and exporting States.

We are living witnesses to the fact that small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and armed groups are responsible for more than 1,000 deaths each day. They undermine peace, security and stability, and the acts of violence they cause, destroy livelihoods, wantonly displace communities and hamper socioeconomic development. It is for this reason that my delegation welcomes the successful convening of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its

Aspects, in 2014, and congratulates the Chair of the meeting, Mr. Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan.

The world must rise in unison against terrorism and other violent acts by groups that do not care about the indiscriminate killing of civilians. That should be done by denying them access to weapons and by depriving them of funds and sponsorship. In this regard, there is need for enhanced international cooperation and assistance, a sine qua non for a full and successful implementation of the Programme of Action.

In today's environment, fraught with accidents and numerous cases of terrorism, my delegation reaffirms that nuclear weapons remain the ultimate weapon of mass destruction and that their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the spectrum of the goals pursued by the United Nations. Nuclear safety and security now constitute significant aspects of our work in view of the possibility of these weapons falling into hands that may not hesitate to use them. In this regard, my delegation continues to restate opposition to the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction, including all chemical and biological weapons.

Nuclear weapons offer no credible defence against enemies possessing similar weapons, and they pose an existential threat to those who do not possess them at all. If the overarching goal of nuclear disarmament is a world free of nuclear weapons, then the world could at least demonstrate that the possession and retention of more than 17,000 warheads in the arsenals of nuclear-weapon States remains not only unacceptable but should be repudiated. Compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in our view, should go hand in hand with the willingness of nuclear-weapon States to disarm and to disavow the continued possession of these weapons.

In the same vein, my delegation reiterates its grave concern at the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons on the ecosystems and calls on all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of these inhumane weapons. Voluntary measures must be taken regarding their renunciation and dismantling. In this context, my delegation joins several States in welcoming the two international Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Norway and Mexico, while looking forward to the third

Conference, in Austria in December. The overriding consideration and moral watershed is and should be the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

My delegation looks forward to the forthcoming ninth NPT Review Conference, in 2015. As we prepare for the Conference, however, let us seize the momentum to deepen our commitment to the realization of the overall goal of the NPT and the objective of the Review Conference, even as concerted efforts are made towards the implementation of the 2010 action plan. My delegation will continue to support the call for effective assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. In this regard, we stress the necessity for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States.

In the overall context of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) are dual issues that must be stridently addressed. We commend the ongoing efforts of the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as demonstrated by their diligent efforts during the first two sessions, held in March and August, and including the vital participation and contribution of a member of my delegation. As we urge the annex 2 States to do the what is needed to ensure the entry into force of the CTBT, we also believe that the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT remain another essential step to ensure the launch of negotiations on a treaty banning the production and retention of fissile materials. My delegation will therefore continue to work constructively in this Committee and all other forums towards achieving the goal of disarmament.

Mrs. Elin-Stener (Norway): Let me start by echoing other speakers in welcoming and congratulating you, Sir, as Chair of the First Committee at this year's session.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and this year it will already enter into force. Norway is proud to be one of the first 50 States to ratify the Treaty and encourages the remaining signatories and other States to complete their ratification processes as soon as possible. Such a

swift entry into force is a great achievement. It reflects our joint commitment to reducing armed violence and the human suffering it causes. We particularly welcome the inclusion of a provision on gender-based violence and emphasize the importance of translating this into practice on the ground.

As we strive for effective implementation of the ATT, we should learn from the valuable experience gained from the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction - the Mine Ban Convention - and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The facts and realities from the field continuously guide the implementation of these instruments. Norway strongly believes that the First Conference of States Parties to the ATT should be held sooner rather than later, and that the States parties should adopt rules of procedure that will ensure effective decision-making.

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) recognized the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would arise from any use of nuclear weapons, and reaffirmed the need for all States at all times to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. The broad and active participation of a large number of States and the wide range of stakeholders at the Oslo and Nayarit conferences reflects the recognition that the catastrophic effects of a nuclear detonation makes this an issue of concern and relevance to us all.

It has become clear that no State or international body would be able to address in any meaningful way the immediate humanitarian emergency that would follow a nuclear detonation. No existing national or international emergency system would be able to provide adequate assistance to the victims.

While the number of nuclear weapons in the world has been significantly reduced since the end of the Cold War, some 17,000 remain. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the humanitarian perspective will continue to be relevant. That perspective has renewed interest in the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the discussions on the humanitarian impact have brought to light the risks and consequences of continued collective inaction. Austria's initiative in hosting a conference in Vienna will facilitate further discussion of the humanitarian perspective as we prepare for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We encourage all

countries, both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to participate constructively in this important discussion.

The humanitarian approach to disarmament and non-proliferation is seeking to make progress within the NPT review cycle. Norway attaches great importance to the full implementation of the action plan adopted at the last NPT Review Conference. At the same time, Norway remains a staunch supporter of bilateral disarmament measures, such as the 2010 Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. However, multilateralism in nuclear disarmament remains plagued by a long-lasting impasse.

There can be no doubt that our overall objective is to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. We may, however, disagree on how to reach this common goal. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we should continue our efforts to reduce the role of this category of weapons in security policies and doctrines. We should consolidate existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and support new ones, particularly in the Middle East. It is therefore of great importance that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction is held before the 2015 Review Conference. It is also vital that the process of reducing the existing arsenals of nuclear weapons continue and accelerate. Bearing in mind our alliance commitments, Norway will continue to participate actively through established forums in working towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Norway took part in the successful Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague last March, where we confirmed our commitment to nuclear security. We look forward to continuing this important process in Washington in 2016. We must keep up our efforts to secure all nuclear material. We must significantly reduce the use of highly enriched uranium in both civilian and military applications, and we must strengthen multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. The International Atomic Energy Agency is the keystone of international nuclear security cooperation, and through common efforts we can succeed in strengthening global security.

We must also ensure that our verification systems are robust enough to instil the necessary confidence in the integrity of both non-proliferation and disarmament processes, based on the principles of verifiability, irreversibility and transparency. For a number of years,

the United Kingdom and Norway have cooperated at the expert level on exploring the technical and procedural challenges that would be associated with a nuclear disarmament verification regime. The purpose of this cooperation is to demonstrate that collaboration between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States in nuclear disarmament verification is both possible and necessary.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has already created a very strong disarmament and non-proliferation norm. The award of last year's Nobel Peace Prize to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was appropriate and well earned. During the course of just 17 years, more than 82 per cent of the world's declared stocks of chemical weapons have been destroyed. Last year's terrible chemical weapon attacks in Syria shocked the entire world. This resulted in Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and Syria joining the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The international mission to remove and destroy Syria's chemical weapons programme was of great importance. In the midst of a brutal civil war, the international community, including Norway and Denmark, succeeded in removing Syria's declared chemical weapons in a peaceful manner. Never before has a country's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction been removed in this way. Thanks to this huge international effort and commitment, these weapons can no longer be used against the civilian population or fall into the hands of militant groups. However, we are concerned about reports of possible discrepancies and omissions in Syria's chemical weapons declaration. We are also concerned about this year's chlorine gas attacks. These grave issues must be investigated and fully resolved.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Biotechnology is a rapidly evolving science, which means that ambitious and forward-looking initiatives are needed to strengthen the BWC. We believe that States parties should focus on areas where consensus is possible and on pragmatic steps that can strengthen the Convention in a constructive manner.

The development of cyberspace has provided us with opportunities that would have been unimaginable only 10 or 15 years ago. At the same time cyber threats from State and non-State actors alike pose serious challenges to almost every nation and constitute a

potential risk to international peace and security. Largely thanks to the excellent work carried out in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts it is now universally recognized that existing international law also applies to cyberspace. However, further work is needed on the implementation of these principles. Norway welcomes the continued efforts of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

Finally, I should like to point out that the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), established for the purpose of conducting substantive deliberations and making recommendations, has not been able to deliver for more than a decade. We question the continued need for the UNDC, but if it is continued it has to be made more practical, more focused and more relevant. UNDC sessions should be shorter and concentrate on one or two topics to be decided by the General Assembly. The same applies to the Conference on Disarmament, which is an outdated forum that has not delivered since 1996.

Mr. Olgún (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and to wish you great success in this year's tasks. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are united in our firm commitment to contributing actively and positively towards the outcome of the deliberations.

We wish to align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2), and to add some personal considerations and perspectives on behalf of our own country.

Chile has always been a firm supporter and promoter of general and complete disarmament and has always advocated debate in a broad, transparent and democratic multilateral space, in line with its foreign policies. As we confirmed on 26 September, on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, we wish to reiterate again today that to win the battle and eliminate nuclear weapons we need first to win the battle of ideas. A first and key step to that end is to delegitimize nuclear weapons by exposing the persistent misconception that nuclear weapons have been and continue to be a guarantee of peace.

In this respect, Chile welcomes and supports the efforts of the process initiated in Oslo in March 2013 on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and congratulates Mexico on organizing the second conference in Nayarit, in February. We appeal to all States to actively participate in the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Vienna in December. My delegation appreciates the offer made by Austria to host the upcoming Conference. That announcement is consistent with the clear message unequivocally expressed by the President of Austria at the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament that "Nuclear weapons must be stigmatized, banned and eliminated before they abolish us" (A/68/PV.11, p. 6). My country certainly shares that view.

For Chile, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We stress the importance of achieving its universalization and a balanced implementation of the three pillars of its fundamental structure. We reaffirm the importance of following up on the eighth NPT Review Conference and its action plan. We support the work being carried out by the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative with a view to formulating specific initiatives to that end. We urge nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitments and obligations under article VI of the NPT and to advance towards the total elimination of these weapons and the full and immediate implementation of the 13 practical measures towards nuclear disarmament, as agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the action plan approved at the 2010 Review Conference.

The upcoming 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will be a new opportunity to make progress in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We also appeal to the nuclear Powers to reduce the high-alert status of nuclear weapons and the operational readiness of these systems in order to prevent their involuntary or accidental use.

Chile firmly believes that all roads leading to nuclear disarmament are valid and must be taken. That is why we work with the Non-Aligned Movement and other international platforms and forums.

It has been 45 years since the entry into force, in April 1969, of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the Latin American and Caribbean as the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated

area. Since then, we have reiterated its importance and contribution to peace and security at the regional and global levels. We call on the nuclear Powers to withdraw their interpretative declarations to Protocols I and II of the Treaty, thereby contributing to the elimination of the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

Chile is presiding over the Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia until April 2015. In that capacity, we join others in expressing regret over the failure to convene in a timely manner the international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as called for by the States parties to the NPT in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

It is inevitable and critical that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enter into force as a necessary step on the path to disarmament. We therefore once again strongly urge those countries that have not yet signed, ratified or provided support for the Treaty to do so urgently.

Chile reaffirms its commitment to supporting multilateral efforts for disarmament, non-proliferation and the prohibition of use and possession of all weapons of mass destruction, and condemns the military use of biological and chemical warfare in all circumstances. We urge universal support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in pursuit of achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

I wish to make special reference to the Arms Trade Treaty and its speedy entry into force in December. Having reached the 50 ratifications necessary to that end in September, we have fulfilled the aspiration of the international community to having a legally binding instrument that will contribute to the transparency of the trade in conventional weapons and help prevent and combat the negative effects that provoke human suffering and the diversion of these weapons to many areas of the world.

The past few years have been fruitful in strengthening and advancing instruments that regulate the sphere of conventional weapons. One example of this was the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in August 2010. We welcome the recent accession of Belize to the Convention and the establishment in

Central America, our brotherly neighbour, as a cluster-weapon-free zone on the occasion of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which took place in San José in September. Similarly, we reaffirm our support for and accession to the Mine Ban Convention and the need to advance towards their total elimination. One testimony to our commitment is the fact that Chile will be the headquarters of the fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, in 2016.

We also wish to underscore a cause that is very important for Chile – the democratization of international organizations and of multilateral practice. Chile wishes to include voices that have been missing from this discussion – those of women and civil society. We cannot forget that the effective inclusion of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control programmes must be a priority and a commitment of all States Members of the United Nations through the implementation of mechanisms ensuring true equality in decision-making and key actions to promote peace. The role of women in these instances is essential. Civil society and non-governmental organizations also have a role to play in the United Nations disarmament machinery. We have seen too much resistance to including those voices in our mission. That must end. My country will be the first to advocate that civil society should be not only an observer but also a participant.

Lastly, my country firmly supports the principle of the indivisibility of international security, which means that all States, regardless of their size and power, have a shared responsibility to contribute to strengthening an international order based on cooperation and regulated by international law. I underscore the need for the resolute and unconditional support and political will of the international community to create the climate of mutual confidence that is required to make progress in disarmament. You, Sir, can count on our commitment to contributing positively to the mission of the First Committee.

Mr. Kellerman (South Africa): Please allow me at the outset, like other delegations before me, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this 2014 session of the First Committee, and to associate my delegation with the statements already delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

While some advances have been made during the past year in strengthening the multilateral disarmament

and international security environment, much remains to be done. Progress on the various undertakings towards disarmament has yet to be realized. Of particular concern to my delegation is the continuing impasse in the United Nations disarmament machinery established at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as far back as 1978. The 18-year stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and the lack of agreement in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) are undermining the multilateral system. Similarly, the UNDC has failed to make any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly for close to 15 years. In our view, these multilateral bodies need to be revitalized so that they can again discharge their respective mandates.

The general lack of progress on nuclear disarmament is frustrating to the vast majority of United Nations Member States. Achievements in the area of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation remain particularly uneven. The regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is constantly reaffirmed by the majority of the international community, yet the nuclear disarmament pillar of the Treaty remains neglected in contrast to the progress made in strengthening nuclear non-proliferation. It is South Africa's firm belief that nuclear weapons do not provide security, but rather exacerbate insecurity.

The Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons that was held in Nayarit, Mexico, in February this year reminded all of us of the devastating impact that a nuclear detonation would have. The very existence of nuclear weapons means that humanity faces the perils of a nuclear catastrophe. South Africa therefore welcomes follow-up efforts that highlight the humanitarian consequences of these weapons, and we look forward to the follow-up Conference that will be convened in Vienna some two months from now.

My delegation remains equally concerned about the failure to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It remains our hope that the conference will be convened without further delay.

In the area of chemical weapons, South Africa welcomes the progress made towards the destruction of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We believe that no cause could ever justify the use of such weapons or any other weapon of mass destruction by any actor under any circumstances.

In the area of conventional weapons, South Africa has on many occasions expressed concern about the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. As a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions — which has been submitted to our Parliament for ratification — South Africa is ready to play its part on the journey towards a world free of cluster munitions. With regard to landmines, South Africa was honoured to be one of the Friends of the President that were responsible for the drafting of outcome documents for the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. It is our hope that the next five-year cycle will accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, especially in the areas of victim assistance, universalization and compliance.

South Africa also continues to believe that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects still represents the central, universally agreed set of undertakings to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and that its full implementation remains as relevant today as when it was adopted in 2001. Apart from national implementation efforts, the full implementation of the entire Programme of Action, including those related to international cooperation and assistance, remains of critical importance. Likewise, we look forward to the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and the full implementation of this important instrument that would regulate international trade in conventional arms and contribute towards curbing illicit transfers.

My delegation stands ready to participate actively in the work of this year's First Committee and to join you, Sir, and all other delegations in making a success of our work.

Mr. Lasso (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): May I extend to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau the congratulations of the delegation of Ecuador on your election. We are particularly pleased to see a representative from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) chair these proceedings.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

Ecuador has recognized for the first time in its Constitution the rights of nature so that they can be fully respected. Our Constitution has also declared our national territory as a zone of peace, ensuring that our people can live in a healthy environment. Moreover, we are proud to say that the Heads of State and Government of CELAC have declared the entire territory of Latin America and the Caribbean a zone of peace. Accordingly, Ecuador condemns the very existence of weapons of mass destruction on the face of the Earth, and considers their use or threat of use to be a crime against nature and humankind.

Like most States, Ecuador believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are and must be parallel and interrelated processes. My country, a non-nuclear-weapon State, has complied and will comply with its international nuclear non-proliferation commitments. In so doing, we have hoped and continue to hope that the nuclear-weapon States will live up to their commitments to nuclear disarmament. However, Ecuador regrets to say that this commitment has not been honoured to date. Ecuador believes that it is high time for the international community to put into practice the priority given to nuclear disarmament by launching negotiations on a universal, legally binding treaty that would prohibit the development, possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Ecuador shares the concern that has been voiced over the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, which, by decision of the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. My country believes that the stalemate is fundamentally due to the lack of political will. It is therefore our hope that the Conference will continue to offer the international community important legal instruments, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention. As the Disarmament Commission too has been unable to adopt any agreed recommendations for the past 15 years, we think it logical and necessary that an overall analysis be undertaken of the United Nations disarmament machinery. To that end, my delegation reiterates its support for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament so that all the bodies that together make up the disarmament machinery can be studied as a whole, not separately, and the necessary corrective measures can be taken.

Ecuador repeats its call for universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

(NPT) and for the implementation of commitments made in the conclusions and recommendations arising from the May 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Such comprehensive implementation would give us hope that the 2015 Review Conference, to be held in New York in 2015, might end with a positive outcome. We regret that the meeting of the Preparatory Committee this year was not able to produce a consensus document.

As a party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region, Ecuador urges the countries that have signed the Protocols to the Treaty to withdraw the unilateral interpretative statements made when they acceded to the Protocols, which affect the denuclearized status established by the Treaty. Similarly, we urge all States to strive to establish and strengthen other nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world.

We regret that it has not been possible to convene the conference for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We appeal to those who are trying to organize the conference to convene it as soon as possible. We also reiterate our appeal to the sole State of that region that has not yet done so to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and place itself under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the context of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Ecuador supports the timely entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as all development and improvement of such weapons through subcritical explosions and other procedures is contrary to the objectives and purposes of the Treaty.

Moreover, Ecuador reaffirms the legitimate and inalienable right of States that wish to do so to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. In that regard, my delegation reaffirms its support for the regulatory framework provided for this purpose by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and stresses the obligation of States that choose to use this kind of energy to develop and apply the highest possible standards in the area of nuclear safety and protection.

On the question of other weapons of mass destruction, and on the basis of previously defined

principles, my delegation reiterates its full commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We condemn the use of such weapons anywhere by anyone, and we appeal for their complete elimination, pursuant to the obligations assumed under these Conventions to eliminate all such weapons within the deadlines set without further delay or postponements. In that regard, Ecuador welcomes the successful conclusion of the destruction of chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic following its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

With respect to conventional weapons, Ecuador strongly supports the purposes of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We fully adhere to the consensus agreements arrived at at the 2012 Review Conference of the Programme of Action. We are committed to the agreements arrived at there, and take note of the outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting, which was held this year.

We note the imminent entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, which the General Assembly adopted by a recorded vote, and not by consensus as we had hoped. The Government of Ecuador will follow very closely the way in which the Treaty is to be implemented, trusting that its provisions will be implemented in a transparent, balanced and non-discriminatory manner, respecting such basic principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations as the sovereign equality of States, self-determination, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, territorial and political integrity and the right to self-defence. The authorities of my country, as stated in our explanation of vote when the Treaty was adopted (see A/67/PV.71), will continue to analyse the situation with a view to taking a definitive decision on Ecuador's signing or accession.

Ecuador is party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We have also ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the universalization of which is a high priority for us, given the especially cruel and harmful nature of such weapons, in particular against the most vulnerable groups. Since civilians are the main victims of land mines, I reiterate our commitment to and support for the Convention on the Prohibition

of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

My country is concerned by the growing use of and improvement in unmanned armed aerial vehicles and the use of lethal autonomous weapons. The use of such new war technologies is a matter of serious concern at the humanitarian, moral and legal levels. The international community, at its various regional and universal forums, should therefore continue studying the implications for international humanitarian law and consider the prohibition of such weapons. We support the work being undertaken in the context of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects in this respect.

Security in international relations must be based on trust and respect among States. A mass, indiscriminate system of spying on the communications of all citizens of the world and the use, in contravention of international law, of information and communication technologies — particularly any attack on the principles of respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of States — introduce a serious element of instability into inter-State relations that affects international security.

In conclusion, in addition to expressing my Government's commitment to peace, universal disarmament and international security with full respect for international law, human rights and the Charter of the United Nations, my delegation reiterates its readiness to cooperate here in the First Committee.

Mr. Botora (Ethiopia): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau on your election to steer our Committee's work, and to assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation in discharging your responsibility. Let me also express our thanks to Libya for successfully conducting the Committee's deliberations last year.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/69/PV.2). My delegation also extends its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his updated reports which contain essential updated information on the agenda items under discussion.

Multilateralism remains the most reliable setting in which to comprehensively address critical global issues of international peace and security, including disarmament in all its aspects. Ethiopia firmly believes that continued multilateral engagements and negotiations are vital instruments to curb the proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons alike, which have increasingly become a real threat to the maintenance of global peace and security.

Indeed, and as has been recognized by this Committee and other multilateral disarmament forums, the unchecked proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose great danger to all humankind without distinction. The threats they represent are deadly and very complex in nature. They therefore require a fundamental and effective global response. Curbing the escalation of the nuclear arms race and reducing the stockpile of other weapons of mass destruction through the full and effective implementation of existing conventions and treaties are of paramount importance. Ethiopia firmly believes that all States need to respect and implement all disarmament treaties and conventions to which they are parties. That is the prime and core obligation that they are expected to discharge without further delay and to ensure the preservation of our world peace and security.

The African continent has shown its unwavering commitment to regional peace and security through the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by a large number of its member States. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty seeks to ensure that nuclear weapons are not developed, produced, stockpiled, tested, acquired or stationed in Africa, including its island States. Furthermore, the Treaty prohibits research on nuclear weapons, the dumping of radioactive waste and armed attacks on nuclear installations in the African zone by Treaty parties. In addition, the Treaty confirms the basic and inalienable right of all States to the development, research, production and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

That is why Ethiopia supports the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call upon the annex 2 States of the CTBT, whose ratification is crucial for the Treaty's entry into force. Ethiopia also welcomes the

ratification of this vital Treaty by Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, the Republic of the Congo, and Niue.

Ethiopia, as a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, has been working towards the realization of the purposes and objectives of the Treaty in close cooperation with the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization. The Ministry of Science and Technology has been designated to coordinate all activities relevant to the implementation and verification of the Treaty.

We have joined other Member States in reaffirming the relevance and importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We are convinced that the impasse on resuming its proper work needs to be overcome on an urgent and priority basis.

Ethiopia, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, also supports the various General Assembly resolutions on the total elimination of nuclear weapons based on a specified agreed time frame to reach the goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world through a negotiated and phased programme of work.

Ethiopia is committed to ensuring that radiation protection and nuclear regulatory control are conducted in pursuance of applicable domestic and international laws, including the International Atomic Energy Agency safety standards. We also wish to stress that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and reiterate once again our call for providing effective negative assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

Regarding the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we welcome the recent successful conclusion of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 16 to 20 June. Unfortunately, illicit small arms and light weapons continue to destabilize and create havoc in many parts of the world, including our subregion of the Horn of Africa. The unauthorized use of these weapons by non-State actors and their widespread and uncontrolled access to them indeed remain a source of threat and of great concern to States in the region. It is precisely for that reason that the implementation of international and

regional commitments and treaty-based obligations in respect of combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is very critical. We are always ready to continue to work with regional States and the international community to monitor, control and put an end to the illegal trade in and transfer of these weapons.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate once again Ethiopia's unreserved commitment to discharge all its treaty obligations as well as to uphold the pertinent United Nations resolutions relating to various issues of general disarmament, particularly to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and wish you all every success in your work. We are committed to cooperating with you to that end.

I should like to associate myself with the statements made by the representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Group of African States and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

We stress the utmost importance of a multilateral framework in addressing the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. We renew our commitment to cooperating in this regard, to promoting international peace and security and to ridding humankind of all weapons of mass destruction in general and nuclear weapons in particular.

In spite of the importance the international community attaches to disarmament issues, the stalemate that has characterized the work of the Conference on Disarmament since 1996 indicates a lack of the political will that would help us to reach the desired objective. The lack of any progress in the deliberations of the Conference since 1999 and in nuclear disarmament since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 requires us to set a ceiling for the objectives to be achieved by the First Committee in any given session of the General Assembly with a view to attaining concrete results and effective recommendations that would assist us to achieve our objective.

The international community has long awaited the implementation of the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference, in particular the resolution containing concrete measures for the declaration of the Middle East

as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. However and regrettably, the international community has not been able to hold such a conference in spite of the efforts made by Arab and international parties, due to the intransigence of one party. The challenges encountered by the Middle East indicate that peace and security in the region depend on cooperation among all the countries of the region and a commitment to international legitimacy. The declaration of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone is an extremely important step in that direction and should be taken without delay.

The spread of small arms and light weapons is another challenge faced by the world in the field of disarmament, requiring all parties that manufacture and export those arms to establish effective controls on their operations. It also requires full commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We believe that putting an end to the arms race in outer space is extremely important for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that the Conference on Disarmament must play its vital role in this regard as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for such issues. We are eager to promote the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and believe that this extremely important Treaty should be honoured by all parties. Non-proliferation is the basis for peace and security, and cooperation is the only means. The reduction of military budgets and cooperation in all fields of disarmament will help us all to achieve our objective.

The Chair: I shall now call on those representatives who have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In this connection, I should like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to 5 minutes.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic): My country reiterates its strong condemnation of the horrific use of chemical weapons against Syrian citizens and Syrian soldiers. It is committed to the full implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a State party and within the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

It is indeed amusing to hear the representatives of the Turkish and Saudi rulers make baseless allegations against my country. It is amusing for the reason that

they both do not realize that hardly anyone in this room believes them. It is amusing because almost everyone in this room recognizes the repulsive deeds and actions that the rulers of those two countries have committed against Syria, the Middle East and against humankind as a whole. Those horrendous deeds and actions are obvious in the partnership of the current Saudi and Turkish rulers with the likes of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), and in the infinite support which those two regimes willingly offer for the barbaric acts of terror and for the ideology of violent extremism.

We all know the dark and bloody reality which those two regimes represent. Even their friends do not believe them. Recently, the Vice President of one of their allies confirmed that “our allies in the region were our largest problem in Syria”, adding that those allies in the region, including Turkey and Saudi Arabia, “poured hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of tons of weapons into anyone who fights in Syria”. I add here that those weapons include chemical weapons provided by Turkey and Saudi rulers to such terrorist groups.

I make this brief statement as a Syrian citizen and human being who truly cares about the safety and security of members’ countries and societies. I want to sound a warning to all who are here representing the national interests of their countries and peoples, and I do hope that they will convey my warning to their Governments and peoples. They should beware the current rulers of Turkey and Saudi Arabia, for they only wish harm to us all. They should beware their hidden agendas and intentions and look at what they specifically, among other nations and States, have done to my country. They should consider their unholy alliance with ISIS and their unending support for that monster and its affiliates, and beware and be watchful of this monstrous alliance, because since the members of that alliance can cause bloodshed and destruction for Syrians, who are their neighbours and brothers, they are willing to unleash that monster against other countries and societies.

Turkey is seeking to enter the European Union, and if we take a deeper look at the behaviour of its recent rulers we will realize that they have an Ottoman agenda. I suppose many European nations and peoples, among others, can still remember the horrific acts and violence committed by the Ottomans. A simple comparison between those Ottoman acts and the current acts of ISIS can uncover a shocking truth. My dear friends should beware and not let them into their societies.

As for the Saudis and their rulers, let us look at the way they treat their citizens and at the Saudi-funded schools and preachers throughout the world who teach only violence, murder, killing and extremism. We need only ask the nations of the Earth, from Bali to New York, and they will tell us what that Saudi-funded ideology and its terrorists have done. Saudi Arabia is the headquarters of international terrorism and its rulers have made it their business to terrorize other nations with their agents of terror, who are able to commit unspeakable atrocities in the name of a perverted interpretation of Islam that only Saudi rulers represent. I emphasize here that Islam and Muslims are innocent of this Saudi-funded extremist ideology. Member States must guard their societies against this ideology and make sure that it does not find a place in their cities and among their people.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Georgia made a statement that merely repeated an unjustified allegation against the Russian Federation. There is no reason for us to respond to this, but we would like to point out just one fact. The regular round of Geneva discussions on security and stability in the Transcaucasus region ended yesterday. In that connection, I would advise my Georgian partners not to engage in megaphone diplomacy and to do their utmost to settle the problems in Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the basis of mutual respect for the benefit of the peoples of Georgia and those sovereign States.

Mr. Alsaad (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should just like to comment on the statement made by the Syrian regime. We are surprised by his very rhetorical way of hiding the truth. The world has become a village indeed, and no one can hide the facts from it.

With regard to his statement about the use of chemical weapons against Syrian citizens by helicopter gunships, that information is not a figment of our imagination. It came from a report that was prepared by a fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Council, which stated that on 10 September helicopters belonging to the Syrian regime were used to drop chlorine gas on Syrians. That was explicitly stated in the report; we did not make it up.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is on the front lines of the fight against terrorism. Here at the United Nations, we have contributed effectively to the establishment of the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism. We have taken part in many conferences held

in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere with the sole objective of fighting terrorism. We have also contributed to the Centre for Rapprochement between Peoples, which was established as an additional means to fight extremism and terrorism. We have always made our best efforts to fight those who claim to be affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): I thank you, Sir for allowing me to take the floor for a second time in response to the statement that has just been made by the representative of the Russian Federation. Although he said that he was not going to say anything new and was not going to enter into an argument, he still made at least two important arguments.

One is related to the Geneva discussions, and all representatives in this room know that Georgia participates in the Geneva discussions in good faith. We take a constructive approach to resolving all outstanding issues with the Russian Federation. The Geneva discussions are of course the result of the ceasefire agreement that was signed in August 2008 by Russia and Georgia with the mediation of the European Union. Most of the provisions of that agreement have not been met by Russia. Russia is in breach of almost the entire 2008 agreement, including the obligations to withdraw its forces to the pre-conflict line and allow humanitarian aid to the occupied territories.

The Russian representative also used a second argument advising us to talk with the occupation regimes that his own authorities have established on

Georgian soil. In this regard, I should like to highlight the fact that Russia is an occupying Power because it has stationed its troops on Georgian soil without the consent of the Georgian Government. Every member of the Committee knows that that is a violation of international law. The consent of the host nation is absolutely essential to deploy foreign troops on its soil. As for talking with the communities across the dividing lines that were created by Russia, of course we try our best to talk with our citizens on both sides of the line. We have medical programmes and education programmes for those affected persons, but the Russian troops and the Russian Government hinder the process for the benefit of all the people of Georgia, including the occupied territories.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation): I should just like to make a short remark in answer to my Georgian colleague. I should like to remind delegations that Georgia and Russia are not the only participants in the Geneva discussions; the sovereign States of the Republic of Abkhazia and South Ossetia also participate therein.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): I am sorry to take the floor for the third time but I feel obligated to respond to the latest statement by the Russian representative because it is the ultimate distortion of the facts on the ground. Representatives of the occupied regions are represented in the Geneva process in their individual capacity. They do not represent any entity except for themselves.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.