



# General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

## First Committee

7<sup>th</sup> meeting

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New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Rattray ..... (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

### Agenda items 87 to 104 (*continued*)

#### General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

**Mr. Maung Wai** (Myanmar): As this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor at the First Committee this year, I should like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your well-deserved election and assumption of office. We assure you of our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities. We are confident that under your able leadership, deliberations at the First Committee will be productive and fruitful.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and with the statement by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

Myanmar continues to believe that internationally recognized treaties on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world effectively contribute to the strengthening of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. We encourage Member States to continue their efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not exist, including in the Middle East.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to welcome the signing of the legally binding Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in

Central Asia by the nuclear-weapon States in May. We also welcome the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, which was made on the occasion of the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Havana in January.

In our neighbourhood, ASEAN member States are committed to preserving South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. In that regard, Myanmar shares the common desire of all ASEAN member States to see the early signing and ratification by the nuclear-weapon States of the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Myanmar welcomes the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the General Assembly ministerial-level plenary meeting (see A/68/PV.11) held on exactly the same date this year here in New York to observe it. That undertaking cannot be an instant game-changer, but it undoubtedly serves as a gentle nudge to incrementally build up public awareness and support on a global scale to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Myanmar attended the Oslo and Nayarit Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the organizers for facilitating our attendance. We also hope to participate in the third Conference, to be held in Vienna in December.

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Like other United Nations Member States, Myanmar considers outer space the common heritage of humankind. We share the view held by the overwhelming majority of Member States that the weaponization of outer space will lead to an arms race. The prevention of an arms race in outer space is a critical issue on the United Nations disarmament and arms control agenda, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space is one of the four core issues for the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

My delegation supports the calls for the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a universal, legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Here in the First Committee, my delegation will explore the possibility of either sponsoring or supporting the draft resolution entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”.

Nuclear weapons have the greatest destructive capacity of all weapons. Therefore, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are given the highest priority in the pursuit of my country’s international arms control and disarmament objectives. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Therefore, we would like to reiterate the call for all nuclear-weapon States, particularly those with the largest nuclear arsenals, to take fully and immediately the 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament that are set out in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the 22-point Action Plan on nuclear disarmament set out in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The 2015 NPT Review Conference is only a few months away. We hold the view that it should bear double significance: renewing the commitments made at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, and adopting pragmatic objectives for the next five years.

Pending the achievement of the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons, it is necessary that the nuclear-weapon States provide effective assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Achieving an early agreement on a universal, unconditional, irrevocable and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States will be extremely important.

My delegation still retains its trust and confidence in the relevancy and validity of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. The CD has taken a few small steps forward this year, such as the re-establishment of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work and the convening of informal meetings on agenda items of the CD, including the four core issues. Progress of that nature does not suffice, however. Instead of putting the blame on the CD for the current state of affairs, we must seek creative solutions to overcome the status quo. We believe that doable solutions are within our reach.

In our view, the CD is not alone in lacking tangible progress. The United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole has been stagnant. We believe that a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) will have the authority and legitimacy to comprehensively review the functioning of the entire disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament. Myanmar looks forward to the early convening of SSOD-IV.

Since the Constitutional Government took power in 2011, Myanmar has been making domestic preparations with a view to ratifying or acceding to major international disarmament instruments. Considerable progress has been made in that regard. Last year, we were able to sign the Additional Protocol to our International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement in connection with the on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We will soon be able to ratify the Biological Weapons Convention.

The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the main purposes of the United Nations. Myanmar, as a peace-loving Member State, abhors all weapons of mass destruction. Since 1995, Myanmar has annually introduced at the First Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, and we will be doing so again this year. We therefore urge all Member States either to sponsor or support our draft resolution. If we follow the road map set out in the draft resolution with a strong political will, our common goal of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons can be reached sooner.

**Mr. Memy** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on taking the helm to guide the work of the First Committee.

We take note of the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo believes that the First Committee remains an ideal framework for holding discussions on issues related to global peace and security. We regret that there has been inertia in the Conference on Disarmament due to a lack of political will, thereby protecting the particular interests of some while disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction still remain of permanent concern to us. We must unite our efforts to overcome differences in order to achieve a solid result that guarantees security for generations to come.

The conclusion of a convention on the banning of nuclear weapons remains one of the urgent priorities for which multilateral negotiations must be undertaken. The presence of those weapons is not only a danger for the very existence of humankind, it is also an instrument of domination. Two concerns are at the centre of our attention in order to achieve the goal of a world without those weapons, which the entire international community is awaiting. The first is the proliferation, modernization and increase in the number of those possessing those weapons. The second is the transfer of nuclear technologies — a very delicate question because it touches upon the fundamental principles of cooperation between industrialized countries and third world countries. Also delicate is the level of restrictions on the transfer of nuclear technologies, as the right of each country to develop programmes for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to have access to such high technology is at risk.

In reality it is the nuclear-weapon States that must show the path to be followed by considerably reducing their stockpiles in a verifiable way in order to create conditions that are favourable to realizing the ultimate goal, which is a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We sincerely believe that the nuclear issue must follow the path traced by chemical weapons, which at this point, in spite of what still remains to be done, has created momentum on international solidarity with very satisfying results for all. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a State party to the Pelindaba African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and has a significant legal arsenal, which deals essentially with the use and commercialization of strategic minerals.

Concerning conventional weapons, the process of reducing and monitoring such weapons must continue, while consultations to limit international transfers should be held. My country welcomes the initiatives already undertaken in this area, the latest of which is the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, which will enter into force in December 2014. That is a very broad legal instrument on the monitoring of the international trade in conventional weapons. It unifies and codifies the responsibilities that fall to States pursuant to the relevant principles of international law. The Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes agreed efforts for the establishment of this instrument.

The same efforts must be pursued to also limit the negative impacts of the use of certain conventional weapons that can cause excessive suffering or evils, such as mines and traps. Other explosives of war are also included in this category of high concern.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is contributing to efforts to combat weapons trafficking at the international level. At the national level, we have a new law in place on small arms and light weapons. A national survey to establish and map where mines and other war explosives are has been completed, which will help us with our demining operations.

**Mr. Asmerom** (Eritrea): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on being elected.

While my delegation fully aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Africa Group, respectively (see A/C.1/69/PV.2), I should like to emphasize the following.

First, international and regional security and disarmament issues can best be addressed when negotiated multilaterally and through transparent, comprehensive and non-discriminatory instruments. Eritrea supports the various international instruments that aim at complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament, covering all weapons. Our shared future and the increasing complexity of international security must compel us to demonstrate the necessary political will to agree on the core agenda and immediately to commence the substantive discussions on disarmament matters.

Secondly, conventional weapons continue to bring untold tragedy to millions of people worldwide. Much

of the destruction, instability, underdevelopment and spread of extremism and terrorism in our region is a byproduct of, or is exacerbated by, the unregulated and illicit movement of small arms and light weapons.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects remains an important document in our effort to combat the illicit transfer of such weapons. Eritrea welcomes the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States, held in June. We also stress the need to maintain the fundamental elements of the Programme of Action, including the primary responsibility of States to combat the illicit trade in and use of small arms and light weapons, and respect for national ownership, priorities and capacities. Eritrea is actively working with the countries of the region under the umbrella of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons to implement the Programme of Action in the fight to eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

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

Thirdly, nuclear weapons continue to endanger the human species and global economic and social progress and to hamper the international security agenda. Eritrea welcomes the first General Assembly ministerial-level plenary meeting (see A/68/PV.11) to observe the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held on 26 September. As a signatory to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which established Africa as a nuclear-free zone, Eritrea strongly supports the establishment of nuclear-free zones in other parts of the world. Eritrea is also a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and considers that its entry into force will have a critical role in the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Eritrea also supports the peaceful use of nuclear technology and commends the development work conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency in different countries, including mine.

Fourthly, advances in science and technology are the main drivers of human progress. At the same time, as we have witnessed in recent years, modern technology has the potential to be used for illegal terrorist and criminal purposes by States and non-State actors to undermine the national economy and the security of nations. Eritrea sees an urgent need to energize our efforts to develop a common understanding among

States about the ways and means collectively to address the use of technologies for destructive purposes.

Last but not least, we must not forget issues, such as aggression and occupation, that undermine international peace and security. Countries big or small should not be allowed to occupy territory of other countries and they must be urged to respect the Charter of the United Nations and their treaty obligations.

I assure the Chair of Eritrea's full support as he steers the work of this important Committee to a successful completion.

**Mr. Samvelian (Armenia):** At the outset, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating Ambassador Rattray on his election to the Chair of the Committee, and I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Let me also express my delegation's readiness to work with him and pledge our firm support in order to achieve the ambitious goals that lie ahead of us during the current session.

Armenia attaches great importance to the efforts of the United Nations aimed at the establishment of international and regional security and stability and an atmosphere of confidence. We believe that peace and security are directly linked to disarmament and arms control. In that connection, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms control and the prevention of the militaristic drift of defence budgets and the destabilizing accumulation of armaments play a fundamental role in the prevention and management of conflicts and lead to confidence-building at the regional and global levels. Furthermore, the unconditional implementation and thorough strengthening of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation agreements, as well as international verification mechanisms and institutions, should become a priority for the international community.

Armenia considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — based on its three main pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — to be an essential foundation for a global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe that upholding and universalizing the NPT — in the situation nowadays in particular — is more critical than ever. Armenia welcomes the establishment by the General Assembly of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

In that context, let me recall the statement of the Secretary-General on that occasion (see A/68/PV.11),



that the International Day is not merely one on which we call for limiting nuclear weapons, reducing their range, constraining their deployment or reducing their role in security policies; it is also a day when the world community reflects on the many benefits that nuclear disarmament would offer, from enhancing security to the conservation of financial and scientific resources.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is the primary international tool to fight the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Its full implementation remains high on our agenda. Very soon, the Government of Armenia will approve a national plan of action for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). It is a remarkable interagency effort by the Armenian side, in close cooperation with the 1540 Committee, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear Centres of Excellence initiative.

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 the only global instrument in its field. We share the view voiced by many that the control of small arms and light weapons has to be intensified in a number of areas. That reflects a common understanding of the joint responsibility and commitment to stop the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which still constitutes a huge impediment for peace and security in the world.

Armenia also believes that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a long overdue task, will be a decisive step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We still see merit in implementing the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The Treaty played a key role in bringing down the quantity of military equipment to a remarkably low level, and eventually created an unprecedented arms control culture through its information exchange and verification mechanism. Unfortunately, the CFE Treaty recently has been experiencing a serious implementation problem. It is obvious that the new security environment in Europe needs a careful reassessment, to be followed by putting in place functional conventional arms control. No doubt, it should inherit certain components of the existing mechanisms that have proven their viability.

*The Chair returned to the Chair.*

Advocating for the strengthening of international humanitarian law and fully supportive of its humanitarian goals, Armenia regards the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention as important international instruments to achieve the goal of the eradication of entire categories of excessively injurious conventional weapons. It has always been our conviction that the human and social costs of the use of anti-personnel mines, booby traps and other explosive devices far outweigh their military significance.

Moreover, while not being a party to the CCW Convention, Armenia implements on a voluntary basis its articles 11 and 13 of Amended Protocol II, on landmines, and presents annual information in the format of the OSCE questionnaire on anti-personnel mines to the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre. Given the security problems in our region, Armenia is ready to consider joining the above-mentioned Conventions in case the principle of simultaneous accession by all States of the region is applied.

Let me conclude by stressing once again the importance of continuous efforts to further improve and expand the international legal system in the field of the conventional arms control regime. Armenia remains fully committed to its international obligations on arms control. Allow me also to mention that Armenia has committed itself to the strengthening of the international capacity of the United Nations. We support the Organization's activities aimed at international peace and security and are ready to make our contribution to it.

**Ms. Martinic** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina is pleased that you, Sir, a representative from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), are chairing the work of the First Committee. We have no doubt that your ability, your career path and your extensive diplomatic experience will contribute to the success of our work. Allow me also to extend the congratulations of my delegation to the other members of the Bureau. I should also like to express gratitude for the presence of, and the intervention a few days ago by, the High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane (see A/C.1/69/PV.2), as well as for the work and dedication of her team.

The delegation of Argentina fully associates itself with the intervention to be delivered by the

representative of Costa Rica on behalf of CELAC, as well as the intervention to be delivered by the representative of Surinam on behalf of the Union of South American Nations in the thematic debate. My delegation would like to provide some brief elements for our deliberations.

The international community has established in the context of the United Nations a relatively comprehensive legal system for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Under the new circumstances, it is vital to maintain that system, to continue to promote the disarmament process and to adopt a new paradigm of cooperation. This is an urgent task, particularly if we want to maintain the integrity and authority of the system. There is no doubt that the United Nations should continue to play its role in this field.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, rhetoric should be set aside and we should achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, hold the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and start negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material. Those three actions were agreed in good faith at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and we call for their implementation. We have no doubt of the positive contagious effect that these steps would have in the entire system of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

In the area of conventional arms, as we have traditionally been doing, Argentina will introduce the draft resolution entitled "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms". We urge all delegations to consider sponsoring the draft resolution.

In addition, we welcome the fact that the Arms Trade Treaty has reached, in record time, the number of ratifications necessary for its entry into force in December. That marks the first time that the international community has agreed to regulate the arms trade. In doing so, we have agreed to prevent arms from falling into the hands of those who violate human rights, from being sold to terrorists and criminals, and from being diverted to the illicit market. In that context, Argentina expresses its strong support for the generous offer made by Trinidad and Tobago to host the secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty. At the same time, Argentina would like to thank Mexico for its generosity and willingness

to work in an open, transparent and inclusive manner with all delegations with a view to holding the First Conference of States Parties to the Treaty.

If we take into account that, as some studies have indicated, the development of what has been called the "Internet of Things" will lead to a doubling of knowledge every 12 hours, there can be little doubt about the urgency and importance of addressing the issue of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Argentina was a member of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts and awaits with interest the conclusions of the current Group of Experts, chaired by a representative of Brazil. At the same time, Argentina believes that the aim of achieving appropriate levels of security in the digital universe is essential for information and communication technologies to achieve their full potential, thereby contributing to the economic, social and cultural progress of all humankind.

In another vein, it is also necessary to overcome the perceived or real stalemate of the United Nations disarmament machinery, to generate the necessary political will to relaunch negotiations on the various agenda items and to reach solutions and find answers to the various concerns about security. In that regard, specifically with respect to the First Committee, we must adopt a pragmatic approach, one that allows us to carry forward our work in a more realistic fashion. We look forward with interest to the consultations that we expect you, Sir, to carry out once we have concluded our substantive work.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to recall what was so eloquently expressed by the representative of Chile at the conclusion of the 2005 NPT Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons:

"One's commitment to multilateralism is not displayed in words but in deeds, in the capacity for leadership and in the generosity to see as one's own the yearnings and needs of all nations."

It is in that context that Argentina is pleased to belong to a region where, on the basis of the invaluable capital that is mutual trust, we could forge a relationship that is mature, intense and productive and one that has crystallized today into a zone of peace. We wish fervently to contribute from our reality of the South to promote the dialogue and mutual understanding at the global level that will generate in the long term the

political will required for us all to benefit from a better future.

You, Mr. Chair, can count on the full cooperation of the delegation of Argentina. We hope that, at the conclusion of our work, we will be able to say, as your compatriot Bob Marley used to sing, “Everything will be all right”.

**Mr. Zamora** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to extend our congratulations to you, Sir, and to the rest of the Bureau on your election to lead the First Committee.

El Salvador supports the objective of building universal machinery that will prevent the use of nuclear weapons. It is time for all Governments of the world to use the meetings of the First Committee to voice their support in order to continue the negotiations to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Allow me to recall that nuclear weapons are extremely destructive because of their power and the danger that they represent to the environment and to human survival itself. This is a reality that cannot be denied. In that connection, our country views with concern the lack of concrete action and the lack of practical follow-up to address this phenomenon.

Although it is a country that neither produces nor seeks to become a nuclear-weapon State, El Salvador believes that any use of this type of weapons will have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, as was shown in the database presented during the Oslo Conference in 2013 and, more recently, at the Nayarit Conference in Mexico. Our Government supports the results of the Oslo and Nayarit Conferences and views positively the decision by the Government of Austria to host the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which will be held in December at Vienna.

Our delegation believes it is extremely important to support any initiative that seeks to eradicate the use of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, El Salvador believes that the Member States from Latin America and the Caribbean have already taken such a step by declaring the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world, which was achieved through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which dates back to 1967 and of which my country is a signatory. Nuclear-weapon-free zones have made a significant contribution to rejecting and stigmatizing weapons of mass destruction. Such zones lay a solid foundation for the development of a universal

international prohibition of such weapons. That is why our delegation will support the will, expressed by the peoples to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. El Salvador joins the effort of the sister Republic of Kazakhstan to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

El Salvador believes that today more than ever it is important to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We recognize this as a critical moment and express our disappointment at the limited support that has been shown for actions to that end. My country believes that the NPT is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. Therefore we believe that the action plan adopted in 2010 is our road map and the path to take to achieve a universal non-proliferation treaty. As part of that effort, my Government, together with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), has contributed by proclaiming our region as a zone of peace during the second CELAC Summit, held in Havana in 2013.

El Salvador is committed to disarmament and non-proliferation. Recently, working with the Network of Survivors and Persons with Disabilities and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, we organized the first national and Central American forum on the impact of the use of nuclear weapons on humankind.

El Salvador believes that human development and security are primordial and mutually complementary elements to ensure that all individuals can freely enjoy their rights and contribute to socioeconomic development, democratic governance and sustainable development. Under this paradigm El Salvador has faced a number of great challenges in terms of human rights, security and peace.

Our country, like many others in Central America, daily faces a threat from groups that stand against the system — such as those referred to as “maras”, a menacing scourge that uses terrorism as a tool to achieve its most despicable goals. In that regard, we believe that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a contributing factor to the actions carried out by such groups and poses a serious threat to our security. The illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and their stockpiling and proliferation fuel a culture of violence and impunity. We must therefore spare no effort to combat this scourge.

That is why we are aware of the situation that affects thousands of lives in the region and throughout the world. El Salvador was among the first 50 countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). That has contributed to the efforts of the international community and the United Nations for the entry into force of this important instrument by the end of this year.. Our Government has taken the necessary steps at the national level to fulfil its commitments under this international legally binding instrument. We reiterate our commitment to continue supporting and strengthening the obligations and responsibilities undertaken under the ATT.

It has been stated in this room that conflicts are linked to disarmament and development. As expressed in the Charter of the United Nations, the establishment and maintenance of international peace in the world require efforts to minimize the use of economic and human resources for the arms race. The problems confronting the international community in terms of development, poverty eradication and the elimination of diseases are all linked to disarmament. That is why my Government encourages the international community to continue taking relevant measures to fulfil the commitments undertaken by the United Nations, with the goal of continuing to strengthen the Organization's role in that regard.

In conclusion, I should like to say that El Salvador reiterates its commitment to continue working, uniting efforts promoting and participating in international forums to raise awareness of the serious threats of the use of weapons of mass destruction, and to stem the real and imminent threat posed by the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. El Salvador will make its contribution in support of the priority objective of the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, paying particular attention to taking measures to neutralize the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

**Mr. Grunditz** (Sweden): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the very important task as Chair of the First Committee, as well as to assure you of the full cooperation of the Swedish delegation.

Sweden fully subscribes to the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/c.1/69/PV.2), but I should like to add the following points in my national capacity.

Sweden believes in an approach to disarmament and international security that puts human beings front and centre of policy. In that approach the equal and full participation of both women and men is of key importance in order to achieve sustainable peace and security. The goal before us is to put in place an international framework of mutually reinforcing and complementary treaties, commitments and institutions in order to ensure that everyone can enjoy the right to be safe and secure.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons contravenes that approach. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, unbound by time and space. Nuclear weapons also pose an inherent risk to the continuation of human life on the planet — a risk over which the majority has no say. It is against that background that Sweden welcomes the fact that the humanitarian dimension has again been put at the forefront of discussions about nuclear disarmament. Sweden therefore supports the statement that will be delivered by the representative of New Zealand on this subject. We also look forward to the upcoming Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Vienna in December. We encourage all States, including the nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-weapon-possessor States, to participate in that Conference.

Sweden firmly believes that the humanitarian perspective can contribute to next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by providing new energy to the debate, new impetus to accelerate disarmament, and information to the new generations on the dangers of nuclear weapons. The 2015 Review Conference will be held in the year that marks 70 years since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 45 years since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and 20 years since the Treaty's indefinite extension.

The NPT was based on the realization that the terrible destructiveness of nuclear weapons had to be contained and eliminated. The goal of a world free of nuclear weapons is shared by most, if not all, but the results have not met our standards. Work is progressing slowly, if at all, in some multilateral forums. Cold War postures remain in place, and we do not see enough concrete steps to eliminate nuclear weapons.



The NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Hard work is needed by all States parties on the three pillars of the NPT — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — in order to reach a successful outcome at next year's Review Conference.

Sustainable security is built through cooperation, rather than in isolation against an adversary. Russian acts of aggression and the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory constitute serious breaches of international law. They completely contradict Russian obligations under the Budapest Memorandum and pose a serious challenge to the security situation in Europe and beyond. Those developments serve to underscore the urgency of strengthening treaties and commitments and of making deep cuts in all nuclear arsenals.

Sweden is particularly concerned about the continued existence of tactical nuclear weapons in our vicinity and urges all parties concerned to take steps to reduce and eliminate those weapons. Just as nuclear weapons should be seen as a relic of a bygone era, power politics should have no place in today's world, in which successful nations focus on progress and freedom.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. There remain unacceptable proliferation and non-compliance concerns. Non-State actors have to be prevented from acquiring weapons of mass destruction; any other scenario would be catastrophic. Sweden has always been in the forefront of efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles. The International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreement, together with the additional protocol, constitutes the verification standard. States that have not done so should bring into force additional protocols without delay.

The Nuclear Security Summit processes and the Global Partnership are instrumental in securing vulnerable nuclear material worldwide and minimizing the use of highly enriched uranium. We look forward to working with partners to promote biosecurity and avert the threat from bioterrorism through the Global Partnership and the Global Health Security agenda process. We are also ready to continue working with others in order to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

The use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict is abhorrent and unacceptable. Such weapons are

prohibited under Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and any such use represents a serious crime under humanitarian law.

Sweden is pleased to have contributed to the United Nations investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons led by Åke Sellström and to join the United Nations/Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Mission to oversee the dismantlement of Syria's declared stockpile of chemical weapons. Sweden condemns the continued use of chemical weapons in the form of chlorine gas in the conflict and supports the Secretary-General's call for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

On a day-to-day basis the biggest threat to human safety and security stems from the use of small arms and light weapons and their illicit proliferation. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) later this year will be a major achievement. The Treaty will encourage more responsible trade in conventional arms and help eradicate the unregulated and illicit trade. The fact that the ATT also addresses gender-based violence is important, but much more needs to be done to reduce and eliminate gender-based violence in armed conflicts.

Sweden attaches the greatest importance to the wide adherence to, and the effective implementation of, the Arms Trade Treaty. We look forward to helping to build a functional and effective Treaty. It is in that spirit that we have nominated Ambassador Paul Beijer to the position of head of the future ATT secretariat.

The work to achieve sustainable safety and security for all reaches beyond Earth. A growing number of human endeavours are dependent upon infrastructure based in space. Those activities are rapidly increasing in number and scope and have contributed tremendously to the development and welfare of societies around the world. With increased use of outer space comes the need for common rules of conduct so that even more people can benefit from space-related services and in order to ensure that activities are conducted in a sustainable manner. The report of last year's Group of Governmental Experts (see A/68/189) and the consensus resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (resolution 68/50) provided a much-needed breakthrough in that respect.

Building on the recommendations in that resolution, a series of consultations have taken place on an international code of conduct for activities in outer

space. The international code of conduct will provide voluntary rules of conduct to address the pressing issue of space debris and to help prevent conflicts in outer space. Sweden strongly supports efforts to commence negotiations on such an international code of conduct.

**The Chair:** I understand that there is no speaker in the room ready to take the floor. I shall therefore suspend the meeting until 4.30 p.m., after which it is hoped we will have more speakers to hear from.

*The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.*

**Mr. Moura (Portugal):** At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/69/PV.2), but let me make a few particular points speaking in my national capacity.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a major achievement of the international community, and we are very pleased that in a relatively short period of time it was possible to build up the sure prospect of the Treaty entering into force on 24 December. The process of enlarging the universe of State parties to the Treaty must continue, and Portugal appeals to all States not yet party to the Treaty to ratify it.

We are confident that the strong, transparent and effective implementation of the ATT will be a valuable contribution to fostering peace and security and will have an important humanitarian impact, particularly in regions affected by conflict, extremist threats, or even emerging from conflicts. The Treaty will also help to foster dialogue, multilateralism and confidence-building among all the relevant national, regional and international actors involved in arms control, thus contributing to improving the international security environment. We very much look forward to the First Conference of States Parties, to be held next year in Mexico.

Portugal attaches high importance to the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Although many questions remain unanswered, the credibility and effectiveness of the Treaty must be preserved and reinforced. We believe that the constructive engagement of all will make possible a positive and consensual

outcome, advancing our collective striving for a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Its three pillars — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — must be equally promoted in a balanced way, as they constitute together the object and purpose of the Treaty. We very much share the well-grounded concern expressed during the 2010 NPT Review Conference related to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.

The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is an aspiration towards which we must continue to strive. We believe that it is crucial to remain seized of the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, guided by the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We urge all States in the region to continue to engage with Ambassador Laajava of Finland and the co-convenors in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, we regret the continued lack of cooperation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are also deeply concerned at the reported Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. As to the Iranian nuclear programme and the post-Geneva Joint Plan of Action, we very much encourage the ongoing negotiation process between Iran and the E3/EU+3 and wish it to further proceed with renewed political impetus in a spirit of openness, transparency and goodwill, leading to a comprehensive and final agreement.

Portugal maintains a long-standing demand regarding the beginning of negotiations towards the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament, which since 1999 has not made any progress in that regard. We are of the strong view that this situation violates a basic non-discrimination requirement that should fully apply to a multilateral United Nations body such as the Conference on Disarmament — the single multilateral disarmament forum to negotiate legal instruments regarding non-proliferation and disarmament. We consider the beginning of the work of a special rapporteur to be a matter of urgency, which is in line with the recent nomination of a Friend of the Chair for enlargement purposes.

The fact is that the Conference on Disarmament remains in an agonizing and frustrating stalemate that urgently requires joint commitment and constructive work to overcome. Some progress has occurred during the current year, and hopefully it will encourage further impetus and closer cooperation to succeed in improving the international multilateral mechanisms aimed at promoting a safer world through non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. The adoption and subsequent implementation of new arms-related treaties and agreements are therefore critical tasks to pursue.

We very much appreciate the outstanding work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in cooperation with the international community in Syria. It stands out as an illustration of how success is achievable when joint political will mobilizes the required effort. Notwithstanding that, we remain concerned by recent reports questioning the accuracy of Syria's notifications on the entirety of its chemical arsenal and related structures. The fact that non-State actors, including radical, extremist and terrorist groups and movements, might gain access to means and expertise related to different types of weapons of mass destruction is a matter of great concern and must be addressed by the international community as a matter of priority.

New challenges to non-proliferation efforts must not be underestimated and deserve to be firmly tackled. The advances in technology are meant to promote human well-being, but their illegitimate use for potentially dangerous purposes involves serious threats, thus highlighting the need for effective international regulation. The developments related to outer space activities and to the cyberspace sphere create not only new borders for science to expand, but also new borders for security, adding challenges that ought to be addressed by the international community as a whole.

Therefore, multilateral instruments must be established to ensure that outer space and cyberspace are used only for peaceful, scientific and development goals. In that regard, we welcome the outcome of the latest report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189). We also fully support the international code of conduct for outer space activities, which constitutes a meaningful example of the kind of instrument required for that purpose.

In the field of technologically advanced new weapons, such as armed drones, and fully autonomous lethal weapons, Portugal is in favour of enhancing international discussions on ways to better address regulation, particularly in the light of international human rights and humanitarian law requirements.

The Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention is one of the most universally accepted and implemented disarmament treaties, with a huge humanitarian impact. In that regard, the recently held Maputo Conference stands out as a case of what can be achieved with joint political will and determination. There is still a long way to go, but we fully support the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan as the next move in the right direction.

Recent reports of the use of cluster munitions by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham in its campaign of terror have brought that category of munitions to a higher level of awareness and even alarm. For the first time, a non-State actor has used such a vicious and lethal conventional weapon. Portugal totally condemns that and looks forward to the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to be held next year in Dubrovnik.

Finally, I should like to reiterate Portugal's continued strong support for humanitarian law and human rights values to be considered in all disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and efforts.

**Mr. Tanin** (Afghanistan): At the outset, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in leading the work of the Committee and assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Afghanistan associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2). However, I wish to make the following observations in my national capacity.

Afghanistan reiterates its full commitment to multilateral diplomacy as an important principle for advancing disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. We believe the global goals towards arms control, arms reduction and the full eradication of any type of weapon of mass destruction can be realized only through all sides displaying strong political will.

Afghanistan supports unequivocally all initiatives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. Consistent with a core pillar of our foreign policy, we are fully committed to realizing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Asia and such zones in other parts of the world. In that regard, Afghanistan is a party to both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

As highlighted in two conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, the catastrophic consequences and humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons would be unbearable and should serve as an imperative to prevent any use of such weapons in future. We echo other delegations in saying that the only guarantee against that is the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. We welcome the call made at the Nayarit conference for the development of a legally binding instrument prohibiting any use of nuclear weapons. We look forward to the third conference, to be held in Vienna in December.

Decades after the adoption of the NPT, we have yet to see any substantial progress towards its implementation, particularly with regard to its article VI. As we approach the ninth Review Conference of the NPT next year, we believe that sincere commitment and cooperation are required by all, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, in order to move towards the realization of the overall goal of the NPT and the objectives of its Review Conference.

We strongly support the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Any continuing delay in the establishment of a Middle East zone runs contrary to the commitments made by the 2010 Review Conference and its action plan. We call for the convening of the conference without further delay.

We also stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, and we believe its entry into force will prevent further development and proliferation of those inhuman weapons.

This year marks one of the deadliest years for the Afghan people since 2001. The use of high-explosive weapons systems with effects over a wide area — systems such as mortars, rockets and grenades — by terrorists groups in civilian-populated areas and the use of civilians as human shields have resulted in a dramatic increase in civilian casualties.

The indiscriminate and unlawful continuing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including

pressure-plate IEDs, roadside bombs and suicide attacks by terrorists and extremist groups, continues to cause overwhelming loss of life on a daily basis among ordinary civilians, as well as among Afghan and international security forces, and is in direct violation of international humanitarian law. In 2010, my Government prohibited the import, export and transfer of ammonium nitrate, the main substance for manufacturing IEDs. We still face a situation in which such substances continue to be trafficked into our territory from within our immediate region. We therefore call for more coherent efforts and integrated mechanisms to address this challenge in our region and beyond.

Having experienced enduring conflict and violence, Afghanistan has been one of the main victims of small arms and light weapons. During wartime, millions of illegal arms and light weapons were imported or trafficked into our country. More than 1 million people were killed just by small arms and light weapons, and approximately 1 million more were disabled or handicapped because of those weapons and their associated ammunition. Small arms and light weapons have clearly been the main destabilizing and destructive element in Afghanistan over the past three decades. Afghanistan bears witness daily to the fact that terrorists' access to illegal small arms and light weapons fuels the cycle of violence in Afghanistan and in our region.

In that regard, Afghanistan fully supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We welcome the adoption of the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States, a process chaired by Afghanistan. I thank all Member States for their cooperation throughout the process with me and my team.

Despite the progress made in regulating the manufacture, trade, transit and circulation of small arms and light weapons, greater international cooperation and assistance is still needed to address challenges arising from the illicit circulation and uncontrolled spread of those weapons in many regions of the world, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations. Hence, we also welcome the inclusion among the sustainable development goals of a goal to reduce the illicit flow of arms by 2030.

War and violence has left Afghanistan heavily mined. In fact, it is one of the most heavily mined



countries in the world. Abandoned landmines and explosive ordinance continue to pose a great threat to the lives of many Afghan civilians and to further jeopardize the security and development of Afghanistan and its people. More than 1 million people have lost body parts due to landmines, and the widespread destruction and loss of life continue today. Moreover, at present, the Taliban and extremist militant groups continue to use mines to achieve their ultimate goal of threatening stability, safety and development in Afghanistan.

Notwithstanding the many challenges ahead, the end of Afghanistan's landmine and explosive remnants of war problem is in sight, as Afghanistan has commenced work on a 10-year plan, in line with the Ottawa Convention extension request, which will see Afghanistan mine-free by 2023. That will be a monumental achievement for the country, a result of the hard work and dedication of the thousands of Afghan deminers, who have been supported technically and financially for many years by numerous donor States and the United Nations Mine Action Service. Yet, financial constraints greatly hinder our ability to meet this tremendous challenge successfully. Therefore, sustained international support and assistance are central to our shared efforts towards achieving that goal.

We welcome the Maputo+15 Declaration, adopted at 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. We condemn in the strongest terms all use of anti-personnel mines and support the completion goals of the Maputo Review Conference. While the Convention has had great success in fomenting the international community's resolve against such indiscriminate weapons and in implementing country-specific commitments, Afghanistan still suffers from the consequences of past use.

Afghanistan is fully committed to the eradication of cluster munitions. In September 2011, we ratified the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions. With the destruction of thousands of different munitions, Afghanistan is pleased to have destroyed all weaponry of that kind within its military stockpiles. We are fully committed to the provisions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We condemn all use of these weapons, which are indiscriminate in their impact, and we encourage the universalization of the Convention.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Auza (Holy See):** As this is the first time that I address the First Committee, allow me to assure you, Sir, and the Bureau of my delegation's full cooperation in the pursuit of the Committee's vitally important efforts for world peace.

I have the honour to convey to you, Sir, and to all the delegations here present the greetings of His Holiness Pope Francis, who has made clear his strong support for the rapid adoption of steps that would lead to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and to the reduction of the world's reliance on armed force in the conduct of international affairs. He pleads for the non-proliferation of arms and for the disarmament of all parties, beginning with nuclear and chemical weapons disarmament.

The past year has seen progress on the elimination of chemical weapons, yet reports of the continued use of chemical weapons, including chlorine gas, remind the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate once and for all chemical weapons and any use as a weapon of dual-use chemicals.

With regard to nuclear weapons, the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which will be held in December in Vienna, is a sobering reminder of the deep frustration of the international community at the lack of speedy progress on nuclear disarmament and of the inhuman and immoral consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction. The inability of the nuclear-weapon States to begin negotiations towards further reductions in their existing stockpiles is troubling, but the modernization of some existing systems and the increase of weapons stockpiles are even more troubling.

The ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will take place very soon in New York. Nearly all the States represented here in this room are parties to the Treaty. One would think that a treaty so important to our mutual security would be implemented more rapidly and effectively, and that by now decisions taken at previous review conferences would already be advanced in their implementation. Regrettably, that has not been and is not the case. The Treaty's central promise of nuclear-weapon States to gradually disarm in exchange for non-nuclear-weapon States to refrain from acquiring nuclear arms remains at an impasse.

The Holy See continues to believe that a policy of permanent nuclear deterrence jeopardizes the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. My delegation therefore urges the Committee and the preparations for the ninth Review Conference to focus on the need to move beyond nuclear deterrence and work towards the establishment of lasting peace founded on mutual trust, rather than a state of mere non-belligerence founded on the logic of mutual destruction. In that regard, the Holy See urges all States to sign and/or ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without further delay, because it is a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Moreover, my delegation believes that the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction would be a big step in the right direction, as it would demonstrate that we can indeed move towards a universal agreement to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction.

In keeping our focus on nuclear weapons and the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we should not neglect our larger objective of a world less reliant on the use of force. Article VI of the Treaty clearly states that:

“Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes 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.”

The Holy See welcomes the progress, however modest, in the areas of conventional weapons such as those related to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. But it remains deeply concerned that the flow of conventional arms continues to exacerbate conflicts around the globe. Let us not forget that financial greed fuels arms sales, and arms sales fuel conflicts, which cause untold suffering and violations of human rights. For as long as such great quantities of arms are in circulation, as at present, new pretexts can always be found for initiating hostilities, and easy access to arms facilitates the perpetration of violence against innocent populations.

It is my delegation's sincerest hope that this year's session will respond to that challenge and recognize the grave consequences of the proliferation and use of conventional weapons for human life throughout the world. While aware that the work of the Committee is extremely challenging and that agreements are very hard to come by, we must never despair. We must not lose interest in these very complex issues.

May the proverbial image of the constant drops of water ever patiently melting the hardest rock inspire us all to go forward in the midst of slow progress and in spite of stalemates and setbacks.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

**Ms. Lawand** (International Committee of the Red Cross): In the course of its humanitarian work in countless armed conflicts and other situations of violence throughout the world, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has witnessed at first hand the high cost to civilians of insufficient controls on the availability of conventional weapons. In addition to prolonging armed conflicts, weak controls on the availability of arms have facilitated violations of international humanitarian law, endangered humanitarian assistance and caused the displacement of millions of civilians. Even after wars have ended, high levels of armed violence and insecurity have continued because weapons have remained too easily available.

The ICRC is therefore very pleased that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will enter into force at the end of this year. Today more than 120 States — well over half of the world's countries — have ratified or signed the Treaty, thereby committing to its humanitarian goal of reducing human suffering through strict controls on the international trade in conventional arms. The ICRC encourages all States to adhere to the ATT at the earliest opportunity.

At the heart of the Treaty is the recognition of each State's duty to respect, and ensure respect for, international humanitarian law. Faithfully and consistently applied, the Treaty will ensure that weapons do not end up in the hands of those who would use them to commit war crimes or serious violations of human rights law.

While congratulating States on the imminent entry into force of the ATT, the ICRC is aware that the flow of weapons continues to fuel some of the most

brutal armed conflicts. We remind all arms-exporting States, even those not bound by existing instruments regulating arms transfers, that they must refrain from transferring weapons to warring parties that are manifestly perpetrating war crimes or where there is a substantial risk that they will do so.

It is not just the availability of conventional arms that engenders civilian suffering; the types of conventional weapons chosen by belligerents when fighting in populated areas are also of concern. This year alone, a number of armed conflicts have seen the use in populated areas of explosive weapons that have a wide impact area, weapons such as large bombs or missiles, unguided indirect-fire weapons, including artillery and mortars, and weapons systems designed to deliver multiple munitions over a wide area. The ICRC believes that explosive weapons with a wide impact area should be avoided in densely populated areas due to the significant likelihood of indiscriminate effects and despite the absence of an express legal prohibition against specific types of weapons.

Recent conflicts show that there is a need for States to pay greater attention to this important humanitarian issue. In its day-to-day work to protect and assist civilians affected by armed conflict, the ICRC continues to witness the devastating human cost of such weapons in terms of incidental or indiscriminate death and injury and severe damage to critical infrastructure.

Damaged or destroyed buildings are the most visible effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Less visible is the damage caused to vital water and electrical supply systems, which has severe adverse consequences on the functioning of hospitals and, more generally, on the survival of the civilian population. Moreover, the loss of homes and livelihoods caused by explosive weapons in populated areas leads to the long-lasting displacement of civilians. Those effects raise questions about the choice of means and methods of warfare, including whether it is appropriate in populated areas to employ weapons that have been designed for combat in an open battlefield, or otherwise to employ large amounts of explosive force.

In his November 2013 report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2013/689), the Secretary-General encouraged States to share information on their respective policies, operational practices and lessons learned on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which would contribute to informing discussions

and, eventually, to developing policy guidance. The ICRC joins the Secretary-General in that call.

Although every day the ICRC observes and responds to the effects on civilians of conventional weapons, the threat of nuclear weapons remains a serious concern in humanitarian terms. In that regard, as is well known, in 2011 the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement appealed to States to ensure that nuclear weapons were never used again and to pursue urgently negotiations to prohibit and completely eliminate nuclear weapons on the basis of existing commitments and international obligations. At the same time, we expressed the difficulty of envisaging how any use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with international humanitarian law.

The ICRC welcomes the increased attention that States are paying to the humanitarian impact of these weapons, including through the Oslo and Nayarit conferences and the forthcoming Vienna conference. We encourage all States to actively participate in those critical discussions. Evidence of the immediate and long-term effects of the use of any nuclear weapon, including as a result of an accidental detonation, confirms that nuclear disarmament remains a humanitarian imperative. It is our hope that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will recognize the urgent need for robust action to advance nuclear disarmament.

Finally, the ICRC wishes to address two new technologies of warfare about which there continues to be much debate internationally — autonomous weapons and cyberwarfare.

The ICRC welcomes the increased attention that the international community is paying to autonomous weapons systems, including in the framework 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 (CCW). In the past year, discussions about those weapons in the CCW and other forums have led to a better understanding of the technological capabilities, the military intent and legal and ethical issues raised by this new technology of warfare.

In the ICRC's view, the defining feature of an autonomous weapon is autonomy in the critical functions of searching for, identifying, selecting and attacking targets. There is often a sense that these

weapons are weapons of the distant future, but the existing autonomy is already increasing in the critical functions of some weapon systems in use today. There is a danger that increasing autonomy in the critical functions of weapon systems will mean that human decision-making is being replaced by that of machines, thereby posing significant legal and ethical concerns.

Current technological capabilities and foreseeable developments raise serious doubts about the ability to use autonomous weapon systems in compliance with international humanitarian law in all but the narrowest of scenarios and the simplest of environments. Beyond the doubts about the legal compliance are fundamental concerns about the ethical and moral acceptability of allowing machines independently to take life-and-death decisions. There is a need to ensure appropriate or meaningful human control or judgment over the use of force, including the use of lethal force against humans.

The potential human cost of cyberwarfare is also a matter of concern. Cyberwarfare refers to operations against a computer or a computer system through a data stream when employed as a means and method of warfare. Cyberattacks against transportation systems,

electricity networks, dams and chemical or nuclear plants could have devastating consequences. The ICRC welcomes the fact that the 2013 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/68/98) confirms the applicability of international law in that regard. Indeed, cyberwarfare is subject to the limits imposed by international humanitarian law on all new weapons, means and methods of warfare, in particular the prohibition on directing attacks against civilian objects and the prohibition on indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks.

Although existing rules apply to cyberwarfare, the interconnectedness of military and civilian networks poses a significant practical challenge in terms of protecting civilians from the dangers of cyberwarfare. This challenge underscores the importance for States that develop or acquire cyberwarfare capabilities — whether for offensive or defensive purposes — to assess their lawfulness under international humanitarian law.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*