



General Assembly

Seventieth session

First Committee

20th meeting

Thursday, 29 October 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

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

I now invite Mr. Wang to address the Committee.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: In accordance with our timetable for thematic discussions, this afternoon the Committee will take up the cluster “Regional disarmament and security”, beginning with a panel discussion.

I now have the pleasure to welcome to the rostrum the members of the panel on regional disarmament and security. They are, first, the Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Wang Xiaoyu; secondly, the Director ad interim of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Ms. Olatokunbo Ige; thirdly, the Director ad interim of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Yuriy Kryvonos; and, fourthly, the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms. Mélanie Régimbal.

I will first give our panellists the floor. The time limit for each panel presentation is 10 minutes. After hearing from our panellists, we will switch to an informal mode to afford delegations an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Mr. Wang Xiaoyu (Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs): It is an honour for my colleagues and me to address the First Committee on the issue of regional disarmament, under agenda item 98, and specifically on the activities of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs’ (UNODA) Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean. In keeping with their mandate, the Regional Centres support regional disarmament measures, at the request of States, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region, with a view to enhancing the security of States and contributing to regional and international peace and security.

While the operational costs of the Regional Centres are funded in part by the regular budget of the Organization, their substantive programmes rely entirely on voluntary contributions. We would like to express our gratitude to those States and organizations that have made financial and/or in-kind contributions to the Regional Centres.

Based on requests of Member States and UNODA’s programme priorities, we believe that capacity-building is essential to the success of promoting and implementing global disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation norms and instruments at the regional, subregional and national levels. During the past year, the three Regional Centres’ programmes undertook activities mainly in the following areas.

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First, they provided capacity-building programmes and legal and technical assistance to Member States in their efforts to accede to and to implement global and regional instruments, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, various regional and subregional instruments on combating illicit small arms and light weapons and their control, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), just to name a few.

Secondly, they promoted dialogue and confidence-building by organizing global and regional conferences and other events on both weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms issues, as well as on regional security challenges.

Thirdly, they undertook advocacy and outreach activities to promote global treaties and raise public awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation through peace and disarmament education programmes. I will leave the details of those activities to the Directors of the Regional Centres to elaborate on their respective Centre's programmes.

Since our last report before the Committee (see A/C.1/69/PV.16), the Centres undertook about 90 activities funded from extrabudgetary contributions. Upon request, those activities focused on supporting Member States in building their national capacities. In doing so, we made greater efforts to build or strengthen partnerships with other United Nations entities, regional and subregional organizations, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Those efforts aimed at improving programme delivery and achieving synergy on the ground. We also made conscious efforts to integrate the Centres' disarmament and arms control programmes into the United Nations overall regional and subregional strategies where relevant, and to enhance cross-regional cooperation and coordination.

The Regional Centres shall continue their close cooperation with Member States that request assistance and with relevant regional organizations, as well as with donors and other partners. We also look forward to the First Committee's continued interest, support and engagement in the activities undertaken by the three United Nations Regional Centres.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Ms. Ige.

Ms. Ige (United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa): I have the pleasure to report to the First Committee on the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre in Africa (UNREC) of the Office for Disarmament Affairs during the period from October 2014 to October 2015. In that period, the Regional Centre implemented 11 conferences and seminars, seven training sessions, three practical disarmament activities, four activities on Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and three activities on the Biological Weapons Convention.

I would like to express my appreciation for the support received from Member States and our institutional partners, including the African Union (AU) and the European Union. I would especially like to thank the Republic of Togo for hosting us for the past 30 years.

Since our last meeting with the Committee (see A/C.1/69/PV.16), the Centre continued to assist Member States and intergovernmental and civil society organizations through capacity-building, policy support and technical assistance to promote peace, security and disarmament in Africa. In line with the priorities of the continent, the prevention of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons remained the primary focus area of UNREC's activities.

As an observer member of the African Union-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the Centre provided substantive and technical advice to the African Union (AU) Commission and the committee on the implementation of the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. UNREC contributed to the drafting of a training manual on DDR and a guide for Central African States to harmonize their national legislation on small arms with regional and international instruments, such as the Kinshasa Convention.

(spoke in French)

The Regional Centre provided substantive support to the 11 States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa on issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. Building upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, and in the context of the

upcoming African Union Summit on maritime security, UNREC is conducting informal consultations with member States of the Gulf of Guinea — from South Africa to West Africa — and with other potential partners on the adverse consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons for maritime security and sustainable development.

UNREC also provided assistance for the implementation of international and regional instruments to combat the illicit trade and the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, in particular by assisting in the drafting of national action plans on small arms and in strengthening the capacity of Governments and civil-society organizations in the area of small-arms control. The Centre has also provided support in the area of legislation in Mali, Nigeria and Togo by reviewing those countries' laws relating to small arms and light weapons.

(spoke in English)

UNREC, in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the International Small Arms Control Standards Implementation Support Unit, conducted a training session for officials from East African Member States on the International Small Arms Control Standards Assessment Tool. With that tool, East African States will assess how their policies, programmes and practices align with international standards and identify areas in need of strengthening. United Nations peacekeeping missions in the subregion also participated in the training.

With regard to the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, UNREC is undertaking a study in nine countries ranging from the Sahel to Central Africa. The study, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will provide up-to-date information on small-arms-related challenges in those countries. That information will form the basis for future capacity-building activities such as those envisaged under the European Union-funded programme of activities on physical safety and stockpile management of small arms in the Sahel. The project will be conducted over a three-year period to reduce the risk of illicit trade in small arms, light weapons and ammunition.

The Centre has conducted capacity-building activities and provided technical support to Mali to empower national civil-society organizations to prevent the proliferation of arms through national

awareness-raising programmes. The Centre also began activities focused on the marking and registration of Government-owned and civilian-held weapons and the development of standard operating procedures for the management of imported weapons.

The Centre provided recommendations to Liberia on the physical security and management of weapons stockpiles in the context of an assessment that the Security Council had requested the Secretary-General to undertake. A training session on the marking and registration of small arms and light weapons in Liberia was conducted by UNREC in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, provided assistance to Burkina Faso, the Niger and Sierra Leone, with the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Marking machines were provided, and training sessions were organized on marking and record-keeping of small arms and light weapons.

(spoke in French)

The Regional Centre provided support to Togo in the marking and registering of over 9,000 civilian-held arms. That activity was accompanied by an awareness-raising campaign for the public and a high-level briefing for the Government. The Centre also developed and piloted a training course on weapons and ammunition management for security forces, including guidelines for the use of force, as well as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the International Small Arms Control Standards.

Building on its existing work in this field, UNREC has continued to provide support and assistance to African States in their efforts to implement the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). For example, the Regional Centre has helped the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to implement the ATT by ensuring synergy among it, the ECOWAS treaty on small arms and light weapons and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Centre helped raised the awareness of States on the ATT and its provisions. It also assisted States in planning the steps towards the implementation of the Treaty.

UNREC will continue to engage with Member States and regional and subregional organizations on the Treaty by bringing its expertise through awareness-raising, information and technical assistance. In particular, UNREC has assisted African small island developing States in identifying the specific challenges they face and how the ATT can contribute to responding to them. UNREC will specifically focus its assistance on understanding how human rights-related provisions in the ATT are to be implemented, including those relating to women.

(spoke in English)

In the area of weapons of mass destruction, the Regional Centre provided assistance on the implementation of international instruments, including the Biological Weapons Convention. UNREC also supported Member States in their efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which builds on the work done by the Centre in the previous year on assisting African States in reporting to the Committee. The Centre facilitated and assisted the 1540 Committee Group of Experts in visiting Malawi, Senegal, Togo and Zambia to provide assistance, in particular discussing future steps to be taken by those States in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). More African States have also expressed interest in hosting such country visits.

UNREC worked with the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso and Uganda in strengthening their national capacities to implement their obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention, in particular confidence-building measures, legislative and administrative measures, awareness-raising and the creation of a code of conduct on biosafety and biosecurity standards, which was done in cooperation with the Implementation Support Unit.

The Centre continued its information, advocacy and outreach activities towards States, civil society and the public at large through various media, events and celebrations, in particular briefings to diplomats accredited to African States, the distribution of the UNREC e-newsletter to over 5,500 global subscribers, and the website.

With regard to contributions and the support received by States, UNREC would like to thank its donors, namely, France, Germany, Japan — through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — Norway, Togo, the United Kingdom and the United States of

America — through the 1540 Trust Fund — in addition to the Economic Community of Central African States and the European Union. The Centre also benefited from the generous in-kind contribution from Finland, which financed an international United Nations Volunteer, and from Germany, which is funding an Associate Expert Junior Professional Officer in legal affairs. Additionally, through the 1540 Trust Fund, the United States of America is funding a national United Nations Volunteer to coordinate activities on resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa.

UNREC is also grateful for in-kind contributions in the form of technical experts provided by the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali. The Centre also wishes to express gratitude for financial contributions from donor States to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, UNDP, the International Organization of la Francophonie, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

(spoke in French)

The Centre remains ready to support Member States in addressing disarmament and non-proliferation challenges in Africa. I would also like to echo the appeal of the Secretary-General and that of the African Union for States in a position to do so to make financial contributions to the Trust Fund of the Centre, and in particular African States.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Mr. Kryvonos.

Mr. Kryvonos (United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific): I have the pleasure to report to the First Committee on the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) since last year's session of the First Committee (see A/C.1/70/PV.16).

The Centre carried out seven projects, reaching as many as 400 participants or trainees. The Centre focused its activities on three main areas, namely, providing capacity-building and technical assistance for the implementation of international instruments on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation; promoting dialogue and confidence-building among Member States by organizing major conferences and other forums; and undertaking outreach and advocacy activities, including peace- and disarmament-education programmes.

As many participants may know, the Centre has been temporarily relocated to Bangkok since 18 May, following strong earthquakes that struck Kathmandu in April and May. During the earthquakes, the Centre's office building was severely damaged and deemed no longer safe for use by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, and the living premises of the majority of the Centre's staff also suffered serious damage and they had to be resettled at a temporary shelter. The temporary relocation made it possible for the Regional Centre to continue its planned regional activities for 2015 and early 2016, which cover a number of Member States in the Asian and Pacific region.

With regard to capacity-building activities, UNRCPD carried out several projects to assist Member States in the Asia-Pacific region to implement their commitments relating to multilateral instruments, including the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Arms Trade Treaty. In cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh, the Centre organized a national capacity-building workshop on the Programme of Action and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). About 40 Government officials from 19 national ministries and agencies participated in the workshop, which addressed policies, practices and technical issues relating to combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as the Arms Trade Treaty. The workshop identified areas where further support would be required, in particular on national legislation and record-keeping systems.

The Centre completed a two-month project in Maldives by providing the Government with technical and legal assistance to facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action and support its capacity to move towards accession to the ATT. The project was developed in response to a request by Maldives for assistance to implement the Programme of Action. It consisted of three phases, namely, an assessment visit to Maldives to identify needs, including a site visit; a review of the national legislation, regulations and procedures relating to small arms control, including stockpile management and the development of recommendations for further action; and the presentation of recommendations to Government experts and officials.

In November 2014, the Centre organized a regional legal assistance workshop on the ATT in Cambodia, with 13 Member States of the region participating.

The workshop focused on facilitating the process of the signing, ratification of and accession to the Treaty. The workshop provided an opportunity to assess and discuss the gaps between national legislation and Treaty obligations. At the workshop, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands Forum presented a model law that could be used for the implementation of the ATT.

Furthermore, jointly with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, the Centre conducted a national round-table discussion on the ATT. Thirty-five representatives from more than 10 key ministries and national agencies dealing with international transfers of conventional arms participated in the meeting. Briefings on the Treaty provisions were provided, and the implications of accession to the ATT were discussed.

With regard to promoting dialogue and building confidence among Member States, UNRCPD co-organized two annual conferences to address current global and regional challenges in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

The thirteenth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, held in December 2014, focused on preparations for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and issues related to the Treaty implementation. In addition, it addressed the potential danger of the development and use of autonomous lethal weapons systems and possible preventive measures to regulate various aspects of such systems.

The twenty-fifth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, held in Hiroshima City, Japan, in August 2015, addressed the outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference and possible next steps in view of its outcome, the significance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the role of civil society and education in renewing the efforts towards realizing the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. With the participation of some members of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Group of Eminent Persons, the Conference also discussed the important role of the CTBT in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

With regard to the peace and disarmament education programme, in 2014, the Centre concluded phase I of its peace and disarmament education project in Nepal, incorporating peace and disarmament education modules into high school curriculums.

Building on the progress achieved, the Centre commenced phase II of the project in December 2014, in partnership with UNESCO. The Centre organized four workshops, attended by 100 teachers and other education practitioners. Six articles on peace and disarmament education methodology were published. The curriculums and textbooks created during phases I and II of the project will reach hundreds of thousands students in Nepal per year for the next 10 years.

The Centre strengthened its outreach activities. UNRCPD publishes regular fact sheets and newsletters and constantly improves and updates its website to reach an increasing share of its audience interested in disarmament issues in the region and beyond. UNRCPD's Twitter stream provides updates on disarmament issues in the Asia-Pacific region and has reached over 1,200 followers worldwide. Moreover, the Centre engaged with subregional organizations and other stakeholders in the region. The staff of the Centre contributed substantively to five events on capacity-building and promoting peace, arms control and disarmament agreements in the region organized by those bodies.

In conclusion, despite the earthquakes in Nepal and its temporary relocation, the Centre, with the support of Member States, including donor countries, as well as the Office of Disarmament Affairs headquarters, managed to implement more projects and activities than it did previously.

I would like particularly to thank our donors, namely, Australia, China, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom, as well as Risho Kosei-kai of Japan, for their confidence and financial support. In addition, Canada, Japan and Switzerland also provided the Centre with in-kind support, such as United Nations Volunteers and United Nations Youth Volunteers.

The Centre is looking forward to continuing its cooperation with, and assistance to, Member States in the region, upon request, to strengthen their capacities to implement global and regional disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. However, the Centre's ability to carry out these programmes depends on the availability of both human and financial resources. Therefore, I would like to echo the call by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document A/69/127, on the Regional Centre, for the countries in

the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Ms. Régimbal.

Ms. Régimbal (United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean): It is a pleasure to be with the First Committee again this year and to have an opportunity to share with representatives highlights of the activities that were carried out in 2014 and 2015.

Since we last met (see A/C.1/69/PV.16), the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) undertook over 50 activities in 17 States, reaching more than 1,550 officials through different capacity-building activities, including training sessions and legal and policy assistance covering issues of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The Centre assisted Member States in their implementation of various international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the International Tracing Instrument; Security Council resolution 1540 (2004); and resolution 65/69, on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

A few highlights of this year's work include UNLIREC's renewal, in 2014 and 2015, of its mission to promote women as agents of change in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation and its launching of its second edition of its *Women Forces of Change* publication, which pays tribute to nearly 100 professional women from the region who have dedicated their lives to advancing the women and peace and security agenda as defined by resolution 65/69.

To assist States in addressing the impact of the illicit arms trade on women and children, UNLIREC developed a risk assessment template to help States identify risks specific to women and young people associated with arms transfers and whether those risks could cross the thresholds of human rights and international humanitarian law violations. This new tool was first made available to States at a regional seminar in Mexico, and then again through the UNLIREC's ATT implementation courses.

In keeping with the global momentum and focus on the ATT, UNLIREC implemented its ATT course for about 130 officials in Central America. The courses, which are now available in both English and Spanish, complement the Office for Disarmament Affairs' ATT implementation toolkit. The national courses target regulating and control authorities, such as customs, police and defence forces, as well as civil aviation and port authorities, to facilitate understanding of the provisions and obligations of the Arms Trade Treaty. In particular, national control authorities are introduced to risk assessment templates' proposed model for end-user certificates, with a view to standardizing the control measures and documentation needed for international transfers to be conducted in keeping with ATT obligations. It is important to note that both the ATT manual and the gender risk-assessment tools have been passed on to our sister centres in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, thereby enhancing the scope of the activities.

UNLIREC responded to requests by States in the Caribbean to strengthen their efforts to combat illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking. In that context, UNLIREC launched a project in eight Caribbean States to assist Governments over the course of the next 24 months in enhancing their capabilities to gather, maintain and share information drawn from forensic ballistics evidence for identifying sources of illicit weapons and ammunition, as well as reducing impunity in cases of trafficking and armed violence caused by firearms. The eight Caribbean States received support in the elaboration of national action plans for firearms forensic ballistics, the provision of basic laboratory materials and equipment, training, the incorporation of standard operating procedures and the development of national competency-training frameworks for firearm examiners. UNLIREC's assistance in this area reached almost 250 officials and built upon the work undertaken by the Caribbean Community, INTERPOL and other international partners to roll out the Regional Integrated Ballistics Information Network for the Caribbean region.

(spoke in Spanish)

UNLIREC is aware that robust frameworks are key to strengthening the fight against the illicit trade in firearms. It is for that reason that UNLIREC provided legal assistance to the Dominican Republic in aligning its new draft law on small arms and light weapons with international and regional instruments. Peru also

benefited from internal advice in the legal and technical fields through assistance in drafting the new regulatory framework to support the new arms legislation enacted at the beginning of 2015.

Since 2014, UNLIREC has formed part of a United Nations multi-agency framework to promote peace and citizen security in northern Peru. The effort continued to make a difference in 2015 with the recent destruction of over 2,000 confiscated small arms, in cooperation with the Government of Peru and local authorities, which permanently eliminated more than 2,000 arms.

That joint programme is a collaborative effort of UNLIREC with partners from the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, which are all implementing activities in Peru. The programme aims to combat the illicit trade in small arms and reduce and prevent armed violence by working with local Governments. This multisectoral intervention is a prime example of how the United Nations system can work as one to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

(spoke in English)

UNLIREC also cooperated with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) to launch a project to address the issue of the growth of private security companies offering armed protection services in the region and its impact on small arms-related issues. Through the introduction of international standards to regulate and oversee the handling of small arms, the project aims to reduce the risk of the diversion of small arms to illicit markets and actors.

In its first set of activities implemented in 2015, the project focused on providing training on the issue of stockpile management in El Salvador and Peru through the application of the International Small Arms Control Standards, as well as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, which were adapted to the requirements of the private security sector and used in the training programmes. It is hoped that the efforts could evolve into a multi-year cross-regional framework implemented with DCAF, and where appropriate, in various regions where Office of Disarmament Affairs Centres are operating.

Finally, UNLIREC continues to support five Caribbean States in their implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) through improved strategic trade controls and in the updated legislative and policy frameworks. Building on last year's activities, UNLIREC continues to assist these five States in updating their legislation and regulations. UNLIREC is particularly pleased to report that in the Dominican Republic it was able to present a new bill of law jointly implementing resolution 1540 (2004) at the national level. Part of this comprehensive assistance package entails supporting the elaboration of voluntary national action plans on resolution 1540 (2004). With UNLIREC's support and thanks to the previous legal analyses and consultations with national stakeholders undertaken in conjunction with members of the group of experts assisting the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), as well as our colleagues from CARICOM, this year Grenada submitted its first voluntary national action plan. We are also expecting that the Dominican Republic will soon follow suit. UNLIREC will continue to work with colleagues in Belize and Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica to follow up on those action plans.

UNLIREC also collaborated in the delivery of joint trainings with several partners, such as the International Maritime Organization in Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, where we were able to undertake tabletop exercises on maritime risk assessments related to the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). A similar training will be undertaken in Belize later this month, as well as in partnership with INTERPOL and other partners in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica to provide law enforcement training on the detection and handling of dual-use chemicals and other substances. In keeping with States' requests for assistance, UNLIREC is currently seeking support from donors to expand the scope of its programme on Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In conclusion, I wish to thank our donors, namely, Canada, Germany, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru and the United States of America, as well as the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, for their generous support, without which none of the activities I have mentioned would have been possible, and to appeal to States — in particular those of the Latin American and Caribbean region — to continue supporting the Centre.

(spoke in Spanish)

I reiterate UNLIREC's commitment to continue developing and implementing innovative tools to counter the proliferation of illicit arms and make our region more secure. I look forward to receiving representatives' feedback on the Centre's impact in the field and how we can better focus our efforts to meet their needs in terms of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The Chair: I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to have an informal question-and-answer session with our panellists.

The meeting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 3.55 p.m.

The Chair: On behalf of all delegations, I would like to thank our panellists for their contributions.

We will now hear from delegations on the list of speakers for the cluster on regional disarmament and security. Before I open the floor, I would once again ask speakers to kindly observe the time limits governing this segment of our work — five minutes when speaking in the national capacity and seven minutes for statements on behalf of several delegations.

I call on the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/70/L.8 and A/C.1/70/L.18.

Mr. Isnomo (Indonesia): I am reading the shortened version of the statement. The complete version is available on the First Committee website.

The States members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) reiterate their serious concern about the two-decade delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and urge the sponsors of the resolution to take all necessary measures to ensure its full implementation without any further delay.

NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their profound disappointment at the fact that the 2010 action plan to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has not been implemented. They strongly reject the alleged impediments for not implementing the action plan or the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. That runs counter to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution.

NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment that a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, due to have been held in 2012, has not yet been convened, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Recalling the opposition expressed by the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada at the concluding session of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, NAM States parties to the NPT express their disappointment that, as a result of that opposition, consensus on new measures regarding the process to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East was not achieved. That could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole.

NAM re-emphasizes the special responsibility of the sponsor States of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East with regard to its implementation. NAM is concerned that the persistent failure to implement the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conference, undermines the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance between its three pillars, in particular when taking into account that the indefinite extension of the Treaty agreed at the 1995 Review Conference — which is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East — does not entail the right to possess nuclear weapons indefinitely.

NAM strongly supports the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Pending its establishment, NAM demands that Israel, the only State in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so, renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without precondition and further delay, and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) full-scope safeguards. NAM expresses great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States. NAM condemns Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals. The Movement also calls for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material and facilities, resources or devices and the extension of assistance in

the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel.

NAM believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba, as well as the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and Mongolia's status as a nuclear-weapon-free State are positive steps forward and important measures towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. They reiterate that, in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances against the threat or use of nuclear weapons to all States in the zone concerned.

NAM will present two draft resolutions, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace" (A/C.1/70/L.18) and "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament" (A/C.1/70/L.8), related to this thematic cluster. The Movement once again seeks the support of all Member States for the adoption, without a vote, of the aforementioned draft resolutions.

The Chair: I thank the representative of Indonesia for reading out a shortened version of his statement.

Ms. García Moyano (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American States (UNASUR).

All UNASUR States are party to the main international disarmament instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We are therefore a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. In August 2009, at an extraordinary meeting in Bariloche, Argentina, the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR decided to strengthen South America as a zone of peace, agreeing to the establishment of a mechanism of mutual trust in the areas of security and defence. In so doing, we upheld the decision to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any other UNASUR member.

Following the decision made in Bariloche, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence of UNASUR established a confidence and security mechanism, which consists of the following concrete implementation

measures and guarantees: exchange of information and transparency with regard to systems of defence and military expenditures; early notification of military deployment or exercises in border areas, invitations to observers to participate in international exercises and the establishment of communication mechanisms in the area of regional and extraregional military activities; security measures related to border surveillance, prevention and deterrence of illegal armed groups, acts of terrorism, and the strengthening of democracy and human rights. The measures also include guarantees such as the prohibition against the threat or use of force; South America as a nuclear-weapon-free zone under the Treaty of Tlatelolco; the respect for the principles of international law related to defence cooperation treaties; and compliance and verification measures.

Accordingly, the Heads of State of South America highlighted this determination at their seventh meeting held in Paramaribo on 30 August 2013, while noting that the South American Defence Council, created in 2008, is the ideal forum to advance work on strategic thinking. Since its inception in December 2008, the South American Defence Council has approved its statute and biennial action plans, which emphasize structured actions centred on defence policy, military cooperation, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, the defence industry and technology, education and training.

In March 2010, the decision was made to create the Centre for Strategic Defence Studies, as an institution to generate knowledge and disseminate South American strategic thinking on defence and security matters. With respect to confidence-building mechanisms and security strengthening measures, the Centre for Strategic Defence Studies launched, in December 2014, the South American Register of Aggregate Defence Expenditures for 2006-2010, compiling for the first time official information from the 12 UNASUR member States, based on an agreement on the common methodology developed for that purpose. Following the publication of the register of defence expenditures, in July 2015 the compendium known as the Institutionalization of Defence in South America was published as an effective and concrete measure to build transparency and confidence. The compendium contains a systematized description and an analysis of the rules of organization and functional aspects of defence institutions across the 12 member countries of the South American Defence Council.

Currently, the Centre for Strategic Defence Studies is developing the first South American Register of Military Inventory, which will further strengthen UNASUR's determination to build transparency.

Each year, the General Assembly reiterates its firm support for the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) for the promotion of United Nations activities at the regional and subregional levels to strengthen peace, disarmament, stability, security and development among Member States. UNASUR wishes to highlight that UNLIREC has succeeded in implementing its programmes of work, which are characterized by their interdisciplinary approach and the level of coordination with various actors in the region, including other United Nations agencies, national and provincial Governments, municipal authorities and representatives of civil society. We stress the importance of ensuring that the Centre's programme of activities is applied in accordance with the priorities of the States of the region.

In that context, I wish to draw attention to the initiatives undertaken by UNLIREC in response to requests from Latin American and Caribbean States for assistance in the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. In that regard, UNASUR refers to the practical training course on the implementation of the Treaty, which supplements the resources provided by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

In conclusion, UNASUR States wish to thank the Governments within and outside the region for the financial support offered in order to develop and implement the activities of the Regional Centre. In that regard, we encourage the international community to continue to support the Centre's activities.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.2.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Group of Arab States associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

As usual, the Arab Group will submit its yearly draft resolution, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" (A/C.1/70/L.2), and we would ask

the international community to continue to support the resolution as it has done in previous years.

The Arab Group calls for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the different regions of the world, including in the Middle East. Furthermore, the Arab countries call for the adoption of effective measures and procedures to create such zones — and, indeed, that is what the aforementioned resolution also calls for. Unfortunately, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was a failure, and the nuclear Powers did not honour their commitments to eliminate nuclear weapons. Hence, the international community must now step up efforts to accelerate the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the world.

In light of the failure to implement the 2010 Action Plan, during the 2015 Review Conference the Arab Group sought to present a new proposal that was supported by NAM. However, that positive approach did not achieve its goal, and the Conference failed to adopt a final document on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Therefore, we emphasize that the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East is the collective responsibility of the international community, and that all stakeholders must take part in it. Otherwise the NPT will lose its credibility and that, in turn, will threaten peace and stability worldwide.

The Arab Group would therefore like to call upon the three relevant sponsors of the NPT to live up to their responsibilities and to implement the 1995 resolution to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We also reiterate our determination to make every effort to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That way the Middle East can indeed become a peaceful, stable region, and we would have achieved our goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

The Arab Group would also like to express its concerns vis-à-vis the humanitarian, security and environmental threats caused by Israel's persistent refusal to adhere to the NPT. Israel is the only country in the Middle East that has not yet adhered to the NPT. Furthermore, it continues to refuse to submit its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, which constitutes a blatant threat to peace and security in the Middle East. The Group would like

to remind Member States that the non-implementation of the 1995 resolution to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is a major step backwards in our efforts to deter nuclear proliferation.

The Arab Group would like to reiterate that establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is one of the major pillars of the NPT. It is equally important to the other three pillars of the Treaty. Since 1995 we have yet to witness any effective progress in that regard, despite the fact that the resolution was part and parcel of the package adopted at the 1995 Review Conference and based on which the Treaty was extended. On the contrary, we have witnessed delays and a lack of respect for the outcome of that Review Conference. The Arab Group, therefore, would like to call for a comprehensive review and to develop an Arab strategy regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In conclusion, the Arab Group calls for the full and universal implementation of the NPT in the Middle East. We are committed to working with the international community to achieve progress in all issues related to disarmament in the region.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in today's debate on regional disarmament and security.

CARICOM member States remain committed to contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security through the implementation of our international obligations and concerted action at the regional level. Our Community has adopted a practical and innovative approach to the multidimensional security threat posed to the region — including transnational organized crime — due to vulnerabilities occasioned by geography and capacity constraints. In that context, as decided by the CARICOM Heads of State, security has been for some time become, formally, the established fourth pillar of our regional integration process.

Regional and subregional cooperation, and collective action and partnerships demonstrate our firm commitment to, in particular, confront the illicit trade in firearms, the proliferation of which — as mentioned in our statement earlier this week (see A/C.1/70/PV.16) — continues to cause a

devastating and lasting impact on all our countries. Indeed, firearms are used in approximately 75 per cent of homicides in the wider Caribbean region. The following is a highlight of some of our efforts at the regional level in the context of disarmament and security.

Last year, the region welcomed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Under that memorandum of understanding, the two agencies have engaged with various partners, including the United States of America and the European Union, among others, with a view to supporting action in a number of important areas of concern. Among them are gangs and small firearms, justice protection, asset recovery, and trafficking in persons, among others. CARICOM is ready to strengthen collaboration with the UNODC in order to achieve the strategic goals outlined in the UNODC Regional Programme 2014-2016 in support of the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy.

We remain appreciative of the important partnerships our member States share with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in implementing our arms control and non-proliferation obligations. The Regional Centre has assisted CARICOM member States to enhance the capacity of our law enforcement and judicial personnel; improve our stockpile-management capabilities; destroy weapons and to align our national legislation with global and regional instruments.

CARICOM notes with appreciation the results of the multi-year project by UNLIREC to strengthen the capacity of 14 Caribbean States to combat small arms trafficking through improved stockpile-management and weapons-destruction procedures, which have so far led to the destruction of more than 50,000 small arms and light weapons and more than 62 tons of ammunition.

CARICOM recognizes the importance of adequate national operational forensic ballistics systems to effectively address the illicit trafficking in weapons and ammunition. To that end, we welcome the strengthening of the Regional Integrated Ballistic Identification Network, aimed at improving the ability of our forensic experts and police investigators to identify and trace guns used in cross-border criminal activities.

Furthermore, as we seek to fully implement our obligations under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including those contained in the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action, we welcome the roll-out of UNLIREC's new forensic ballistics technical assistance package, through which the Regional Centre will organize training courses, provide ballistic laboratory material and equipment and assist with the establishment of standard operational procedures and national competency testing frameworks.

CARICOM is strongly committed to the full and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. To that end, the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, through funding provided by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, is working on the development of CARICOM model law to facilitate a harmonized approach to the implementation of the provisions contained in the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action on Small Arms. To date, a gap analysis of existing legislation in the 12 CARICOM States that are States parties to Treaty and a preliminary draft model law have been completed. We look forward to the regional consultative meeting, which will be held on 25 and 26 November, to review the preliminary draft model law and further elaborate the parameters, scope and content of the model law provisions.

CARICOM has also long supported the strengthening of the role of women in disarmament. Under Trinidad and Tobago's leadership, the role of women, the encouragement of women's participation in the disarmament process, and the significant contributions of women to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is not only highlighted, but also discussed in a meaningful and robust fashion. In that regard, CARICOM welcomes the UNLIREC publication, entitled *Forces of Change II: Recognizing the Contribution of Latin American and Caribbean Women to Disarmament*.

CARICOM is committed to the full implementation of the CARICOM-Security Council Resolution 1540 Implementation Programme. UNLIREC currently supports four CARICOM member States (Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago) in their efforts to strengthen implementation and to modernize

legislative and policy frameworks and regulations. Those countries received assistance in elaborating and presenting action plans for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), as well as in the drafting of legislation related to resolution 1540 (2004). They also benefited from practical training in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization, through risk-management tabletop exercises aimed at strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and maritime officers to identify and handle nuclear, chemical and biological material that could be used for proliferation purposes.

In conclusion, let me say that the ultimate goal of the implementation of the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy is to ensure the security of the citizens of our region. In that endeavour, against the backdrop of limited resources with which to confront the multiple and complex challenges facing the region, we seek meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships to complement our own domestic efforts. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our various bilateral and multilateral partners and the regional, subregional and civil-society organizations that have provided financial, technical and other resources contributing to the achievement of the region's security goals.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): I would like to speak briefly on behalf of the Group of African States to thank the Director ad interim of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for her briefing. Like the other two Regional Centres, the Regional Centre in Africa was established to serve the interests of its region. Ms. Ige's briefing today succinctly highlighted the Centre's objectives and operations, as well as the requirements for effectively executing its mandate. The Secretary-General's report on the Centre, contained in document A/70/116 of 29 June 2015, which covers its activities between July 2014 and June 2015, is instructive on the need for supporting the Centre.

Among other issues, the report highlights the Centre's functions, objectives and activities, including its support for African Member States in implementing international and regional instruments for combating the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons by providing assistance in implementing regional and national action plans on small arms and strengthening the capacity of Governments and civil-society organizations in the field of arms control. The Centre also assists with information and outreach.

Besides that, the Centre advocates for African Member States' broad participation in the Arms Trade Treaty, in addition to supporting them in their efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on weapons of mass destruction. On request, it also gives assistance to States in the areas of capacity-building and training civilian and uniformed personnel.

Lastly, as the Centre looks forward to celebrating its thirtieth anniversary in 2016, and in order to help it to fulfil its mandate and continue its operations, the African Group would like to take this opportunity to underscore the need for Member States and other donors to provide it with the necessary financial and in-kind support.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.5.

Mr. Ait Abdeslam (Algeria): I would like to read a shortened version of my delegation's statement. The full text will be available on the PaperSmart site.

Algeria fully associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States; and Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

I would like to emphasize Algeria's commitment to the promotion of peace and regional security as a permanent feature of its foreign policy and a cardinal principle around which its action in the international arena is focused. Algeria continues to make every effort to support initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue with a view to strengthening security within its regional frameworks and political groups, particularly in the Mediterranean region.

In Africa, Algeria contributed to the conclusion and entry into force in 2009 of the Pelindaba Treaty, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. That legal instrument is a major contribution to denuclearization, peace and security in Africa and the rest of the world and is therefore a significant addition to the strengthening of peace and security in North Africa and the Mediterranean region. It should be an example for the Middle East. We deeply regret, therefore, that the Middle East continues to be denied nuclear-weapon-free status, years after the adoption under the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of a resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear

weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region. Algeria rejects that status quo and stresses its strong commitment to effective implementation of the resolution.

The current situation in the Sahel region is a major concern for my country, in view of the proliferating illicit trade and transfer of arms to the terrorist groups operating there. Algeria has undertaken numerous initiatives and measures aimed at strengthening cooperation in the subregion for preventing and fighting terrorism. Enhancing the capacity of the countries of the Sahel and helping them with the socioeconomic development of the region will also require substantial support from the international community. Algeria promotes the virtues of democracy, reconciliation and development for its people's benefit and will spare no effort to invest in peace and help to settle this crisis in its region, thereby exporting stability and security beyond its own borders.

In Mali, Algeria led the international mediation effort that ended on 15 May in the comprehensive Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation between the Government and the other Malian parties. We call on the international community, and donor countries in particular, to support that process, both politically and financially. In that regard, we welcomed the conference of donor countries held last week in Paris, and we hope that the commitments made at the meeting will be honoured as soon as possible.

Algeria, which has had to deal directly with the consequences of the prolonged Libyan crisis, is working to help establish an inclusive national dialogue for promoting national reconciliation there, guaranteeing the legitimization of its institutions and mobilizing every possible means and resource to restore peace and stability in Libya, with the aim of rebuilding it for the sake of our Libyan brothers. We reiterate our support for the United Nations efforts to achieve an inclusive solution to the problem.

The Algerian delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", as contained in document A/70/160 and its addendum, A/70/160/Add.1, which presents information from Member States and regional organizations on ways to strengthen security and cooperation in the region.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

In accordance with its Mediterranean policy, and based on the principles of cooperation, friendship, good-neighbourliness and mutual respect, Algeria has the honour, as in previous years, to submit to the First Committee and the General Assembly at its seventieth session, under item 102 of the agenda, a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", as contained in document A/C.1/70/L.5. With the exception of technical updates, this year's draft retains the entire text of last year's General Assembly resolution 69/80. It notes in particular the efforts of Mediterranean countries aimed at addressing the challenges we have in common in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The overall objective is to make the Mediterranean region an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity. Finally, the text emphasizes the close links between Mediterranean and European and international peace and security. The Algerian delegation and the other sponsors are relying on the support of all Member States to ensure the draft resolution's adoption by consensus, since its importance and relevance are increasing in the light of the developments that the region is experiencing.

The Acting Chair: I call on the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/70/L.31, A/C.1/70/L.33 and A/C.1/70/L.34.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): I will read an abridged version of my statement, the complete text of which will be posted on the PaperSmart site.

Even as old disputes fester, new conflicts and tensions are emerging in several regions and subregions, from the Euro-Atlantic area to the Middle East and elsewhere. The new century's promise of peace, stability and prosperity appears to be fading in a world beset by conflict and destruction among and within States. Those trends emphasize the fact that most threats to peace and security continue to arise mainly among States in the same region or subregion. South Asia is being denied the ability to pursue peace and development by a policy of hegemony and intransigence encouraged by some powerful States outside the region.

The General Assembly has long recognized that global peace and security depends in large measure on stability at the regional and subregional levels. It is that inseparable relationship between regional and international peace and security that the Charter of the United Nations itself recognizes and for which it

includes provisions for regional arrangements. The Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2), the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee's resolutions have repeatedly reaffirmed the need for the simultaneous pursuit of regional and global approaches, including agreements in the areas of disarmament and arms limitation. Through those mechanisms and normative frameworks, the international community has endorsed two well-recognized and tested tools — conventional arms control and confidence-building measures, particularly at the regional and subregional levels.

Several regions of the world have benefited from the application of the principles and guidelines for conventional arms control and confidence-building measures that have been developed and agreed on at the United Nations. It is important to recall and give concrete shape to some of those principles, including the maintenance of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces, and the special responsibility of militarily significant States and those with larger military capabilities when it comes to promoting agreements for regional security, undiminished security, and the pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms control should give priority to addressing the most destabilizing military capabilities and imbalances in both the conventional and non-conventional fields. In regions dealing with tense environments and disputes, it is essential to achieve a stable balance of conventional forces and weapons through cooperative regional initiatives.

Confidence-building measures have proved their efficacy over the years at the regional and subregional levels, especially in the area of arms control and disarmament. They also have a positive correlation with international peace and security. As General Assembly resolutions and Disarmament Commission guidelines have affirmed, at the regional level such measures must be tailored to the specifics of a region and should begin with simple arrangements on transparency, openness and risk reduction until the States concerned are in a position to pursue more substantive arms control and disarmament measures. Confidence-building measures are significant in that they can help to create favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of existing international disputes and facilitate settling situations that might lead to international friction.

However, they should not become an end in themselves, but should be pursued in conjunction with sincere efforts to peacefully settle disputes, as outlined in the Charter. They can contribute significantly to a global political environment that is conducive to promoting international agreements on disarmament and arms limitation.

Regional disarmament and confidence-building measures have a special significance in the South Asian context. If we cannot make progress towards eliminating underlying disputes and causes of mistrust between States, their utility will diminish. Confidence-building measures alone cannot act as a substitute or a precondition for steps towards the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Pakistan feels privileged to have spearheaded initiatives on regional disarmament, conventional arms control and confidence-building measures at the United Nations for several years now. A practical expression of our commitment to promoting those globally agreed-on goals is reflected in the draft resolutions that Pakistan introduces every year in the First Committee, namely, those on regional disarmament, confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context and conventional arms control at the regional and subregional level. Those draft resolutions recognize the significance for international peace and stability of regional approaches to arms control, disarmament and confidence-building, and the complementarity between regional and global approaches. We look forward to Member States' continued support to the adoption of these draft resolutions this year too.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States is strongly committed to promoting international peace and prosperity, as well as strengthening partnerships and cooperation with regional and other intergovernmental organizations. Non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives at the global and regional levels are mutually reinforcing. In East Asia, the regional non-proliferation and disarmament architecture has steadily matured to address challenges to the global regime. The Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) has started its third round of intersessional meetings on non-proliferation and disarmament, and the East Asia Summit continues to serve as the region's premier leader-led forum for political and security issues. Additionally, we welcome calls under the ASEAN-United States plan of action to resolve any outstanding issues and stand ready to assist

with countries' signature and ratification as soon as possible of the Protocol to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

We commend regional efforts by States to demonstrate their commitment to all three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including through treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and the South Pacific. Such zones facilitate regional cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

The members of the Organization of American States are using workshops and exercises to enhance their readiness and response capabilities for chemical and biological incidents. Such activities serve to strengthen coordination between Governments and emergency-response agencies. The United States welcomes the strong statement of support made by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Biological Weapons Convention earlier this year, and we support her call for African Union member States to ratify and accede to the Convention without further delay.

On 14 July, the United States and its international partners achieved something that years of animosity could not — a comprehensive, long-term deal with Iran that will prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon. We also remain focused on working with the international community to address the grave threat that North Korea's nuclear weapons programme poses to the global non-proliferation regime and our common peace and security. More broadly, developing partnerships between regions and international organizations is also key, and organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and others deserve praise for their collaborative efforts to address development and security challenges at the regional level.

Strong partnerships require sustained effort. Unfortunately, Russia's deliberate and repeated violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine has undermined the security structure in Europe. We call on Russia to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine. At the same time, we remain committed to strengthening and advancing arms control efforts, based on key principles and commitments.

The United States remains disappointed that the 2015 NPT Review Conference was unable to adopt a consensus final document, owing to differing views on how to advance the goal of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We hope that States will focus on real, tangible efforts towards convening a conference on such a zone. There is no substitute for direct dialogue among the States of the region. In every State in the Middle East there are diplomats with vision, creativity and determination, and we will not cease our efforts to work with them towards that goal.

In conclusion, the United States is firmly committed to fulfilling its obligations and working with the international community to reduce nuclear threats. All States benefit from those efforts, and we have a common obligation to continue making progress. I note that the full United States statement on this topic will be posted on the Secretariat's website.

Mr. Al Yammahi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the United Arab Emirates wishes to associate itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and so far no tangible progress has been made by the international community towards establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, except in some parts of the world based on existing treaties. The United Arab Emirates expresses its deep concern regarding the inability of the international community to achieve any progress or concrete results on disarmament in the Middle East or the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, especially after the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to adopt its final document. The Conference also failed to agree on the future steps towards declaring the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which constitutes a setback to this important process.

My delegation believes that achieving progress in this regard would significantly support stability and security in the Middle East. There is no doubt that the international community is facing major challenges today, which require it to work hard to achieve the long-awaited goal of declaring the Middle East a region free of nuclear weapons. Therefore, my country continues

to support all constructive efforts aimed at achieving this noble goal and urges all States of the region to play a positive role in this regard. We also renew our call to Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty, since it is the only State of the region that has not yet acceded to this Treaty.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and disarmament are critical elements for achieving international peace and security. We have expressed our concern with regard to Iran's nuclear activities and emphasized the importance of Iran's full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We hope that the recent agreement reached with Iran on its nuclear programme will encourage it to open a new chapter and enhance confidence in the absolutely peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. We also call on Iran to comply fully with its international obligations and responsibilities under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We call on the international community to invest in the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations as an opportunity to reach consensus on developing the work of this Committee and to adopt effective actions that would contribute to promoting regional and international peace and security.

Mrs. Daudey (Malta): I will read out an abridged version of our statement. The full version will be posted on PaperSmart.

Malta's foreign policy is to a large extent shaped by developments within the Mediterranean region. The security challenges in the Mediterranean are numerous and wide-ranging, which is why we welcome once again this year the submission by Algeria of resolution A/C.1/70/L.5, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", of which Malta is a traditional sponsor. Malta is also very active in several regional forums that work towards that end.

One cannot talk about security in the Mediterranean without mentioning the situation in Libya. Malta is very concerned over the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in the country and regrets the inability by the Libyan factions to agree on the political agreement that had been proposed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bernardino León. Malta continues to believe that the formation of a Government of National Accord is a crucial step. In this regard, we believe that disarmament and national

reconciliation are prerequisites for it to succeed. Failure to do so would only continue providing a fertile ground for radicalization in Libya. This is of concern not only for Libya and its people, but also for the wider region.

We cannot deny the shifting nature of the conflict in Syria as it approaches its fifth year, especially now in view of the military interventions undertaken by external Powers. We cannot stress enough the importance of international unity, and we urge the international community to put all its weight in full support of the United Nations process led by its Special Representative Staffan de Mistura. The recent and fast-paced developments should not make us lose sight of the humanitarian toll this war is taking on the Syrian population. We urge the stepping up of assistance to address this humanitarian crisis.

The threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as well as by the numerous foreign terrorist fighters who have travelled to Syria and other countries from the Mediterranean region, is another major concern. Malta recognizes the political urgency and necessity to counter the advance of ISIL and that the United Nations is central to the fight against terrorism. The wider political and regional context should be addressed, particularly the neighbouring countries which are being affected by the spillover of the fighting and the plight of the refugees.

Education and the rule of law are key in countering effectively violent extremism and radicalization. In this regard, the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law in Malta, which was founded in June 2014, has been very active in convening practitioners from different parts of the world to provide rule of law-based training. Given the geographic location, the Institute is paying particular attention to supporting countries in transition in North, West and East Africa, as well as the Middle East.

Malta remains strongly committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and fully supports all actions aimed at ensuring the fulfilment of its objectives. Following the Review Conference, it is with certain disappointment that we recognize the lack of agreement on a final document that could in particular have furthered negotiations towards the setting up of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Malta, being strategically situated in the centre of the Mediterranean, continues to follow closely the events unfolding in the region

and believes that the furthering of non-proliferation and disarmament efforts would be of importance not only to the region itself, but to the whole international community. It is also with this in mind that Malta decided to become one of the initial sponsors of the new draft resolutions submitted by Austria to this Committee this year on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

The nature and extent of irregular migration and the smuggling of human beings in the Mediterranean continue to pose a serious threat to the security of the entire region. We continued witnessing tragic events related to the smuggling of human beings across the Mediterranean, a scourge which, according to International Organization for Migration, has resulted in thousands of lives lost since the beginning of this year. Malta believes that an international anti-human-smuggling coalition mandated by the United Nations should be set up and given a mandate to intervene to disrupt smugglers of persons who are making a profit from the plight of such persons.

It is also imperative to recognize the overriding importance of looking at migration from a holistic perspective that offers protection to vulnerable persons in need of protection, but that also tackles irregular migration for those who do not qualify. From our regional perspective, fighting migrant smugglers, including by strengthening the European Union's presence at sea; intensifying work on return, readmission and reintegration; and working in close cooperation with our partners, especially in Africa, are priority areas that need to be pursued. In this connection, it is hoped that the Valletta summit on migration, which will be held on 11 and 12 November, with key African partners, will be an opportunity to address these migration challenges.

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Latvia.

We highly value the importance of best practices and the exchange of information among States in the fields of maritime and air traffic, both civil and military. It provides a significant contribution to the building of mutual understanding and confidence. We believe that high safety standards are in the interest of both civil and military air and maritime traffic. Against that backdrop and understanding, we would like to recall existing international regulations and call upon States to ensure proper civil-military coordination in order to

guarantee the safety of civil navigation and to further improve the overall climate of trust between States, in particular in the Baltic Sea region.

First, we would like to recall the importance for both air and maritime traffic to fully respect the obligation to ensure the safety of navigation of civil aircraft as well as civil maritime activities.

Secondly, States could demonstrate their goodwill by ensuring that all aircraft, both civil and military, operating in areas with heavy civil air traffic make use of transponders. We would like to recall that each State party to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, also known as the Chicago Convention, undertakes, when issuing regulations for their State aircraft, to ensure that those aircraft operate with due regard for the safe navigation of civil aircraft. In that regard we underline the importance of discussions on existing international mechanisms. In particular, we welcome the ongoing work to address these matters at the International Civil Aviation Organization. All of these practices would allow countries to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and the erroneous interpretation of certain activities as military ones in international maritime and air traffic, thus enhancing transparency and mutual confidence.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy remains fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Despite the efforts made so far, the existence of proliferation programmes and networks, the difficulty of securing sensitive materials, and the risk of terrorists obtaining access to them remain major challenges.

We value nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important instrument to ensure peace and security, strengthen nuclear non-proliferation, and advance the objective of nuclear disarmament. We therefore commend the contribution of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones to attaining these goals.

Because of its geopolitical position, Italy is part of the wider Mediterranean area, and is very close to the Middle East. Our history is intimately connected to that region. We are very sensitive to developments in that context also from the point of view of disarmament and non-proliferation, and we follow them very closely.

We reaffirm our strong support for the process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East adopted at the Review Conference

of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of the same year, and the related practical steps endorsed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We stress that the 1995 resolution remains valid until it is fully implemented and its goals and objectives are achieved. While commending the tireless efforts of the facilitator, Ambassador Laajava of Finland, the Secretary-General and the conveners of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, we regret that, so far, it has not been possible to convene such a conference.

Therefore, we continue to support the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction — to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them — as decided at the 2010 Review Conference. We are convinced that the historic agreement of 14 July between the E3+3 and Iran on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in full conformity with the principles of the NPT, will contribute to the creation of an environment that is more conducive to the convening of such a conference.

As to other regional issues, we consider the plan for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, in line with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decisions by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as the most important multilateral disarmament operation of the recent decade. Italy substantially contributed to that operation, providing concrete assistance to both the United Nations and the OPCW.

We also express our serious concern for the systematic and repeated use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in Syria since last year, confirmed in the reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission. Those responsible for such acts must be held accountable. In that respect, we welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which establishes a Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify the perpetrators responsible for chemical attacks in Syria. The international community cannot remain silent in the face of those intolerable attacks.

Mr. Tehrani (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to engage actively in all international diplomatic and legal efforts to save humanity from the menace of nuclear weapons and their proliferation, including through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East. The establishment of such a zone in the Middle East region has been an important objective and priority for Iran as well as all other peace-loving nations in our region.

Iran has a strong interest in and commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. That policy is based on rational, legal and religious grounds. On such a solid basis, Iran is party to all international agreements on the control of weapons of mass destruction, and has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the Middle East.

Despite all international efforts, unfortunately no progress has been made so far to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East because Israel continues to block all international and regional efforts to achieve that goal. In its latest obstructive act, the Israel regime foiled the convening of a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was mandated at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to be held in 2012 under the auspices of the United Nations.

It is crystal-clear that the only obstacle to the establishment of such a zone is the Israeli regime. The existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime, which has a long record of aggression, occupation and the commission of war crimes, poses a serious threat to the security of non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT in the Middle East. This situation is highly discriminatory. The refusal of Israel to abandon its nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT has increased the potential for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and has resulted in the non-accession of some States to international instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction.

We have consistently urged that norms related to non-proliferation be applied globally and without exception. Nuclear proliferation is as dangerous in the Middle East as it is in other parts of the world. The existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime is obviously the result of the application of

double standards by certain nuclear-weapon States. The full and prompt implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the commitment of the international community, in particular the sponsors of the resolution. Neglecting that commitment can only embolden Israel to remain a threat and a source of instability by flouting the aspirations of the international community. To establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the international community has no choice but to exert the utmost pressure on Israel to accede to the NPT.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no efforts in supporting meaningful steps aimed at making progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and will continue its strong support for the establishment of such a zone.

Mrs. Del Sol Dominguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Sir, it is an honour to have you presiding over the First Committee.

Cuba supports the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We reaffirm our strong support for multilateralism as an underlying principle of negotiations in the area of disarmament and arms control. Multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, constitute the only sustainable method of addressing issues related to disarmament and international security. At the same time, in no way should that lessen the importance of regional and subregional initiatives in that area. Disarmament efforts at the regional level should take due account of the particularities of each region. We cannot pursue a one-size-fits-all approach or any action that could endanger the safety of any State in the region. Approaches to global and regional disarmament and arms control, and confidence-building measures complement one another and, to the extent possible, should be pursued simultaneously with a view to promoting peace and security at the regional and international levels.

The adoption and implementation of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures must have the consent and participation of all stakeholders and contribute to the easing of tensions, prevent conflicts and consolidate regional stability. States with greater military capabilities have an important responsibility in that area. In that regard, respect and support for

regional and subregional decisions and treaties aimed at achieving peace and security are key.

Cuba supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world, as part of efforts to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. We believe it is important that these zones include cooperation mechanisms among States parties and signatories. Cuba is proud to belong to the region formally proclaimed as a zone of peace by its leaders, in an unprecedented historic act, at the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana, in order to banish the threat or use of force in our region forever.

Cuba deeply regrets the ongoing failure to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East adopted within the framework of the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the 2010 agreement to convene an international conference for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. At the 2015 NPT Review Conference, dissatisfaction with the proposed modalities for the convening of a conference for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, was the argument used by three States parties to block the final agreement, despite the special responsibility borne by two of those States as sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East — which has yet to be implemented — and as depositaries of the NPT. Cuba will continue to support the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We are convinced that it would be an essential contribution to the peace and security of all countries in the region.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm that the activities of the United Nations at the regional level, aimed at strengthening the stability and the security of its Member States, must continue to be promoted in close consultation with the States of the region, including everything related to the important work of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

Mrs. Boura (Greece): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chair and his Bureau on the competence and guidance they have brought to the deliberations of the First Committee.

While nuclear energy is not an option for our national power mix, Greece remains a strong proponent of the third pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which addresses the peaceful use of nuclear technology. We acknowledge all States' sovereign right to opt for peaceful nuclear energy. They should, however, fully adhere to and respect the international non-proliferation regime, safeguard agreements and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safety standards and security architecture. It is critical that prospective nuclear energy producers adhere to and comply fully with the treaties pertaining to nuclear safety and security and aimed at safeguarding the operational aspects of nuclear plants.

The 2011 Fukushima Daiichi accident has renewed focus on the area of nuclear safety. We would like to take this opportunity to commend the tremendous efforts that the IAEA made in the preparation of the report on the Fukushima accident, and we look forward to seeing the lessons learned from that tragedy reflected in the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety beyond 2015. In that regard, we stress the importance of environmental safety considerations in regions with dynamic seismic and earthquake activity. That cannot be stressed enough in the Eastern Mediterranean region, where ongoing conflicts and seismic activity render the full deployment of security and safety aspects for peaceful nuclear activities more pertinent.

In that context, we would have liked to see more progress at the 2015 Review Conference, especially in the formulation of a concrete road map for the way forward in finalizing the conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We fully support the efforts made towards the establishment of such a zone, as we believe that the application of comprehensive IAEA safeguards to all nuclear material, facilities and activities will create confidence among States and promote peace, stability and security. The 2010 NPT action plan provides adequate benchmarks for the years ahead, and States should take advantage of the guidance these benchmarks provide. We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT.

We welcome the adoption by consensus of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety to prevent accidents and mitigate radiological consequences, at the Diplomatic Conference on the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We urge all parties to the Convention to fulfil their obligations under the Vienna Declaration without delay, with the aim of strengthening nuclear safety

and increasing transparency. I would like to recall that Greece, a member of the European Atomic Energy Community, fully abides by the relevant European Union legislation. We were especially satisfied with the results of the fifth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, held under the auspices of the IAEA last May.

Greece gives high priority to nuclear security issues. That is reflected by our ratification of the relevant IAEA instruments, including the Additional Protocol, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendment, the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources, to name just a few. We are encouraged by the momentum created since the Nuclear Security Conference in 2013, and look forward to the next Nuclear Security Conference, to be held in Vienna, in December 2016.

It is crucial that all States fulfil their disarmament commitments more resolutely and urgently. We must have a pragmatic road map delineating the practical aspects aimed at bringing us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons. Humanitarian considerations should not only guide nuclear disarmament, but should be in conjunction with nuclear security and safety initiatives.

Greece considers that the peaceful use of nuclear energy can be further and responsibly developed only through the reinforcement of nuclear safety and security conditions. We therefore believe that the IAEA has a pivotal role in strengthening the safety and security framework through enhanced international activities.

Mr. Kadjenda (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau of the First Committee for the remarkable manner in which you have been leading our work.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria, respectively, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States. I wish to make a few important remarks in my national capacity.

As part of their efforts to promote peace, disarmament and development on the continent, the African States have taken the initiative to set up the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and

Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), the headquarters of which my country is honoured to host. Today, thanks to that institution, State reforms and institutional capacity-building programmes have been developed and implemented, and campaigns to raise awareness about, gather and mark small arms and light weapons have been conducted. Similarly, where its intervention has been necessary, the Centre has made its expertise in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations available to subregional communities, such as the Economic Community of West African States.

In recent years, the Regional Centre has focused more on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by organizing, *inter alia*, subregional workshops in Lomé and facilitating the visits of experts from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) to Togo to assist the Togolese Government in the full implementation of the relevant resolution, all of which contributes to the promotion of peace and stability on the continent.

My country — which has always appreciated the importance of the Regional Centre to the commitment of African States to ensuring security and stability on the continent, where the uncontrolled circulation and use of light weapons is particularly alarming — believes that the potential of this institution is not being used as it should. Indeed, despite the goodwill of its staff, the Regional Centre can only act in to a minimal extent, given the fact that States are reluctant to pay the contributions that should enable it to perform its tasks optimally. The Regional Centre also does not enjoy the support required to facilitate the implementation of its mandate, while the challenges are multiple and complex.

As the Regional Centre is preparing to celebrate its thirtieth anniversary, it is an urgent for all States, particularly those of Africa, to strive to give its operations new impetus. It is the ardent wish of Togo that the institution become not only a real catalyst in Africa for regional conflict prevention policies but also a centre of excellence for training and strengthening the capacities of all States of the region in all aspects related to disarmament and security in Africa.

For its part, in addition to the usual facilities granted to it under the headquarters agreement, Togo has renewed its commitment to providing the Centre with new local infrastructure. This commitment

was communicated to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs by the Head of State of Togo himself during their meeting on 30 September at United Nations Headquarters. Accordingly, discussions are already under way with the Secretariat on the practical modalities of this commitment. My delegation can therefore confirm Togo's readiness to contribute further to revitalizing the functioning of the Centre, convinced that the stability of our continent depends on it.

The entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), a legally binding multilateral instrument in the arms trade, marked an important step in monitoring the trade in arms, ammunition and other military equipment that fuel conflict, armed violence, terrorism and organized crime. The international community can take full advantage of this instrument only if it is universalized and implemented in a comprehensive manner. In that regard, Togo hopes that the three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament will consistently help States to achieve these objectives.

Following its ratification of the Treaty on 8 October, my country intends as soon as possible to take the measures necessary to review its national legislation, penal code and code of penal procedures in order to integrate them into the framework defined by the ATT. Togo intends thereby to fully honour its obligations under the Treaty and to that end will need the cooperation of all its development partners.

In conclusion, I reiterate the gratitude of the Government of Togo to the countries and institutions that in various ways support the Regional Centre, and wish the regional Director every success in fulfilling its mandate.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to express our thanks for the full support we have enjoyed and to align myself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States, respectively.

Iraq is aware of the critical need to create nuclear-weapon-free zones to build trust at the regional level, to strengthen efforts for nuclear disarmament and ensure security and peace in the countries affected. This will undoubtedly contribute to achieving global peace and security. On the basis of that principle, Iraq supports all efforts to create nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions, notably in the Middle East, which has

long lived in extreme tension. That will contribute to achieving the goal of the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The resolution on the Middle East emerging from the 1995 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the ongoing calls for its implementation ever since have become the cornerstones of the Treaty's longevity. Iraq therefore calls for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, with phased implementation at the regional level, without duplication or delay.

Despite the support and international attention given to the issue, unacceptable arguments and obstacles have been put forth with regard to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, including Israel remaining outside of the NPT itself. All of Israel's nuclear facilities remain outside the guidelines and safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Therefore, Iraq wishes to call for the implementation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), in particular paragraph 14.

The Government of my country wishes to express its disappointment about the lack of consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, held in 2015. The failure of the Conference at this crucial stage in the Middle East will perpetuate the destabilization and tensions in the region and will increase the number of issues impeding the Treaty from becoming universal, and will therefore have an extremely negative impact on the non-proliferation regime. In that regard, Iraq wishes to reiterate its conviction that the parties to the Treaty must assume their responsibility in the implementation of the 1995 resolution and spare no effort towards achieving a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Chair returned to the Chair.

In conclusion, Iraq wishes to stress the importance of political will and flexibility, which are necessary to create a better future for us and for generations to come — a future of peace, security and stability without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): When we speak about regional security, we

must not forget that peace has never been sustainable. Peaceful conditions themselves have never really existed. Peace on our planet has always been the product of the most serious and responsible negotiation processes and mutual compromises. We all know that the end of the Cold War ended the ideological stand-off. We cannot deny that many of us in Russia were naive and thought that geopolitical discord would no longer exist. Unfortunately, our Western partners quickly changed our sunny view of the world. What have we seen? We saw the NATO military appear as quickly as possible along the Russian borders, under the pretext of countering possible nuclear-weapon threats from Iran, and even the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Our partner from overseas began to develop its military capability right on the border with Russia. At the same time, it destroyed many countries of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, such as Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya. There were even attempts to destroy Egypt and Syria. This has become completely absurd. Our Western partners even thought of accusing Russia of attacking Georgia, and then Ukraine. Representatives will laugh, but maybe the next thing would be to hear accusations that Russia bombed Japan. That is what our partners call the promotion of democracy.

It is therefore incredibly surprising to hear even today that our American colleagues have started to talk about some kinds of destabilizing activities in Ukraine. Perhaps they were talking about the massive support given by Washington, D.C., to the armed anti-governmental coup in Kyiv, which led to the collapse of our brotherly country into a bloody civil war. There are plans to make a former official from the United States Department of State the next Prime Minister in Kyiv.

Therefore, I wish to draw the attention of delegations to the fact that our world is growing more connected. We are living on the same planet, and a lack of sincerity at any time becomes quite clear. I wish to ask the representatives of all the democratic States, or those countries that consider themselves to be democratic, if they cannot see what is actually happening. Do they really believe that there is a possibility of establishing regional and international security in a world in which the global anti-missile systems of the most militarily powerful State are being enhanced unilaterally and without restrictions, when a concept of a global attack is being developed and when the military bases of that State are already deployed in 160 countries and their

number exceeds 800? Do members believe that we can truly create a world without nuclear weapons when 70 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki the NATO nuclear military bloc, which is led by a State that used nuclear weapons in 1945, continues to increase its ability to carry out nuclear attacks on the territory of the Russian Federation and engages non-nuclear NATO member States in these activities, which violate not only the words, but also the very spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons?

We could discuss these topics for days, but unfortunately our time frame at this meeting does not allow it. I will therefore bring my statement to an end, but first I will say just a few positive words. I will say what one of the most influential leaders in the modern world said today:

“We all must have an equal and mutually respectful dialogue, taking into account each other’s national interests.”

Who said that? Nicolas Sarkozy said that today in a meeting with Vladimir Putin in Moscow. He then repeated it in his statement at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. My daughter, who is studying there, told me about it and I checked on the website, and it is indeed true. Let us therefore listen to these wise people on our planet.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Angola to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.43/Rev.1.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): As this is the first time I take the floor at this session of the First Committee, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau. You can count on my country’s support and cooperation for the success of your mandate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

On behalf of the Economic Community of Central African States, I am honoured to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.43/Rev.1, entitled “Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa”. This is a draft resolution that our subregion has presented in previous sessions of the General Assembly and that has been adopted

by consensus. At the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, it was presented by the Permanent Representative of Gabon.

Overall, the draft resolution, which was duly submitted to the Committee and circulated among Member States, envisages to contribute to the global efforts in combating terrorism and illegal armed groups, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, piracy, poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking, the trafficking in persons and other criminal activities affecting our region. The draft resolution also reaffirms the General Assembly’s support for the efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels in order to ease tensions and conflicts in Central Africa and to further sustainable peace, stability and development in the subregion.

The draft resolution requests the continued assistance of the Secretary-General and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the countries of Central Africa in tackling the problems of refugees and displaced persons in their territories. Additionally, it requests the continued assistance of the Secretary-General and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the subregion on issues related to human rights and the strengthening of democracy.

The contents of the draft resolution hereby submitted by the Central African States does not differ substantially from resolutions adopted at previous sessions, except for the addition of some data on major developments that took place since the adoption of the last resolution during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly (resolution 69/73).

The draft resolution welcomes and supports the recommendations of the strategic review of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and strongly encourages the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and international partners to ensure it has the adequate resources to undertake its mandate.

It welcomes the adoption by the States members of the Committee of the integrated strategy on counter-terrorism and the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons for Central Africa, while requesting international support for those Member States that have ratified the Arms Trade Treaty and encouraging those that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so. It also encourages Member States to implement the provisions

of resolution 69/314, the first resolution on poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking. That is why we request the usual cooperation and understanding of the First Committee, which, as on previous occasions, considers and adopts this draft resolution by consensus, as orally amended.

The Republic of Angola hosted with great pleasure the fortieth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The meeting considered the political and security situation in the Central African region, in particular the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Republic of Burundi. Special attention was paid to the terrorist threat and to the attacks by radical extremists in Central Africa, stretching from the Sahel to the gulf of Kenya; the increase in attacks in the Maghreb; and threats in other parts of Africa. Angola, as President of the Standing Advisory Committee, has sought to shift consensus, on the basis of dialogue with Member States, to the problems of the subregion and the African continent in general.

In conclusion, we believe that the prevention of and fight against this scourge should be tackled through international, regional and bilateral cooperation. As such, the United Nations regional and subregional organizations should play a leading role in the fight against the still-incipient forms of terrorism already being felt in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa, before they become a real threat to the region.

Mr. Mana (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): As we consider sub-item (e) — “Activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa” — of agenda item 98, entitled “Regional confidence-building measures”, I take the floor following the statement delivered by the representative of Angola on behalf of the Member States of Central Africa, in which he introduced draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.43/Rev.1. My delegation fully supports his statement and invites all delegations to support the draft resolution. While aligning myself with that statement, however, I would like to make a statement in my national capacity on a particular aspect of insecurity in Central Africa that affects the mandate of the Standing Advisory Committee, namely, the fight against terrorism, including its most recent manifestation, Boko Haram.

For more than two years, some countries in Central Africa, especially Cameroon and Chad, have been broadsided by the heinous acts perpetrated by Boko Haram, which of course are also ravaging Nigeria, its country of origin, and its neighbour the Niger. Given the scale of the phenomenon, the countries in the Lake Chad Basin, with the support of Central Africa, have established, under the auspices of the African Union, a joint multinational force to complement their own national efforts.

Boko Haram appears to have been militarily defeated and is now increasingly resorting to suicide bombings. To deal with the resurgence of this terrorist threat, Central Africa has prepared a regional strategy to fight terrorism and tackle the proliferation of weapons, as mentioned by the representative of Angola in his statement, in order to enable the various stakeholders to formulate a coordinated response.

The Government of Cameroon has taken measures at the national level and made a point of leading this war in strict compliance with international human rights standards. Among the measures taken, in addition to military operations, those at the legislative level included the filling of a legal gap that would have hampered our ability to take action, through the adoption of a law on the suppression of terrorism. The law makes it possible to try those arrested during our fight against Boko Haram in an appropriate framework and in accordance with Cameroon’s international and regional commitments.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, after several months of calm due to the defeat of Boko Haram by the armed forces of Cameroon and Chad, Boko Haram terrorists have been trying once again, since June 2015, to embark upon a new *modus operandi*, namely, suicide attacks using women and children as suicide bombers. Given that new trend, the Cameroonian authorities have decided to increase the security level alert and strengthen the operational mechanism set up to secure the affected areas, intensify public sensitization campaigns in the affected areas and among the population there and establish new measures in cities across the country. Those national measures fit in with the regional strategy for most of Central Africa.

While it is true that we have accurately assessed the danger and that we have adopted appropriate strategies at the national and regional levels, we cannot rid ourselves completely of this evil without the support of

the entire international community, in the framework of an active solidarity that we wish to see in play worldwide. No single country or region can effectively tackle international terrorism. That transnational and global threat requires a multinational and global response.

In the framework of the mandate of the United Nations Permanent Consultative Committee on the Security Situation in Central Africa (UNSAC), my country is assured of the international community's support in its just fight against terrorism. I take this opportunity to reiterate to all friendly countries, as well as United Nations agencies on the ground, Cameroon's gratitude for their multi-form contributions in the fight against Boko Haram, as well as their contribution to our efforts to cope with the consequences, which are mainly the need to manage refugees and internally displaced persons, the fight against radicalization and a reduction of the socioeconomic impact of the influx of refugees and internally displaced persons on host populations.

In the same vein, Cameroon would like to reiterate its gratitude to the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) our gratitude for the support and assistance provided to the activities of UNSAC. My delegation also welcomes the support of UNOCA in the countries of Central Africa's fight against Boko Haram. I hope that the international community will not allow that Regional Strategy to be jeopardized.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): At the outset, Egypt associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with the statements made on behalf of the Arab Group and the Group of African States.

The issue of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has long preoccupied the international community. Despite the fact that the General Assembly has adopted resolutions annually on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East since 1974, unfortunately the issue remains unresolved after 40 years.

In 1995, as an integral part of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) extension package, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference adopted a resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of

mass destruction in the Middle East. After 15 years of inaction, the 2010 Review Conference adopted as part of its Action Plan a set of actions on the implementation of the 1995 resolution that included, inter alia, mandating the Secretary-General and the co-sponsors — the three NPT depositary States — of the resolution to convene a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in 2012.

In November 2012, despite all the efforts and the full engagement of the members of the League of Arab States, it was announced, unilaterally and without consulting Arab States, that the 2012 conference had been postponed. Even after many rounds of consultations and meetings in Vienna, Lyon and Geneva, to date the conference has not been held. In view of the fact that the 2012 conference was not held in accordance with the defined mandate of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the Arab States came up with a working paper, later endorsed and adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, which called upon the 2015 Review Conference to undertake the following actions.

First, the Conference should reaffirm the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which, being the basis upon which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote, remains valid until it is fully implemented.

Secondly, the Conference should call upon Israel, the only State in the Middle East that remains outside the Treaty, to immediately sign and ratify the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, without any further delay.

Thirdly, the Conference should call upon the Secretary-General to convene a conference within 180 days from the adoption of the 2015 NPT Review Conference draft final document — which was not adopted, of course — aimed at launching a process to conclude a legally binding treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction with the following mandate.

The Secretary-General shall invite all States of the Middle East region, namely, members of the League of Arab States, Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran, to attend the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The Secretary-General shall exert all efforts and take all the necessary measures with a view to ensuring the success of the conference.

The 1995 resolution on the Middle East, adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, shall be the terms of reference of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The conference shall also establish two working groups as follows: one dealing with the scope, geographic demarcation of the zone, prohibitions and interim measures, and a second dealing with verification measures and implementation mechanisms. The conference shall meet annually in its plenary format and working groups.

When a legally binding Treaty is agreed among the participating States of the region, the Secretary-General shall reconvene the conference to adopt the negotiated treaty on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Secretary-General shall inform the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties and its Preparatory Committee on progress made and the status of the implementation of the 1995 resolution. That should take place after five years.

What I have laid out here constitutes our vision of the way forward for regional disarmament. We all share that view, and we shall spare no effort, hand-in-hand with the international community, to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Ms. Lyashuk (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): In my statement I would like to focus on the contribution of Belarus to regional disarmament and security.

From the moment Belarus gained its independence, it has maintained a consistent and responsible policy on international and regional security, disarmament, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and arms control, first and foremost in our region. Belarus was the first post-Soviet State to voluntarily renounce the possibility of keeping the nuclear weapons that remained after the fall of the Soviet Union. In November 1996, we completed their removal from our territory and acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. In the United Nations, for the past decade, Belarus has consistently called for a ban on the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Belarus

has significantly contributed to the strengthening of European security and to increased predictability in the region by decreasing stocks of conventional weapons.

On the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), by the end of 1995 Belarus had completed the first part of its Treaty obligations by decreasing its weapons and military equipment by 10 per cent, more than the reductions made by all 30 States parties to the CFE Treaty. Belarus took an active part in the development of the agreement to adapt the CFE and was the first to sign and ratify it. Belarus facilitated the strengthening of regional military political security in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) by participating in the elaboration of OSCE mechanisms in that area.

Early in the new millennium, Belarus concluded bilateral agreements with Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine on additional confidence-building and security measures in the military and political spheres. The agreements serve as key instruments for promoting the concept of a friendly neighbourhood around the perimeter of our State. Belarus pays keen attention to combating international terrorist activities. Belarus has acceded to all key international documents focused on combating the WMD threat.

In addition, our country has been taking all possible steps to implement the provisions of the highly important Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In 2012, Belarus was one of the first in the OSCE region to develop a national plan to implement the resolution. In Belarus, with the assistance of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Executive Board and the OSCE secretariat, in 2013 we held a seminar for CIS members to exchange experiences on issues related to implementing resolution 1540 (2004). We plan to continue to hold events in Minsk on the issue.

In the context of international anti-terrorist efforts based on Council resolution 1286 (2001), noting its relevance, Belarus provided NATO the transit of cargo through Belarusian territory that was essential to the international efforts to facilitate security in Afghanistan. From the moment of signing the Collective Security Treaty in 1992 and the establishment of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2002, Belarus has actively participated in the development and strengthening of the CSTO and

considers the organization one of the most important elements in ensuring regional security.

Belarus greatly contributes to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Our country is developing a project to eliminate munitions containing PFM-1 mines. The expected result will be the destruction of more than 3 million anti-personnel mines, which have remained in Belarus since the fall of the Soviet Union. The project is financed by the European Commission.

Beginning in 2007, Belarus has successfully implemented joint OSCE-United Nations Development Programme projects aimed at modernizing the storage system for small arms and light weapons at 13 Ministry of Defence locations in Belarus. We are sincerely grateful to all donor countries that have participated in funding the project and the various stages of its implementation. With the project, Belarus has developed software to automate the registry of small arms and light weapons, which has generated great interest in the OSCE. Belarus has expressed its readiness to share the software with interested States and has already given it without charge to eight OSCE member States from South-East Europe and Central Asia.

In our view, the further strengthening of international and regional security must be achieved through such specific steps as ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the full implementation of the NPT and in reviewing the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): Armenia attaches great importance to regional disarmament, since stability and security are easier to achieve with fewer armaments. The efforts of the United Nations aimed at the establishment of international and regional security, stability and an atmosphere of confidence through the encouragement of disarmament are much appreciated. We are convinced that peace and security at the global level directly and predominantly depend on regional and subregional stability.

The Government of Armenia strongly advocates for the United Nations efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels. We have consistently supported General Assembly resolutions relating to peace and security at the international, regional and subregional

levels. Armenia has been a staunch, long-term advocate for regional cooperation in every possible sphere. The reasoning is simple and well-justified: even if there are problems between the countries in a particular region, any cooperation, whether on a small or large scale, in the short or long term, is an indisputable contributor to confidence-building.

Guided by that principled approach, Armenia makes every effort to advance confidence-building in the South Caucasus, utilizing the frameworks of the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO, the Partnership for Peace of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and bilateral relations. Armenia also demonstrates its readiness and will to initiate projects aimed at the development of regional cooperation in various fields. Unfortunately, the prevailing situation in the region, and the ill-perceived political motivations of some do not allow taking practical confidence-building steps in the field of disarmament.

Armenia has been duly informing the relevant bodies of the United Nations about the ongoing blatant violations of the ceasefire by the Azerbaijani armed forces along the line of contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Armenian-Azerbaijani State border. Unfortunately, the situation of late has deteriorated even further. Azerbaijan has continued to completely ignore the provisions of the 1994 ceasefire agreement by shelling, on a daily basis, the positions of the Nagorno Karabakh defence army and the Armenian armed forces with weapons of various calibres, and has undertaken more aggressive attempts to infiltrate into Armenian positions, thereby carrying out subversive activities. It has also started targeting border villages and their civilian populations, in open violation of international humanitarian law.

Alarmingly, the Azerbaijani military has started to use heavy weapons, including 120-millimetre mortars as well as 107-millimetre rockets. Azerbaijani military units continue to deliberately target border villages, inflicting deaths among the civilian population. The escalation of the situation during the past month was accompanied by large-scale military exercises in close vicinity to the line of contact and the border of Armenia, with the participation of 65,000 military personnel, including 6,000 reservists and hundreds of battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery units and air forces. We are deeply concerned and strongly

condemn those provocative actions, which fuel military tension in the region.

Armenia remains committed to the proposal of introducing an investigative mechanism for ceasefire violations, which is essential for maintaining a ceasefire, while Azerbaijan continues to reject it. We reiterate our firm position that a clear and unequivocal commitment to the ceasefire and to confidence-building by the parties concerned is the only way to create a conducive environment for the peace process.

Along with the destabilizing developments I just described, we have been witnessing another alarming trend, that is, deliberate non-compliance with the Vienna Document. Large-scale military exercises that qualify for prior notification under the Vienna Document are being held in a neighbouring country, in violation of their own international commitments. The developments in our region have demonstrated yet again that the use of force could in no way bring about a durable solution to the existing conflict. There is no alternative to conflict resolution but a political compromise stemming from negotiations based on the ultimate commitment of the parties to the non-use of force.

In conclusion, we reiterate our adherence to peaceful negotiations within the internationally mandated format of the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs. We also commend and appreciate the continued support of the Secretary-General to the peace process within that format.

The Chair: I shall now call on those representatives who have requested to exercise their right of reply.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): In his statement, which was more like a lecture than a statement, the representative of the Russian Federation sarcastically questioned — or, should I say, ridiculed — the well-known fact of Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008. I want to express our dismay at Russia's continued denial of the acts it has committed and its commitments, and its utter rejection of the reality on the ground. That is why I would like to once again bring the Committee's attention to the well-known facts.

In August 2008, after careful planning, well in advance, Russia committed an act of aggression against Georgia when it sent thousands of its troops to destroy Georgia's sovereignty in full breach of Russia's international obligations and all written norms of

international law. As a result of Russia's aggression, hundreds of thousands of Georgians were subjected to ethnic cleansing.

More than seven years after the invasion, Russia continues its aggression in blatant violation of international law and the August 2008 ceasefire agreement between Russia and Georgia, mediated by the European Union. Russia militarily occupies one fifth — 20 per cent — of Georgia's territory, in our central and western zones, and it is not allowing hundreds of thousands of ethnically cleansed populations to return to their homes. We once again call on the Russian Federation to end the illegal military occupation of Georgia's sovereign territories and withdraw all its military forces from our land.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I would again like to exercise my right of reply to some of the comments made earlier by the representative of the Russian Federation.

The first point, on NATO's alleged encroachment on Russia's borders, that is nonsense. But I would point out that Russia is the one that is encroaching on others' borders. Let us be clear about that. I am not sure what the representative of Russia is referring to when he says that the United States is unilaterally increasing its capacity to attack Russia, in violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I am not sure what he means by that.

On the issue of ballistic-missile defence capacity, I have made very clear in this room why we pursue ballistic-missile defence. I do not think I need to repeat that.

Lastly, I would respond to the allegation that the United States is supporting the violent overthrow of the legitimate Ukrainian Government; to the contrary, it is the Russian Federation that is threatening the independence and territorial integrity of the sovereign Government of Ukraine.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have just a few words to say regarding the statement made by the representative of Georgia. If I am honest, I do not really have anything to say in reply. I just have a quick question. Does someone in this room still truly believe that what was said is actually what is true?

With regard to the remarks by the representative of the United States, we have already discussed those

issues in great detail in our bilateral meetings, and I do not see any need to bring all that to light here. We all know the joke according to which Russia is moving its territory closer to American bases. Yes, sure, that is well known; everybody knows that.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I do not even know how to comment on that. I will just leave it at that.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): I wanted to make a short comment about what my Russian colleague just said. I do not think that this is the right place or the right time for jokes when 8,000 people in Ukraine have died because of Russian aggression.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is a very serious issue, and of course we should not discuss it here, but I can quite responsibly repeat the actual facts. The Russian Federation has not perpetrated any aggression against our brother country, Ukraine. We never have and we never will. I would ask that the representative of Ukraine stop such idle talk.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): I think that the position of my country as well as that of other countries are not just pure talk, as the representative of the Russian Federation suggests. Unfortunately, Russian aggression against my country remains ongoing.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.