



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

First Committee

20th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: This afternoon, we will take up the cluster “Regional disarmament and security”. However, before commencing with the list of speakers on that cluster, in accordance with its adopted timetable, the Committee will first hear a briefing by the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament. It is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the Chair, Mr. Fernando Luque Márquez of Ecuador. After giving the floor to Mr. Luque Márquez to make his statement, I will suspend the meeting and switch to an informal mode to give delegations an opportunity to ask questions.

I now give the floor to Mr. Luque Márquez.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (spoke in Spanish): I would first like to thank you, Sir, and the members of the Committee for including on the Committee’s agenda this briefing on the activities of the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, which I have the honour to chair.

In accordance with the provisions of resolution 65/66 and decision 70/551, under which it was convened to agree on its objectives and agenda, including the

possible establishment of a preparatory committee of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, on 22 February the Open-ended Working Group held its organizational meeting, at which it elected the Chair, as well as the Vice-Chairs presented by the Group of Western European and other States and the Group of Eastern European States, namely, Mr. George-Wilhelm Galhoffer of Austria and Mrs. Laura Romanescu of Romania, respectively. The Working Group also adopted a provisional agenda for the three substantive sessions to be held in 2016 and 2017. The first was held from 28 March to 1 April and included a total of eight meetings. At the beginning of the session, the representatives of 26 States made general statements, four on behalf of groups and 22 in a national capacity.

At the morning meeting on Tuesday 29 March, at my invitation, Mr. Randy Rydell, a former official of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, gave a briefing on the historical and political aspects of the three prior special sessions devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, 1982 and 1983. That was followed by a very interesting discussion between those present and Mr. Rydell that, I believe, was extremely useful for the Working Group, as it both clarified questions about the antecedents and progression of the previous special sessions and helped delegations to decide on what the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session should be. In that regard, I believe it was also useful for delegations to review the agendas of the previous special sessions, which, at my request, were distributed in the meeting room. For the first session, I thought it

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was helpful to have a broad debate, which I stimulated with my own questions to the Group where necessary.

By the end of the week, we were able to present working documents to the Secretariat, in the order in which they were submitted, from the United States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and Australia. At that meeting, Ms. Saada Hassan of Djibouti, representing the Group of African States, was elected Vice-Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, and agreement was reached to change the date of the third and final substantive session to June 2017.

The second substantive session took place between 11 and 15 July, with a total of eight meetings. On the first day, Mr. Ali Robotjazi of the Islamic Republic of Iran, representing the Group of Asia-Pacific States, was elected Rapporteur, thereby completing the composition of the Bureau. Two weeks before the first meeting of the second session, I circulated, through the Secretariat, a working document that contained the proposed objectives and agenda of a fourth special session on disarmament and could serve as a basis for building consensus within the Open-ended Working Group. I drafted it while taking into account and linking together the working documents presented at the end of the first session and the statements by delegations. During that week, we discussed the working paper, using the format of a rolling text so that the proposals of all delegations were reflected and could be discussed. An updated version of the text that included the agreements reached and the various proposals was circulated at the end of each day, with the help of the Secretariat.

I have to admit that the rolling-text method can be more laborious, but I believe that transparency is essential in such negotiation processes so as to ensure a consensus outcome. As a result, the document circulated on the last day of the second week of meetings includes the proposals that had been made up until then and reflects delegations' various perspectives on the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session. I believe firmly that those diverse perspectives, which in my opinion are not so very different in essence, can and will be reconciled. We will therefore continue to discuss the concept of a holistic and comprehensive fourth special session together with some delegations' proposals for the inclusion of specific topics on the agenda. We will have to agree on how disarmament mechanisms should be analysed at a fourth special session on disarmament.

We will have to continue to discuss the place that consensus should have in a special session, and how to express that. We will also have to discuss how to subsume legitimate national interests and aspirations in an agenda that reflects our shared interests. Starting in January of next year, in order to prepare the ground for the Open-ended Working Group's third and final session, which will begin on 5 June 2017, I intend to conduct periodic consultations open to the participation of all interested delegations, using the text that was circulated on the final day of the preceding session as a basis. In that way I hope to start the June session with a text acceptable to all delegations, thereby making it possible for us to adopt it by consensus and to make a decision about a preparatory committee, thus complying with the General Assembly's mandate to the Working Group.

Mr. Isnomo (Indonesia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by acknowledging the work of the staff of the Secretariat in supporting the Working Group's efforts during the two sessions held this year. Some of them are here today at the rostrum, and I would especially like to salute them — and the interpreters — now since today is United Nations Staff Day. I would also like to thank the members of the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group and, above all, each and every one of the delegations for their contributions, statements and ideas and, more than anything, for the good spirit they showed during our discussions. I believe that is a good sign for a potentially successful conclusion for the Group next year.

The Acting Chair: In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I shall now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to hold an interactive discussion on the briefing we have just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.10 p.m. and resumed at 3.35 p.m.

The Acting Chair: On behalf of all delegations, I thank Mr. Fernando Luque Márquez, Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, for his statement.

The Committee will now begin its consideration of the cluster "Regional disarmament and security". I once again urge all speakers to kindly observe the time limit of five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf

of a group. The Committee will continue to use the buzzer to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.53.

Mr. Mahmaminov (Tajikistan): I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their elections to the First Committee this year.

I have the honour to deliver a statement on behalf of the States parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which are the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan, in its capacity as Treaty coordinator. I am pleased to inform the Committee that this year marks the tenth anniversary of the signing of that very significant Treaty, and I can say with pride on behalf of all of us that we have achieved much. The Treaty's entry into force, on 21 March 2009, was an important milestone marking the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, by which the countries of our region have made a significant contribution to strengthening regional and global security.

The zone's creation was the result of the collective efforts of all five Central Asian States in their desire to provide security, stability and peace in the region, and to create the necessary conditions for our peoples' development and prosperity. In September 1997, Tashkent hosted an international conference entitled "Central Asia — a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons". The Treaty's signing ceremony was held in Semipalatinsk, which was home to one of the world's largest nuclear test sites until it was closed in 1991. The first consultative meeting on the Treaty was held in Turkmenistan on 15 October 2009 and the depository of the Treaty is the Kyrgyz Republic. The States parties to the Treaty have committed voluntarily and unequivocally to banning the production, acquisition and deployment on their territories of nuclear weapons and their components or other nuclear explosive devices. The Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone has therefore made a real contribution to implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the global process of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to the formation of a mechanism for regional security.

The Central Asian zone has a number of special features. It is the first in the world located entirely in

the northern hemisphere and in a landlocked region. It is the only one where nuclear weapons were once deployed on its territory. Needless to say, declaring the Central Asian region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the heart of the Eurasian continent significantly enhances security and stability in that vast geopolitical space. We hope that the secure space around our area will continue to expand so that one day our entire planet will be one nuclear-free zone. Building strong guarantees of peace and security in and around our region creates a basis for sustainable development, cooperation and progress. We have a common history and shared values dear to all of humankind — peace, security, mutual respect and cooperation — to which we are committed and which we once again affirm on our tenth anniversary.

We note with great satisfaction that the long consultation process on the provision of negative security assurances to members of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was successfully completed on 6 May 2014. On that day, high-ranking representatives of the nuclear-weapon States signed the Protocol on negative security assurances in the presence of the States parties to the Treaty. The Protocol is an integral part of the Treaty and provides Central Asia with security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We can say without exaggeration that the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty has become one of the milestones of the global non-proliferation regime in the past decade. The Protocol has been ratified by the four nuclear-weapon States, and we hope that the formal process of institutionalizing the zone will be completed soon. That has been and will continue to be our shared significant contribution to strengthening the NPT regime.

The establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons — one of the universal instruments for preventing the proliferation of such weapons — ensures that in vast areas of our world numerous States have undertaken the obligation not to transfer or accept transfers of nuclear or other nuclear explosive devices, and to exercise control over such processes, directly or indirectly. The countries that belong to those zones have also pledged not to manufacture or in any other way acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or to receive any assistance in their manufacture.

On behalf of the delegations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, at this session of the Committee my delegation has the honour

to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.53, entitled “Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia”. The draft resolution reflects the progress made since the signing of the Treaty, in 2006, and reaffirms our strong commitment to enhancing the effective implementation of measures in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, I would like to express the shared hope of the Central Asian States that the draft resolution will receive the unanimous consensus and wholehearted support of the States Members of the United Nations, taking into account the fact that the zone has made such enormous progress. We thank the Member States that have expressed their desire to join us in sponsoring the draft resolution. We are happy to inform the Committee that, by October 2014, the resolution already had 44 Member States as sponsors, including the five nuclear-weapon States, and was co-sponsored by 14 Member States. We invite more to join us this year. Ten years have passed since we began, and we have remained determined. We look forward to the decades ahead as we work to enhance global security in order to ensure peace and prosperity for humankind.

Ms. Challenger (Antigua and Barbuda): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in this thematic debate on regional disarmament and security.

The CARICOM member States remain committed to contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by implementing our international obligations and taking concerted action at the regional level. Our community has adopted and continues to implement practical and innovative approaches to the multidimensional security threats to our region. In that context, as has been decided by CARICOM Heads of State, security is the established fourth pillar of our regional integration process. Regional and subregional cooperation, collective action and partnerships demonstrate our firm commitment, particularly to confronting the illicit trade in firearms, whose proliferation continues to have devastating and lasting effects on all of our countries.

Two years ago, we 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 committed to undertaking discussions with

various donors, including the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Government of the United States of America and the European Union, in areas related to, among other things, gangs and small firearms, justice protection, asset recovery and trafficking in persons. CARICOM countries continue to work alongside UNODC in their effort to achieve the strategic goals outlined in the UNODC Regional Programme 2014-2016 in support of CARICOM’s crime and security strategy.

CARICOM remains appreciative of the partnership its member States share with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC). It is an important partner for CARICOM in its efforts to honour its arms-control and non-proliferation obligations. The Regional Centre has assisted CARICOM member States in enhancing the capacity of their law-enforcement and judicial personnel, improving their stockpile management capabilities, destroying weapons and aligning national legislation with global and regional instruments. CARICOM notes with appreciation the results of UNLIREC’s multi-year project aimed at strengthening the capacity of 14 Caribbean States to combat small-arms trafficking through improved stockpile management and weapon-destruction procedures.

CARICOM also recognizes the importance of adequate national operational forensic ballistic systems to effectively address 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. During 2015, UNLIREC visited six CARICOM countries — the Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. The three-day courses increased the knowledge of firearms examiners and other specialized enforcement personnel about firearms and ammunition identification and examination. A key component of that important training in our region included simulating the presentation by expert testimony of forensic ballistic evidence in a court of law, an exercise that enabled participants to exchange information on best practices as well as real-life challenges in the field. UNLIREC’s training has helped CARICOM to fulfil its

obligations under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including those outlined in the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of the States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action.

CARICOM remains strongly committed to the full and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In that regard, the regional consultative meeting held in November 2015 to review the preliminary draft of an ATT model law sought to further elaborate on the parameters, scope and content of the model law's provisions.

CARICOM supports strengthening 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 are not only highlighted but also discussed in a meaningful and robust fashion. We are encouraged by the support that has been given to the draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.37) submitted by Trinidad and Tobago on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

CARICOM is fully committed to its implementation programme on Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Four CARICOM member States are receiving support from our regional partners in strengthening their implementation efforts and modernizing their legislative and policy frameworks through assistance in formulating and presenting resolution 1540 (2004) action plans, as well as in drafting 1540-related legislation. Thanks to that assistance package, Trinidad and Tobago benefited from a two-day workshop in June that focused on operational practicalities concerning the regulation of proliferation financing. Trinidad and Tobago is the first Caribbean country to intensify efforts related to preventing proliferation financing. We look forward to seeing more countries in the region follow its lead. Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica also benefited from practical training, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization, through its 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, CARICOM's ultimate goal, by implementing its crime and security strategy, is

to improve citizens' security. However, our region continues to face the challenge of limited resources with which to tackle our various and complex security finance issues. We seek meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships as we strive to increase our institutional efficiency and human capacity for addressing such issues. In that regard, we would like to thank the various regional and subregional partners and civil society organizations that provide the financial, technical and other resources that the region needs to achieve its strategic goals.

Ms. Chan Shum (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (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 Convention on Chemical Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention, and we are therefore a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

At an extraordinary meeting held in Bariloche, Argentina, in August 2009, the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR decided to strengthen South America's status as a zone of peace by committing to establishing a mechanism for mutual confidence on security and defence issues, in support of their decision to abstain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any UNASUR member. Based on the Bariloche decision, UNASUR's Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers established a confidence and security mechanism. Its concrete implementation steps and guarantees include information exchange and transparency on defence systems and military expenditures; advance notice of military deployments and exercises in border areas; invitations to observers to participate in international exercises; and the establishment of communication mechanisms for military activities both within and outside the region. It established measures on the security front for border surveillance, for preventing and deterring illegal armed groups and acts of terrorism and for strengthening democracy and human rights, as well as on guarantees such as bans on the use or threat of use of force; measures for affirming South America as a nuclear-weapon-free zone under the Treaty of Tlatelolco; for maintaining respect for the principles of international law of treaties for cooperating on defence; and measures on compliance and verifiability.

The Heads of State of South America subsequently affirmed that resolve at their seventh meeting, held in Paramaribo on 30 August 2013, noting that the South American Defense Council is the ideal forum for developing strategic thinking. Since its creation, in December 2008, the South American Defense Council has adopted a statute and biennial action plans that emphasize action based on defence policy, military cooperation, humanitarian work and peacebuilding operations, defence and technology, and education and training.

In March 2010, it was decided to create the Center for Strategic Defense Studies (CEED), in order to disseminate knowledge and strategic thought in South America on defence and security issues. In December 2014, in the context of the confidence mechanism and measures strengthening security, CEED launched a registry of aggregate defence spending in South America from 2006 to 2010, compiled for the first time from official information provided by UNASUR's 12 member countries based on an agreement on the shared methodology developed for the purpose. That was followed by the publication, in July 2015, of a compendium on defence institutions in South America, which constitutes an effective and credible measure for promoting transparency and confidence, since it includes systematic descriptions and analyses of the organizational principles and functional aspects of the defence organizations of the 12 countries on the South American Defense Council. CEED is currently in the process of developing South America's first military inventory registry, which should further reinforce UNASUR's transparency efforts.

Each year, the General Assembly reaffirms its strong support for the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in promoting United Nations activities at regional and subregional levels aimed at strengthening peace, disarmament, stability, security and development among its member States. UNASUR stresses that UNLIREC has been successful in implementing programmes of work with an interdisciplinary approach and excellent coordination among the various actors in the region, including other United Nations agencies, national and provincial Governments, municipal authorities and representatives of civil society.

We would like to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the Regional Centre's programmes are

implemented in accordance with the priorities of the States of the region. In that context, I would like to draw particular attention to UNLIREC's efforts in response to requests for help from Latin American and Caribbean States in implementing the Arms Trade Treaty. UNASUR has used its practical training course on implementing the Treaty, which complements the resources provided by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Lastly, the UNASUR States would like to thank the Governments both within and outside the region for their financial support for developing and implementing the activities of the Regional Centre, and we encourage the international community to continue that support.

Mr. Ben Sliman (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to say that the Group of Arab States associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Group of Arab States affirms the importance of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world, including the Middle East. We would like to reiterate the importance of taking practical and immediate steps to achieve that, something traditionally called for in the resolution that the members of the League of Arab States submit each year entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". We hope that the international community will support this year's draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.2), as it has done in past years, with the aim of maintaining international peace and security.

The Arab Group also urges the three authors of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to shoulder their responsibilities in order to enable us to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. We reaffirm our determination to advance its cause and do everything we can to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. That is how we will ensure security and stability for our region and achieve the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard — and in the light of the fact that the consensus-based resolution adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has not been implemented — the Arab Group attempted to break that impasse during the 2015 NPT Review Conference by proposing a new text, supported by the Non-Aligned Movement. However, that positive

approach failed to achieve the desired goal, for every effort at the Review Conference to arrive at an outcome document was undermined.

We should emphasize that the responsibility for creating a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is a shared one. We did our part in shouldering our share of that responsibility, and other countries should do the same. Failure to do so damages the credibility of the NPT and the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery as a whole. In that regard, the Arab Group expresses its concern about the ongoing security, humanitarian and environmental risks posed by Israel's continuing refusal to accede to the NPT. Israel is the only Middle Eastern country not to adhere to the Treaty, and its continued refusal to submit its nuclear installations to the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency represents a real and flagrant threat to peace and security in the Middle East.

The Group of Arab States reiterates that the non-implementation of the international commitment under the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which calls for the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region, is a true failure for the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We reaffirm the fact that the creation of such zones is one of the pillars of the NPT, and one whose importance is on a par with the other three pillars of the Treaty. We have made no concrete progress in that regard since 1995, despite the fact that the resolution is an integral part of the agreement reached to extend the NPT indefinitely at the 1995 Review Conference. We have witnessed delays, dithering and foot-dragging over the review process and the relevant commitments. That is why the Arab Group has launched initiatives to undertake a comprehensive review of these issues, including by developing an Arab strategy for creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We have also considered creating a committee of the wise within the framework of the League of Arab States to consider the issue, based on a resolution adopted by four Arab State Foreign Ministers on 11 March.

In conclusion, the Arab Group once again urges universal adherence to the NPT in the Middle East, which will help to promote international peace and security. We also commit to acting in concert with the First Committee and the international community in order to advance the cause of all matters relating to regional disarmament.

Ms. Jenie (Indonesia): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). I shall read a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which is on PaperSmart.

The NAM member States that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) reiterate their serious concern about the two-decade-long delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and urge the resolution's sponsors to take all necessary measures to implement it without further delay. The NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their profound disappointment over the fact that the 2010 Action Plan for establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has not been implemented. They firmly reject the alleged impediments to implementation of the Action Plan and the 1995 resolution, since they run contrary to the letter and spirit of that resolution, which contains the original terms of reference for establishing such a nuclear-weapon-free zone. They also violate the collective agreement reached at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

NAM would like to re-emphasize the special responsibility of the States sponsoring the 1995 resolution for its implementation. We are concerned about the fact that the resolution's persistent non-implementation, contrary to decisions taken at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, undermines the NPT's effectiveness and credibility and disrupts the delicate balance between its three pillars, and taking into account the fact that the indefinite extension of the Treaty agreed on at the 1995 Review Conference, which was inextricably linked to the resolution's implementation, does not include the right to indefinitely possess nuclear weapons. NAM strongly supports the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. As a first priority step to that end, we recommend the speedy establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Until then, NAM demands that Israel, the only State in the region that has neither acceded to the NPT nor declared its intention to do so, renounce all possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the Treaty without preconditions or further delay and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency's full-scope safeguards.

The Movement also calls for a total ban on the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources and devices, and on extending assistance to Israel in nuclear-related scientific and technological fields. In that connection, NAM would like to recall the successful conclusion of the nuclear negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3+3, which resulted in finalization of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on 14 July 2015. We would like to emphasize that the agreement showed once again that dialogue and diplomacy are the most appropriate means for resolving such issues, as the Movement has always advocated.

NAM believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones established under the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, along with Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are positive steps and important measures towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We reiterate that, in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is essential to ensure that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of such weapons to all States in those zones. NAM calls on all nuclear-weapon States to ratify the related protocols to all the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, to withdraw any reservations or interpretive declarations incompatible with their object and purpose and to respect the denuclearization status of those zones.

We urge States to conclude agreements, freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, with a view to establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they do not exist, in accordance with the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and with the principles and guidelines adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999. NAM would also like to emphasize the importance of United Nations activities at the regional level for increasing Member States' stability and security. Those activities could be promoted in a substantive manner through the maintenance and revitalization of the three Regional Centres for peace and disarmament.

Mr. Raja Zaib Shah (Malaysia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia,

the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Malaysia.

In the light of the increasingly complex security challenges facing us today, we must remain steadfast in maintaining international peace and security through our collective disarmament-process efforts. ASEAN has therefore striven to strengthen its own ability to address regional security challenges, in accordance with its Charter and by promoting ASEAN's centrality in the regional security architecture. The establishment, in 2015, of the ASEAN Economic Community was a testament to our efforts to build a regional architecture that is conducive to peace, stability and prosperity.

ASEAN views transparency and confidence-building measures, as well as progress on global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as indispensable to improving the security environment of the Asia-Pacific region. We underscore the importance of strengthening international cooperative efforts in nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We must continue to uphold the peaceful use of nuclear energy in ways that meet safety, security and non-proliferation standards. As such, we reaffirm our commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and we especially value the platform that regional dialogues give us to facilitate the balanced implementation of those commitments. We remain firmly wedded to ensuring the NPT's universality and its full and effective implementation, and we view that as crucial to achieving regional disarmament and security. We therefore call on all States parties to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the Treaty.

We believe that establishing the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone has helped to strengthen the security of States in the region and international peace and security generally. We remain encouraged by the agreements that have established nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Semipalatinsk, and by Mongolia's self-declared nuclear-weapon-free status. In that regard, we continue to urge others to conclude agreements to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in areas where they do not exist, including in the Middle East.

Among other things, our contribution to regional disarmament this year included the official

inauguration, in May, of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre headquarters in Phnom Penh. Once it is fully operationalized, it will serve as a regional centre of excellence for addressing the humanitarian aspects of explosive remnants of war. Secondly, the ASEAN network of regulatory bodies on atomic energy continues to undertake various activities on nuclear safety, security, safeguards and emergency preparedness and response by exchanging information, complementing the work of existing mechanisms at various levels, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In an effort to strengthen cooperation, ASEAN senior officials have been asked to explore ways to formalize relations between ASEAN and the IAEA in order to promote collaboration and capacity-building that can benefit all member States.

The eighth ASEAN Regional Forum intersessional meeting on non-proliferation and disarmament, co-chaired by Canada, New Zealand and Malaysia, was held in Putrajaya in April with the aim of deepening cooperation between various intergovernmental frameworks in order to improve the fulfilment of commitments and obligations regarding disarmament and non-proliferation through a proposed Regional Forum work plan.

We believe that regional frameworks have a valuable role to play in developing concrete initiatives, building capacity and ensuring continuity in meeting our commitments to the three central pillars of the global non-proliferation regime — preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology and advancing global disarmament efforts. ASEAN remains committed to working with the international community to achieve those goals.

Mr. Lwin (Myanmar): I would first like to congratulate the Chair on his leadership of the Committee for this session, and to assure him and the Bureau of my delegation's full support.

Myanmar aligns itself with the statements delivered previously by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and of Malaysia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), its Regional Disarmament Branch and the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and

Disarmament for their valuable contribution to global disarmament and international peace and security. My delegation fully supports and appreciates the role played by the three Regional Centres, particularly the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD), in promoting regional and global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments through national capacity-building, outreach and advocacy initiatives. In recognition of those contributions, my delegation, together with other like-minded countries in the region, has become a sponsor of this year's draft (A/C.1/71/L.27) of the annual resolution entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific".

In January, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, Myanmar organized a national round table on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. The event was supported by the European Union, the United States Government and the United Nations Regional Centre. It focused on good practices in implementing the resolution in order to counter the spread of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. The round table included discussions with experts from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the European Organization for Nuclear Research and UNODA on national implementation and future regional and international cooperation.

Also in Myanmar, in February the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific organized a capacity-building workshop on small arms and light weapons, with the kind assistance of the Government of the United Kingdom. International experts, representatives from UNRCPD and UNODA and Myanmar stakeholders discussed relevant international instruments, domestic legislation, reporting requirements and tools available for assistance in relation to the control of small arms and light weapons.

In the context of international peace and security, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a growing concern for all countries. As threats of terrorism and violent extremism become increasingly imminent, controlling small arms and light weapons becomes a priority for us. States have major concerns about the wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences that can arise from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small

arms and light weapons. Regional security and stability are prerequisites for developing countries, since security, stability and development go hand in hand. In that regard, we would like to reaffirm Myanmar's willingness to cooperate with neighbouring countries and regional institutions in order to enhance the stability and security of the State and the region.

We commend the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, organized by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs. Myanmar is a beneficiary of the programme and looks forward to more such opportunities in years to come. We also wish to encourage Member States that are in a position to do so to contribute to the fund, since the activities of the Regional Centres are very reliant on voluntary contributions. Maintaining and revitalizing the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament would contribute significantly to regional and international peace and security. We wish to reaffirm our continued support for the Regional Centres in promoting peace, security and disarmament in their respective regions and beyond.

Ms. Al-Mukh (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to affirm that my delegation aligns itself with the statements made earlier today by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are a key regional confidence-building measure and have the potential to become important tools in strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Their establishment reflects the shared values held by many in the areas of nuclear disarmament, arms control and disarmament. Iraq therefore fully supports the creation of such zones as a contribution to strengthening regional and international peace and security.

The critical state of the world in general, and of the Middle East in particular, must compel the international community to accept its collective responsibility and work to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In that regard, Iraq is disappointed by the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its lack of consensus on an outcome document. We emphasize that the United Nations and the three depositary States of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT) must honour their commitments and assume their responsibility for creating such a zone in the Middle East without further delay, with the goal of strengthening regional and international peace and security in accordance with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Failure to implement the resolution on the Middle East will help to perpetuate instability and tension in the region and make universalizing other treaties more challenging, thereby eroding the non-proliferation regime and undermining the Treaty's credibility and universality. Iraq believes that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is conditional on some essential steps. Israel must place all of its nuclear weapons under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards regime, and its other nuclear installations must be verified in line with Security Council resolution 487 (1981). Such measures are a necessary precondition for easing tensions in the Middle East, a region that remains deeply insecure because, unlike other countries' installations, Israel's nuclear facilities, which have the capacity to be used for military purposes, are not subject to International Atomic Energy Agency oversight.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States is firmly committed to promoting international peace and prosperity by strengthening partnerships and cooperation with regional and other intergovernmental organizations. Developing effective partnerships between regions and international organizations is also key. In that regard, organizations and initiatives such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Global Health Security Agenda deserve praise for their collaborative efforts to address development, health and security challenges at both the regional and international levels.

As a strong supporter of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties — important measures that move us closer to our shared vision of a world without nuclear weapons — I especially want to applaud the efforts of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean as it commemorates next February's fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. The United States remains committed to the goal of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and we remain prepared to actively support direct, inclusive discussion among the States of the region, which is essential to progress.

Regional groups also provide important avenues for furthering disarmament, security and non-proliferation objectives. In East Asia, the regional architecture has steadily matured. For the first time, the 2016 East Asia Summit issued a stand-alone statement on non-proliferation. The strength derived from the Summit's participants' unity will be vital to addressing regional threats such as North Korea's nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. On 9 September, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test, the second this year, and conducted an alarming number of launches using ballistic-missile technology that is proscribed by the United Nations. Such provocative and destabilizing actions are in flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and pose a grave threat to our common security. We intend to work closely with all our allies and partners to develop and apply new measures to compel the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change course and return to denuclearization. In the face of such threats, our commitment to the defence of our allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan, remains ironclad.

In Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) remains one of the most important institutions involved in the pursuit of comprehensive security. The United States remains committed to preserving, strengthening and modernizing conventional arms control in Europe, based on key principles and commitments. Unfortunately, we face acute challenges to European and Eurasian security, including terrorist incidents, an active conflict in Nagorno Karabakh and intolerance, which has increased as the refugee and migrant crisis across Europe has intensified. Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine and its attempted annexation of Crimea are a clear violation of its international obligations in contravention of OSCE commitments, and its violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty also severely undermines European security.

In Africa, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, the United States also works closely with regional organizations, as well as the United Nations Office

for Disarmament Affairs, to foster implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and address individual regional concerns, including chemical and biological issues, border security and small arms and light weapons.

Beyond nuclear issues, the growing membership in the BWC in most regions reflects its value in setting a global standard for banning such abhorrent weapons. The United States would like to see BWC States parties take steps at their November Review Conference to strengthen the Convention in a variety of ways, including through regional cooperation and efforts to increase membership and implementation in developing regions. We also welcome the strong support from most regional groups for the work of the OPCW and its efforts together with Member States to strengthen global norms outlawing the development and use of chemical weapons. In that regard, the United States strongly condemns the use by Syria and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant of chemical weapons, as documented in the 24 August report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. Using chemical weapons is reprehensible and those who do so must be held accountable.

In conclusion, the United States is firmly committed to working with the international community, including in regional settings, in order to advance international security, non-proliferation and disarmament. All States benefit from action that stabilizes regional security and should continue to work to improve security conditions regionally and, by extension, globally.

Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Paraguay.

The Republic of Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to achieving peace and international security through non-proliferation and disarmament, the renunciation of war, the use of peaceful means to resolve conflicts and cooperation among States.

The decrease in disarmament and regional non-proliferation initiatives damages global peace and security. Latin America and the Caribbean is a zone of peace, free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of massive destruction. In that connection, Paraguay would like to highlight the efforts of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Union of South American Nations and the Southern Common Market, along with its associated States, to undertake

and implement regional and subregional commitments linked to disarmament and security, and to acknowledge the efforts of the Organization of American States in that regard. Paraguay urges the member States of those organizations to work to promote compliance with measures that build confidence and security in the region and, above all, to limit their spending on arms as far as possible without prejudicing the principle of security for States at the lowest level of armaments.

Paraguay also urges the member States of those organizations to intensify their efforts to respond to the region's shared challenges, based on international cooperation and friendly relations among States, especially with a view to universalizing and implementing relevant international instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Paraguay also calls on the States of the region to encourage women's participation in debates and decisions on disarmament measures, non-proliferation and arms control in the region and their active cooperation in comprehensively combating transnational crime, including the fight against terrorism.

Paraguay recognizes and welcomes the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in its thirtieth year, and emphasizes that it was created taking into consideration the close links between disarmament, non-proliferation, international peace and security and development.

Lastly, Paraguay stresses that economic, intellectual and other resources should be used for peaceful purposes and our peoples' socioeconomic development, not to foment arms races or exacerbate the uncertainty that leads to armed confrontations between nations. In that context, we particularly emphasize the importance of shifting resources intended for modernizing arsenals to efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly target 16.4, so as to significantly reduce flows of illicit arms and help to fight all forms of organized crime.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Bangladesh acknowledges the critical importance of regional disarmament and security in the

maintenance of international peace and security. The notion of strategic stability nonetheless remains an area of particular concern. We encourage the relevant civil-society stakeholders and others concerned to continue to engage in discussions on the possibility of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia as soon as possible. We consider obtaining unconditional and legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States to be a priority. We add our voice to those advocating the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in the interests of sustainable peace, security and stability in the region. We subscribe to the notion that peaceful dialogue and diplomacy are still the best options for building a sound regional security architecture. Enhanced regional cooperation, including in transparency and confidence-building, remains critical to creating the conditions conducive to sustained and meaningful dialogue on disarmament and security issues.

Bangladesh acknowledges the useful role played by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) in convening relevant experts and policymakers from the region to share views on issues of concern to all. In the recent past, UNRCPD facilitated the process of identifying common elements of interest and concern among countries in the region during negotiations on certain disarmament treaties. In our national context, we have particularly benefited from the UNRCPD customized support for promoting the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Tracing Instrument. The Centre's technical assistance in that area has also enabled us to identify the existing gaps and challenges in our legal, policy and institutional arrangements for ensuring compliance with the relevant Arms Trade Treaty provisions. We can only reaffirm the critical importance of regional cooperation in effectively addressing the challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms and ammunition.

We look forward to further expanding our partnership with UNRCPD in support of our ongoing work on developing a comprehensive national control list that will fulfil our obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), among other things. Bangladesh remains open to opportunities for further

learning from best practices in other regional countries in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their possible acquisition by terrorists and other unauthorized, non-State entities. We have already established well-functioning institutional arrangements for enhancing our national capacity for nuclear safety and security in the context of our pursuit of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We thank the Government of Nepal for hosting UNRCPD, and the Government of Thailand for making interim arrangements for the Centre's effective functioning. We look forward to seeing the Regional Centre move back to Kathmandu at soon as possible in order to resume its full-fledged activities. As in previous years, we are happy to be a sponsor of the draft resolution on the Regional Centre (A/C.1/71/L.27). We would like to request that UNRCPD further strengthen its efforts to promote and disseminate disarmament education and research in the region, drawing on the useful resources at its disposal.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.14, A/C.1/71/L.15 and A/C.1/71/L.16.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on this cluster by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In the post-Cold War era, most threats to peace and security have arisen among States located in the same region or subregion. Regional approaches to disarmament and arms control are therefore both essential and complementary to international and bilateral efforts. In the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as in the Disarmament Commission's and in the First Committee's resolutions, we have repeatedly affirmed the importance of simultaneously pursuing regional and global approaches, including agreements in the area of disarmament and arms limitation.

The international community has endorsed those mechanisms and normative frameworks and the two widely recognized and tested tools of 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 principles and guidelines in the areas of conventional arms control and confidence-building measures developed and agreed on at the United

Nations. It is important that we recall and reiterate some of those principles, including the preservation of balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces, the special responsibility of militarily significant States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security, and the pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner.

Preventing the possibility of surprise military attacks and avoiding aggression remain important goals of conventional arms control. A stable balance of conventional forces and weapons is necessary to ensure strategic stability, particularly in sensitive regions like South Asia. Pakistan has made numerous proposals for enhancing South Asia's strategic stability. Regrettably, none have had a favourable response. Our comprehensive proposal for establishing a strategic restraint regime includes the three interlocking elements of dispute resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and conventional force balance. Recognizing the complementarity of regional approaches and forward movement on those three issues in a holistic manner will go a long way to promoting the goals of arms control and disarmament at the global level.

Over the years, confidence-building measures have shown their utility and efficacy in several regions and subregions, including in the areas of arms control and disarmament and, more broadly, of international peace and security. As the relevant General Assembly resolutions and United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines have affirmed, confidence-building measures at the regional level have to be tailored to the specifics of the 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. However, regardless of the specifics of different regions and the confidence-building steps taken by the States concerned, the ultimate aim of regional approaches should be to enhance regional and global peace and security.

Confidence-building measures are significant in that they can help to create conditions conducive to more serious dialogue and diplomacy. However, confidence-building measures should not become an end in themselves, but should rather be pursued in conjunction with efforts to achieve the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the

Charter of the United Nations. If progress is not made towards eliminating the underlying disputes and causes of mistrust between States, the utility of confidence-building measures will remain limited at best. Confidence-building measures alone are neither a substitute or a precondition for steps aimed at resolving disputes peacefully.

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, as a practical way to promote those globally agreed goals. Pakistan's traditional three resolutions on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional contexts, regional disarmament and conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels are contained in draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.14, A/C.1/71/L.15 and A/C.1/71/L.16, respectively. They 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' continuing support for the adoption of those draft resolutions this year as well.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): At the outset, Egypt associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), and Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

When we address the universal objective of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones all over the world, the Middle East has always been at the forefront. The long-standing issue of the establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has been a major preoccupation for the international community, to the extent of becoming what amounts to a fourth pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Despite the fact that since 1974 the General Assembly has adopted an annual resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons, more than 40 years later the issue unfortunately remains unresolved. Two decades ago, as an integral element of the NPT extension package, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted a resolution on the establishment of

a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. After 15 years of inaction, as part of its Action Plan, the 2010 Review Conference adopted a set of constructive steps on the implementation of the 1995 resolution that included, among other things, mandating the Secretary-General and the sponsors of the 1995 resolution — which, as we all know, are the depositary States — to convene a conference in 2012 on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. In November 2012, despite all efforts and the full engagement and official readiness of the member States of the League of Arab States, the international community received the unexpected and shocking news that the 2012 conference, scheduled to be held in Helsinki that month, had been postponed. The illegitimate and unilateral announcement was made without even the stakeholders being consulted. And even after many rounds of consultations and meetings in Vienna, Lyon and Geneva, to date the conference has not been held.

In the light of the terms of reference embodied in the 1995 Middle East resolution and the 2010 NPT mandate, the NAM working document at the 2015 Review Conference provided a road map in that regard, including several practical, progressive steps aimed at creating the zone. It included, first, reaffirming the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as the basis on which the NPT was indefinitely extended by consensus, and the resolution's continuing validity until it is fully implemented. Secondly, it called on Israel, the only State in the Middle East that is still not a party to the NPT or other international treaties on weapons of mass destruction, to immediately sign and ratify the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Thirdly, it called on the Secretary-General to convene a conference as soon as possible aimed at launching the technical and political process for concluding a legally binding treaty establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The process would be based on consensus and all States in the Middle East — that is, the members of the League of Arab States, along with Israel and Iran, as defined by the IAEA — would be invited to attend and participate in that conference. The Secretary-General would be in charge of organizational efforts

throughout the process and would take every measure necessary to ensuring the success of the conference.

In conclusion, the proposal I have outlined constitutes our vision of a way forward for regional disarmament. Together with the international community and our partners, we will spare no effort to achieve a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the 1995 resolution, which remains valid until fully implemented.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.60.

Mr. Tenya Hasegawa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Latin America and the Caribbean is fundamentally a middle-income region that has made great strides in reducing poverty, but we nonetheless continue to face persistent challenges such as inequality, poverty and extreme poverty, in addition to the problems of violence and insecurity that affect a number of our cities. To address those challenges, our Governments need technical tools and economic resources. A good part of those resources is lost through the negative effects of armed violence or spent on costly armaments. To tackle the situation we need coordinated efforts to advance activities aimed at implementing peace, confidence-building and disarmament measures, together with actions to promote economic and social development. That is why, 29 years ago, the General Assembly mandated the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to provide substantive support to State initiatives and activities in the region aimed at implementing peace and disarmament measures and promoting economic and social development by reusing the available resources where appropriate. Next year, the United Nations Regional Centres will mark their thirtieth anniversary of working to comply with the mandate of resolution 41/60, and my delegation congratulates the Regional Centre in Lima on its upcoming anniversary.

Thanks to the Regional Centre's support, our States have been able to make progress in capacity-building, training specialized personnel and developing and implementing standards in areas related to disarmament and security. This year the Regional Centre organized more than 60 technical, legal and training assistance events in support of initiatives of States of the region

aimed at implementing the provisions of disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation instruments.

The Regional Centre has also continued its programme of specialized training and capacity development for addressing illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, with activities aimed at national security-sector personnel and by providing technical assistance to Latin American States for destroying more than 2,000 confiscated weapons and marking more than 1,400 small firearms. It also trained more than 100 private security company employees in small-arms control, and promoted greater effectiveness in tracing such weapons by training 75 laboratory specialists and experts in forensic ballistics from States of the region. The Centre also trained personnel from more than 120 national authorities of the region in order to strengthen States' ability to implement the Arms Trade Treaty and provided assistance in implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), especially in the areas of national legislation, maritime border security and national action plans.

The Regional Centre assisted Peru as part of a United Nations joint programme for strengthening human security and community resilience by fostering peaceful coexistence in Peru by providing technical assistance to Peru's national regulatory entity for security services, firearms, ammunition and explosives for civil use in destroying small arms that had been confiscated by the national police. Taking into consideration the increasing privatization of security services, it also organized workshops in Lima for the staff of national authorities and senior executives of private security companies. The workshops focused on exchanging best practices and international norms with a view to ensuring adequate physical security and improving the management of arms stockpiles.

In conclusion, I believe that identifying the areas that the Centre should focus on is an essential task that the various administrations running the Centre have tackled with good judgement, especially the current leadership, which is responsible for planning and executing its activities both in Lima and New York. We are very grateful to it.

For the reasons I have mentioned, my delegation once again has the honour this year of facilitating the submission for the General Assembly's consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.60, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and

Development in Latin America and the Caribbean”, which emphasizes our firm support for the role of the Centre in promoting the activities of the United Nations at the regional level aimed at strengthening peace, stability, security and development. As in previous years, we therefore trust that we can rely on the support of all delegations so that it can be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Al-Matrooshi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the United Arab Emirates wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Despite the importance of the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in various parts of the world, the international community has still been unable to make tangible progress towards the goal of creating a world free of nuclear weapons. The United Arab Emirates considers the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to be extremely important. In that regard, we are disappointed with the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the inability to convene a conference in 2012 on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to support all constructive efforts to achieve that goal.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the global non-proliferation and disarmament regimes are critical to achieving international peace and security, and considers the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) an important mechanism for achieving our nuclear-disarmament goals. We are, however, very concerned about the inability to achieve any progress since the CTBT was opened for signature, 20 years ago. The Treaty has not yet entered into force, and the United Arab Emirates therefore urges the annex 2 States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible. We also urge States to meet their international commitments and refrain from conducting any nuclear tests. In that regard, we are seriously concerned about North Korea’s development of its nuclear and ballistic-missile capacities and conduct of nuclear tests, thereby threatening the security of its neighbours and international peace and security generally.

Iran’s interference in regional affairs has aggravated instability and conflicts in the region. Despite the nuclear agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1, the positive expectations of countries in the region have been dashed by Iran’s continued efforts to undermine regional security through its aggressive rhetoric and blatant interference. The United Arab Emirates hopes that the nuclear agreement can encourage Iran to work to build confidence in the peaceful and transparent nature of its nuclear programme, and we urge it to fully implement its international obligations and responsibilities under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In conclusion, we call on the international community to redouble its efforts with a view to reaching consensus on advancing the Committee’s work and adopting measures to contribute effectively to strengthening regional and international peace and security.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.30.

Mr. Ait Abdeslam (Algeria): Algeria fully associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned, and Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States. Given the importance of the issue of regional disarmament and security, my delegation would like to take the opportunity afforded by this thematic debate to make the following comments.

Algeria is committed to promoting regional and international peace and security as a permanent feature of its foreign policy, and as a cardinal principle that guides its action in the international arena. Bearing that in mind, Algeria has always advocated dialogue, cooperation and solidarity within the traditional frameworks and settings of its memberships, and particularly as a member of the African and Mediterranean regions.

In that regard, Algeria welcomed the entry into force, in 2009, of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba, as a major contribution to the strengthening of peace and security both regionally and internationally. However, we remain deeply concerned that the region of the Middle East has not been granted the opportunity of becoming such a zone, years after the adoption at 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 nuclear-weapon-free zone in that part of the world. We therefore reiterate the importance of establishing it as quickly as possible.

In the face of a deteriorating security situation among its neighbours, Algeria has alerted the international community to the risks associated with the unregulated and uncontrolled proliferation of all types of arms in the North Africa and Sahel regions and their close links to terrorist groups, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking and smuggling networks. That challenging situation is extremely worrying and represents a serious threat to the peace, security, stability and sustainable development of every country in those regions and the Mediterranean. It also has devastating humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. We therefore firmly believe that adequate assistance from developed countries and the United Nations and other international organizations will contribute significantly to strengthening the ability of the countries of the Sahel to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and thereby to dismantle organized arms-trafficking networks and terrorist groups.

Algeria, which promotes the virtues of democracy, reconciliation and development for the benefit of its citizens, has spared no effort in working to consolidate stability and security beyond its borders. In that regard, where the crisis in Libya is concerned, Algeria remains convinced that the only solution to that issue, so crucial to security, peace and stability within the region and beyond, is through dialogue and national reconciliation between our brothers and neighbours in Libya. It is therefore the international community's duty to bring all possible political and diplomatic means to bear in supporting, encouraging and promoting that unique right. That is why my country will continue to work closely with the United Nations in its efforts to create consensus on a political solution that preserves Libya's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and the cohesion of its people, thereby paving the way for establishing the national institutions that Libyans want. Algeria — which is duty-bound by its solidarity with the Libyan people, but also because Libya's stability concerns it directly, as it does all Libya's neighbours — has helped to initiate and wholeheartedly endorsed the efforts of those neighbours, the African Union and the international community to support our Libyan brothers on a path of dialogue and reconciliation.

With regard to the situation in Mali, the inter-Malian dialogue process initiated by Algeria has concluded a comprehensive Peace and Reconciliation Agreement between the Government and other Malian parties. My country is committed to ensuring its implementation and will continue to play a key role in that regard as Chair of the Monitoring Committee of the Agreement. We urge the international community to continue its much-needed political and financial support. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Algeria's commitment to supporting our brother peoples of Libya and Mali, and to working with our other neighbours for a better future for all the peoples of the region and beyond.

The Algerian delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/71/156) on strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, which includes the views of some Member States concerning ways and means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Member States that have contributed to implementing resolution 70/72. In that context, as in previous years, Algeria has the honour to submit, for the approval of the First Committee and the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, under agenda item 103, draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.30, also entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region". With the exception of technical updates, the draft resolution retains the entire text of last year's resolution. Lastly, the Algerian delegation and the draft resolution's 56 other sponsors hope that all Member States will support its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I associate myself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The security situation today in our volatile region of the Middle East is ever more tense, complicated and appalling. The first, oldest and most chronic security problem in the region is that posed by the nuclear weapons of the Israeli regime, which not only threatens peace and security in the region and beyond but is also the only obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Despite more than 40 years of international efforts, today there is no hope of that, thanks solely to the stubborn objections of the Israeli regime, the region's only non-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The inability of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to adopt a final document was due mainly to pressure from that regime. Not only, therefore, in order to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, but also to uphold the authority and relevance of the NPT, the Israeli regime must be compelled to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, with no conditions or further delays.

Another source of great concern is the Israeli regime's possession of other weapons of mass destruction and a large arsenal of sophisticated conventional weapons. Given its dark record for attacking all its neighbours, waging more than 15 wars and even invading countries beyond the region, we believe that its accession to all treaties banning weapons of mass destruction is the chief and most urgent prerequisite for preserving peace and security in the Middle East.

In recent years, the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq by the terrorist group Da'esh has also aggravated the already tense security situation in the Middle East. As one of the main victims of chemical weapons in modern history, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to firmly condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, in any circumstances. We also continue to assist people affected by them, as we have done for the Iraqi civilians who had chemical weapons used against them by Da'esh.

There are certain oil-rich countries in the Persian Gulf that have almost always been major arms-importing nations. However, their excessive accumulation of sophisticated weapons has increased massively in recent years through unprecedented levels of imports. Such weapons, mostly imported from Western countries, have been used by the United States-backed Saudi-led coalition in its 20-month-long aggression against Yemen, in which the most recent atrocity was the deliberate bombing of a funeral gathering that killed at least 150 civilians and wounded more than 500. In short, besides the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, it is the threat of the United States-backed regime in Israel and Saudi Arabia, both of which have invaded their neighbours and have kept the peoples of Yemen and Gaza under brutal sieges, that most endangers peace and security in the Middle East. In order to ease that situation, therefore, the military assistance and arms being exported to those regimes must be stopped and the inhumane blockades of Yemen and the Gaza Strip lifted.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, despite being surrounded and affected by those situations, the Islamic Republic of Iran still has one of the lowest levels of military expenditure in the region. And as a party to all the major treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, we continue to fulfil our obligations under those treaties. We also remain committed to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, first proposed by Iran in 1974. Iran will continue to take its responsibilities seriously by continuing to contribute to the preservation of peace and security in its sensitive region, and we expect that others will be compelled to do likewise.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.67.

Mr. Koyma (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate the Chair and the Bureau on their elections to head the Disarmament and International Security Committee, and to commend the Chair for his admirable leadership of the Committee's proceedings.

Considering the increase in military expenditures and the risks that the over-arming of our planet represents, we can no longer stint on the steps that must be taken if we are to ensure the survival of humankind. In order to do that, the Committee must revitalize the long-deadlocked Conference on Disarmament through the draft resolutions that will be introduced and considered here. We must address every kind of weapon of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological, chemical or conventional, through legally binding international treaties and confidence-building measures that can serve as a basis for disarmament action by the States Members of the United Nations.

With that goal in mind, the Central African Republic delegation once again has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.67, entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa". While it is essentially the same as the version adopted by the General Assembly last year at its seventieth session (resolution 70/64), it includes some changes and refinements that take into account the recommendations and conclusions of this year's Summit of Heads of State and Government of Central Africa regarding developments in the political and security situation in the subregion, including the

anarchic flow of small arms and light weapons that fuels armed groups and the terrorists of Boko Haram through maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. My delegation therefore encourages other Member States to adopt the draft resolution by consensus, as in the past.

Ms. Chand (Fiji): Fiji aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We wish to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

Our efforts to move towards general and complete disarmament must begin with regional disarmament if we are to live in a world of genuine peace and security, a world to which Fiji is committed. In that connection, we signed and ratified the 1985 Rarotonga Treaty, whereby we resolved to keep the Pacific free of nuclear weapons. The Rarotonga Treaty illustrates the commitment of 14 Pacific-island countries to keeping our region free of nuclear weapons.

Regional security is central to international security and serves as a catalyst for enduring peace and security in the world. As violence and armed conflicts flare up in different parts of the world today, we, as the international community, must revisit our traditional approaches to strengthening peace and security. While there are numerous benefits to comprehensive and complete disarmament, Fiji also recognizes the advantages of adopting a piecemeal approach to reaching that goal by keeping regions free of nuclear weapons as well as employing measures to curb the trade in illicit small arms and light weapons. We firmly believe that there should be more conventional arms control at the regional and subregional level. Regional cooperation and assistance represent one of the most effective ways of combating the illicit trafficking and proliferation of conventional weapons. In that regard, information-sharing would also help States to monitor, detect and confiscate illicit weapons.

That approach has worked well for the Pacific region. The Treaty of Rarotonga constitutes a linchpin of security and stability in the Pacific, where we have successfully established a nuclear-free zone in a region that until very recently had been subjected to nuclear testing. The Treaty not only bans the use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons, it also represents its States parties' clear commitment to regional peace and security. The merits of regional disarmament arrangements should not be overlooked where regional security challenges are concerned. We therefore

encourage other States to adopt similar arrangements in their own regions.

We also urge the international community to revisit the merits of adopting other relevant measures, particularly confidence-building within regions. Transparency and trust are fundamental to enduring regional peace and security, and such measures help to reduce fear in tense situations. That applies just as much to conventional weapons as to nuclear weapons. Tasked with fulfilling our ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States simply cannot afford to become embroiled in regional conflicts or divert scarce resources to fund wars rather than implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. They therefore have a vested interest in ensuring that such confidence-building measures are adopted.

In conclusion, Fiji is committed to the principles of the United Nations and to peace and security. In this globalized world, we are no longer immune to the threats and problems that our neighbours face, for issues on a transnational scale do not respect boundaries and are never confined to the borders of one State. That is why Fiji urges the international community to engage in meaningful dialogue and negotiations aimed at creating and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): As an advocate of maintaining peace and security with the lowest possible level of armaments, including conventional ones, Ukraine recognizes the important role of conventional arms control, including at the regional and subregional levels, and welcomes all measures designed to achieve that. Ukraine's consistent commitment to strengthening the effectiveness of confidence-building measures is also unchanged. In view of that, Ukraine is supporting and sponsoring draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.16, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", and A/C.1/71/L.14, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context".

Ukraine is a responsible and long-term participant in pan-European confidence-building mechanisms related to conventional arms control, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Despite the tense situation in some regions

of our country and the increased burden on Ukraine's armed forces that Russian aggression has created, Ukraine continues to comply with its obligations in the field of conventional arms control under those international instruments.

Ukraine attaches great importance to bilateral confidence-building measures with its neighbours in border areas, developed in accordance with the Vienna Document. To date, we have entered into relevant bilateral agreements with Poland, Belarus, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. Our ability to conduct inspections on a parity basis pursuant to those agreements has confirmed their practicality and usefulness in fostering trust, friendly relations and military-political cooperation between the countries concerned. These bilateral confidence-building measures' noteworthy features include the ability to observe military activities, starting at the tactical level; a ban on the conduct of military exercises at or above battalion-level within 10 to 20 kilometres of a border; the application of confidence-building measures to the activities of other security, defence and law-enforcement agencies as well as the armed forces; and the possibility of extending inspections for longer periods and expanding them to battalion-level units.

Regrettably, Ukraine's numerous previous proposals to enter into a similar agreement with Russia were rejected by the Russian side. It is also regrettable that the Russian Federation has left subregional military cooperation and confidence-building arrangements between the Black Sea littoral States at an impasse — particularly the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group and the naval confidence- and security-building measures in the Black Sea that Ukraine participated in. Moreover, since suspending its participation in the CFE Treaty in 2007, Russia has avoided exchanges of information and verification control, especially where the situation in the Russia's southern military district is concerned. The destabilizing effect of the build-up of personnel and military equipment there has facilitated Russia's aggressions against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine from 2014 to 2016. And its aggression against Ukraine has meant that conventional arms-control and confidence-building regimes do not currently apply on the territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Despite the deterioration in the security situation caused by the current Kremlin leadership's uncivilized

behaviour, Ukraine believes that the experience gained in the OSCE area through the development of confidence-building measures deserves serious attention, and that the Vienna Document, which has generated a great deal of experience in the area, can serve as a viable example for similar arrangements in other regions of the world.

Mrs. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Cuba affirms its commitment to multilateralism as a basic principle for negotiations on disarmament and arms control. Multilateral negotiations within the United Nations system and in strict observance of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law are the appropriate way to reach the goals of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and in general to safeguard international peace and security.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the importance of regional and subregional initiatives for disarmament. The existence of nuclear-weapon-free zones, for example, helps to advance nuclear disarmament, and Cuba supports their establishment in regions around the world. In particular, we support the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which would be a major contribution to the peace and security of the countries of the region. The proposed international conference on establishing such a zone cannot continue to be postponed indefinitely and should be convened without further delay.

Global and regional approaches to disarmament and arms control should complement each other and, as far as possible, be applied simultaneously in pursuit of the same goal of promoting international disarmament, peace and security. Disarmament efforts at the regional level should not be subject to one-size-fits-all recipes or models and should take due account of the particular characteristics of each region.

We urge other regions to proclaim themselves zones of peace, as Latin America and the Caribbean did at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014. The establishment of such zones around the world would help to end the use or threat of use of force and of weapons of mass destruction forever.

The implementation of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures that have the consent and participation of all the parties involved helps to defuse tensions, prevent conflicts and consolidate regional stability. While responsibility for disarmament and security rests with all States, those with greater military capability have the primary responsibility. In that context, respect and support for regional and subregional decisions and treaties are vital.

In conclusion, the Cuban delegation would like to recognize the work of the United Nations Regional Centres on Peace and Disarmament in their thirtieth year. The activities of the United Nations at the regional level, including the important work of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, should continue to be promoted in close consultation with the States of the region.

Mr. Kpayedo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that Togo takes the floor since the start of this year's session of the First Committee, I would first like to congratulate the Chair on his election and to assure him of my country's support. We firmly believe that under his skilful stewardship our efforts will succeed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say that Togo subscribes fully to the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Togo is also grateful to the Secretary-General for his very detailed report (A/71/128) on the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC). The numerous initiatives it outlines perfectly illustrate the fact that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa is carrying out its mission well. In this year of 2016, when UNREC is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, its importance has never been more relevant, especially at a time in Africa when terrorism is rampant, every kind of weapon is proliferating and non-State actors' possession of conventional weapons poses enormous security challenges for our States.

In accordance with its mandate, outlined in resolution 40/151 G, UNREC has undertaken some encouraging initiatives in the past year. On request, it has provided African States with technical support to initiatives aimed at carrying out critical measures relating to peace, arms limitation and disarmament,

which have especial impact when they receive technical assistance in various areas. There are a number of key initiatives, such as assistance with issues of peace and security, with the application of international and regional legal instruments in combating the illegal trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons and with the Arms Trade Treaty, to mention only a few.

In Togo and within the framework of the West African subregion, the key initiative has undoubtedly been the technical support provided for marking and registering weapons. We should also stress that UNREC's technical support was critical during preparations of the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa, which was held in Lomé. I would like to express our gratitude to the Centre for its consistent support to Togo in the pivotal role it plays in disarmament in Africa.

Despite UNREC's regional-disarmament efforts, it continues to face financial difficulties. Togo would like to echo the Secretary-General's call to Member States and donors to do more to help strengthen its operational capacities in order to tackle the ever-growing needs of our countries. That is why we call for the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.50, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa", submitted by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States, with the goal of building the Centre's capacity.

For our part, as the host country, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Togo to meeting its obligations, reflected in the facilities that we continue to provide for the Regional Centre. We have recently undertaken efforts to equip the institution with more modern infrastructure, which includes a new building and rehabilitation of the main road to UNREC, giving the staff a better working environment and access to their workplace.

In agreeing, in 1986, to host the UNREC headquarters, we were driven by the desire to contribute to realizing the security ideals governing the United Nations. Thirty years on, that desire is still strong. Togo is very proud of the role it plays in international affairs by hosting the Centre. Lastly, with regard to UNREC, I can assure everyone that my country will spare no effort in fulfilling its responsibilities under the headquarters agreement.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): Armenia attaches great importance to regional disarmament, in particular to the efforts of the United Nations aimed at establishing international and regional stability, security and an atmosphere of confidence. We believe firmly that peace and security at the global level depend directly, and largely, on regional and subregional stability. The United Nations and regional organizations have played a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding and confidence among States and peoples in the same neighbourhood so as to overcome enmity and mistrust among those who must once again learn to live side by side.

Regrettably, the numerous warnings that have been made on Armenia's behalf, including in this Committee — about the fact that Azerbaijan would eventually become hostage to its own warmongering rhetoric, and would use force and violence to pursue one-sided advantages in the context of conflict resolution — have gone unheeded. In the absence of a firm international response, Azerbaijan has been preparing for quite a long time for the use of force, both in terms of creating capacities and preparing its population for war. Its consistent efforts to undermine the work of the international mediators, the Minsk co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), clearly point to a policy of escalation and a climate of permissiveness.

In the early hours of 2 April, Azerbaijan unleashed military aggression against Nagorno Karabakh, thereby violating the 1994 and 1995 trilateral agreements on a ceasefire signed by Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia. There is no time limit on the ceasefire agreements, but Azerbaijan has attempted, including within the United Nations, to challenge their validity. Since the Azerbaijani aggression began, the civilian infrastructure and population, including children and the elderly, have been intentionally and indiscriminately targeted. Among the first civilian victims were a 12-year-old boy, killed in front of a school building as a result of a Grad missile attack, and two other schoolchildren, who were wounded. Three elderly people, including a 92-year-old woman, were brutally tortured, mutilated and killed. Three captured soldiers from the Nagorno Karabakh defence forces were beheaded, Da'esh-style, by Azerbaijani armed forces, in a barbaric act that was subsequently celebrated in the towns and villages of Azerbaijan and broadcast on their social networks.

In late April, during the seventh United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held in Baku, Azerbaijan's armed forces continued to violate the ceasefire, resulting in more loss of life. The Forum turned a blind eye to this as it celebrated the possibility of creating a more peaceful and socially inclusive world and building mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious identities — in a country engaged in barbaric acts and killings that were taking place a few hundred kilometres from the Forum's venue.

Armenia welcomed the unequivocal condemnation of the ceasefire violations voiced by various representatives of the international community. However, non-specific and generic condemnations will not restrain Azerbaijan, the party responsible for the aggression. It is therefore essential to identify it as such and hold it accountable for undermining the ceasefire and, as a result, regional peace and security.

It is now crucial that we prevent a repetition of what happened at the beginning of April and ensure that these dangerous attempts to seek a military solution to the issue are effectively curbed. The implementation of the confidence-building measures proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs, including the proposals agreed to earlier this year at the Vienna and Saint Petersburg summits by the Presidents, will certainly serve that purpose. It is also critical to ensure that the international community urges Azerbaijan to commit to strict compliance with the 1994 and 1995 trilateral ceasefire agreements. Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh have accepted and remain wholly committed to implementing the most recent proposals as soon as possible, but so far Azerbaijan still refuses to do so. We reiterate our firm position that clear and unequivocal commitment to the ceasefire and confidence-building by the parties concerned is the only way to create an environment conducive to a peace process.

In conclusion, the developments in our region have demonstrated once again that the use of force cannot produce a durable solution to the existing conflicts. The only option is a political compromise resulting from negotiations based on the parties' ultimate commitment to the non-use of force. We emphasize our adherence to peaceful negotiations conducted within the internationally mandated format by the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs. We also commend and appreciate the Secretary-General's continued support to a peace process within that format.

Ms. Mammadova (Azerbaijan): As this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor, I would like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their elections.

Azerbaijan aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to joint efforts to address regional and global issues, with a particular focus on regional security, combating terrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring energy security. We strongly advocate for a region free of weapons of mass destruction in the South Caucasus and beyond. We acknowledge the importance of issues pertaining to small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition stockpiles. We have been actively engaged in addressing the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons at the international level, including through efforts aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in combating illicit trafficking of any kind. In that regard, States' fulfilment in good faith of obligations they have undertaken becomes particularly important. We welcome the successful outcome earlier this year of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and look forward to its 2018 Review Conference.

The issue of regional disarmament has particular importance for our region generally and for Azerbaijan in particular. As the Committee knows and as the Security Council has documented, the Republic of Armenia has unleashed a war and used force against Azerbaijan, occupying almost one fifth of its territory, including the Nagorno Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts. It has carried out ethnic cleansing in the areas it has seized by expelling about 1 million Azerbaijanis from their homes and has committed other serious crimes during the conflict. I am therefore sure that we are all perplexed to hear the country that has used force to occupy Azerbaijani territories — the destructive action that is the main reason for the current impasse in negotiations — condemn the use of force.

Armenia has flagrantly violated its international legal obligations by using military force to invade Azerbaijani territory and establish an occupied

territory and an unethically constructed subordinate separatist entity. In its resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), the Security Council condemned the occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, affirmed its sovereignty and territorial integrity and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders, and demanded the occupying forces' immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The General Assembly and other intergovernmental organizations have adopted a similar position.

Twenty-four years have passed since the armed conflict began. However, in total disregard of the demands of the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the decisions of international organizations, and in flagrant violation of the generally accepted norms and principles of international law, Armenia continues to unlawfully occupy territories in Azerbaijan. It continues to attempt to further consolidate the status quo of the occupation, strengthening its military build-up in the seized territories, changing their demographic, cultural and physical character and preventing hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis from returning to their homes. Moreover, regular ceasefire violations, in the form of attacks on Azerbaijani towns and villages, have become more frequent and violent in recent times, resulting in many Azerbaijani civilians being killed or injured. Most recently, Armenia conducted large-scale attacks on the civilian population of Azerbaijan in early April.

The April escalation is a vivid reminder that the status quo, which the international community has acknowledged to be unsustainable and unacceptable, is dangerous and has the potential to escalate at any time, with unpredictable consequences. Armenia must realize that relying on the status quo and armed provocations is a grave miscalculation. Azerbaijan expects Armenia to halt its military build-up in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and engage in negotiations with Azerbaijan in good faith, so as to find a long-overdue political solution to the conflict.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the conflict can be settled only on a basis of maintaining Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Azerbaijan's territorial integrity has never been, and will never be, subject to negotiation. We remain committed to the settlement process based on that understanding. The sooner Armenia returns to consultations and takes

that reality on board, the sooner the conflict will be resolved and the countries and people of the region will benefit from the possibility of cooperation and economic development.

Mr. Coussière (France) (*spoke in French*): At the regional level, former adversaries who have learned to work together to build a peaceful neighbourhood can come up with ambitious best practices with the potential to inspire the work we do in multilateral disarmament forums. One of the best examples of that is in the European Union, which has succeeded in drawing the lessons of a painful past for building lasting peace by inventing a new kind of managing differences. In its policy of neighbourly cooperation, the European Union applies that experience to the benefit of its partners. Its tools for cooperation, including in the area of disarmament, have a clear regional dimension. For example, France participates actively in a European Union assistance programme aimed at improving the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. Last year, it held subregional workshops in Senegal and in Burkina Faso on the subject.

The United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament are also involved in this area and can play a useful role in efforts closest to the stakeholders on the ground. In partnership with Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger, the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel, French forces are also conducting several operations with a view to limiting armed terrorist groups' ability to act freely and depriving them of their weapons. They also intervene regularly in efforts to combat explosive devices in support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

The regional approach is also an important way to promote disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. France has signed and ratified the various treaties instituting nuclear-weapon-free zones, is intending to sign the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty on a Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and it has supported the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems from the start. That vital goal is also an essential component of a lasting solution to the crises of proliferation and timely adherence by all States of the region to all the relevant conventions on non-proliferation and disarmament.

On the European continent, France, like other members of the European Union, firmly supports establishing transparency and confidence-building measures adapted to the region's geostrategic situation. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe has resulted in the destruction of much weaponry, and my country urges all those party to it to create the conditions for continuing its full and complete implementation. The Treaty on Open Skies, which allows daily flights over three large areas from Vancouver to Vladivostok, also improves symmetry among European States. The Vienna Document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is a tool for building confidence, transparency and risk reduction. Considering the threats that loom over the European security architecture, France supports the impetus given by Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, to a new dynamic in conventional arms control in Europe.

There are other forms of cooperation within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, particularly in dealing with issues such as combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cross-cutting threats, cybersecurity and the management of small arms and light weapons and munitions stocks. They are being studied by the OSCE's partners in the Mediterranean and Asia, along with best practices adapted to their specific regional environment.

Non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives conducted at the global, regional and subregional levels can be mutually reinforcing if they are conceived in a spirit of complementarity. The mobilization of the international community against the problems of explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices is a good example. At the global level, France is coordinating the work being done on improvised explosive devices within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which, under its Amended Protocol II, has enabled us to adopt a political declaration on combating improvised explosive devices.

At the local level, through various entities of our Ministries of Defence and the Interior, France extends its support through financial and logistical assistance to a number of training courses for such partners as Cambodia, Lebanon, Iraq and Ukraine, as well as to Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad and the Niger, the African countries most vulnerable to the threat of improvised explosive devices.

With a view to forging a link between the global and local levels, France contributes to regional cooperation initiatives, particularly the Humanitarian Demining Training Centre for West Africa in Ouidah, Benin. The complementarity of the knowledge that the Training Centre develops also enables it to support our African partners in capacity-building for assessing, upgrading standards and managing small arms and light weapons and munitions stocks. Such exemplary projects, which are reproducible in other countries in similar situations, aim to strengthen their institutional capacities and national operations rather than replace them.

The Acting Chair: We have just heard the last speaker on the list for today.

I shall now call on those delegations wishing to exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second.

Mr. Ri Tong Li (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Earlier in the meeting, the representative of the United States once again brought up the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a statement that was full of lies and in a conspiracy against reality and truth. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again totally rejects such a ridiculous argument. Since I strongly suspect that the representative does not understand the meaning of the threat he refers to, I will go over his points one by one to enable him to understand.

First, he said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had conducted a fifth nuclear test. We should be clear when we mention numbers. How many times has the United States conducted tests? We are all professionals and disarmament experts, and we in the First Committee know better than anyone else in the world that more than 2,000 nuclear-weapon tests have been conducted at the global level. The United States accounts for almost half of those tests, at around 1,000. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has now conducted five tests. The United States representative has no moral right to talk about, or even raise, the issue of someone else's nuclear tests.

He also referred to a threat — but that threat really comes from the United States. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea possesses nuclear weapons as a war deterrent — and a very reliable one — that contributes to peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the

world at large. Were it not for our nuclear war deterrent, another Korean war would already have broken out, creating a second disaster along the lines of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But our possession of nuclear weapons has prevented any such disaster from occurring on the Korean peninsula, or anywhere else in the world.

Where, then, does the threat come from? The Democratic People's Republic of Korea firmly believes that it is from the United States. The United States is the source and the root cause of the threat at both the regional and international levels. At the international level, everyone, even babies, recognizes that. The United States is the number-one nuclear-weapon State, and the largest. And the United States is the only country that has used its nuclear weapons, dropping their terrible destructive power on the people of the major cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If it were not for the United States, nuclear weapons would never have been created and the terms to describe it would not exist. No one would have learned the words “nuclear weapon”. But the United States was the first to create, manufacture and use such weapons against civilians. That cannot be ignored and should be regarded as a crime against humanity — and I believe that one day it will be seen as such.

Concerning the threat to our region, I have made it clear to the Committee more times than I can remember who it is who is actually creating the problems. Again, just as it has done at the global level, it was the United States that brought the first nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula, in 1957, increasing that number to more than 1,000 by the 1970s, as I have said. In 2002, the United States called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a respected State Member of the United Nations, part of an “axis of evil”, along with several other States, and designated it as a target for a pre-emptive nuclear strike. Joint nuclear military exercises have been carried out since the 1960s. Only two days ago, another joint military exercise was held as a follow-up to the joint naval exercises, this time with the participation of Japanese bombers and fighter planes, using the *U.S.S. Ronald Reagan* aircraft carrier and its group of warships, with their highly sophisticated weapons. The target was still the same — an openly announced effort to take out the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Again, for the Committee's information, on 21 October, Mr. Kerry, the current United States Secretary of State, openly referred to the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea as an illegal and illegitimate regime. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea totally rejects that allegation as another ridiculous argument. On the contrary, it is the United States that is the world's most illegal and illegitimate regime and the creator of every nuclear and regional issue, invading other countries and creating refugee problems that have become massive disasters. Faced with this growing assault through blackmail and threats, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no option but to go nuclear. As I said, our nuclear weapons are a reliable war deterrent that contributes to peace and security on the Korean peninsula and around the world. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to increase its nuclear-armed forces in accordance with its State policy, regardless of any ridiculous arguments from the United States.

In his statement, Mr. Kerry also said that he would make our country change its course regarding our fifth nuclear test. As I have said, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was compelled to go nuclear by the United States blackmail. It is the United States that has made the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a nuclear Power. And it is the United States that is fully responsible. The United States should feel disgraced and ashamed of its characterization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a threat to international peace and security, because it is the United States that is the greatest threat and the cancerous source of all the problems developing on the Korean peninsula.

With regard to the legitimacy of the sanctions and resolutions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea firmly believes that they are illegal documents without legality, morality or fairness. There are many regulations and standards for nuclear and ballistic-missile activities around the world, but there is not a single provision that calls nuclear tests and satellites a threat to international peace and security. The United States is using Security Council sanctions as a weapon against legitimate Governments.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): In his statement today, the representative of the United Arab Emirates repeated a number of baseless accusations aimed at my country. They are absurd, hypocritical and farcical.

First, while the United Arab Emirates has been busy accusing Iran of interfering in other countries' domestic affairs, its fighter jets and those of its partner,

the Saudi regime, have been busy bombing the innocent civilians and infrastructure of the impoverished nation of Yemen, in inhumane acts that are contrary to international humanitarian law and amount to war crimes.

Secondly, for decades the United Arab Emirates, along with some other accomplices, has been exporting a host of extremist takfiri ideologies and funding and arming terrorist groups such as Da'esh in Iraq, Syria and many other places. In fact, the United Arab Emirates is unhappy because Iran is at the forefront in the fight against such terrorists, and thereby foiling their schemes.

Iran has always worked to try to end tension in our region and develop friendly, cooperative relations with its neighbours, including those in the Persian Gulf. We once again urge for, and reiterate our interest in, the holding of a dialogue with a view to dispelling misunderstandings and restoring the friendly relations that our people have usually enjoyed throughout history.

Mr. Kim In-Chul (Republic of Korea): Each year delegations come to the First Committee in the hope of sharing ideas and deliberating together on ways to make the world a better place through progress in the field of disarmament. But our hopes have been shattered by the reckless and illegitimate provocations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Since the Committee's previous session, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has conducted two nuclear tests and fired dozens of ballistic missiles. In the past few days I have twice had to change the count of the ballistic-missile launches, all of which have been carried out contrary to the will of the international community as embodied in binding Security Council resolutions. We have serious doubts as to whether the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shares in our common goal of peace and security when its representatives sit and speak in this forum. We flatly reject their unfounded and illegal claims, which are simply a waste of time.

Mr. Hall (United States of America): I take the floor to reply to the delusional comments about the United States made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's missile and nuclear-weapon tests are a threat to regional and global peace and security and in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has said that its missiles

are intended to serve as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons to cities in the United States and those of our allies in the Republic of Korea and Japan. Such provocations serve only to increase the international community's resolve to counter the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's prohibited activities, including by implementing existing Security Council resolutions and seeking new sanctions. We continue to call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to end its destabilizing and threatening behaviour and abide by its international obligations and commitments. Our commitment to defending and standing with our allies is ironclad.

Mr. Al-Matrooshi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to exercise our right of reply to the false and unfounded allegations made by the representative of Iran, who has denied his country's continuing interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours. That has led to heightened tensions in the Arab Gulf, Yemen, Syria and many other parts of the region. We have given our support to the nuclear agreement reached by the P5+1 and Iran in the knowledge that, after years of sanctions, the agreement gives Iran an opportunity to forge new relations with its neighbours and to demonstrate its commitment to regional stability and its respect for the sovereignty of neighbouring States. Regrettably, more than a year after the signing of the agreement, all we have seen from Iran in the region is increasingly aggressive policies and a strengthening of its ballistic-missile and weapons programmes. That reminds us that Iran continues to be a State sponsor of terrorism that continues with its interference, despite the fact that we are fighting such terrorist groups. We are fighting to defend the Yemeni people's rights, which have been violated by Iran and its allies.

Mr. Ri Tong Li (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, South Korea and the United States are falsely accusing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Nothing is grounded in fact or in the reality of what is happening on the Korean peninsula.

The representative of South Korea expressed doubts about whether we share the goal of achieving peace and security. It is absurd for South Korea to make such ridiculous arguments, for it is South Korea that is importing many kinds of nuclear assets from the United States. There is no country here in the First Committee that allows foreign countries to deploy weapons against its fellow-countrymen. And yet South Korea permits

the massive accumulation and deployment of many different types of strategic aircraft and vessels, such as B-52s, E1Bs, aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines. The B-52 and other bombers are capable of carrying six megatons of nuclear material, bombs that are 600 times more powerful than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. South Korea therefore has no legal or moral right to meddle in nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula.

The representative of the United States once again called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a threat. I would once again like to remind him to visit the site of the joint military exercises, where, on the pretext of participating in the exercises, highly sophisticated nuclear bombers and assets are being used and could attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any time. The United States is increasing tensions and causing the situation on the Korean peninsula to spiral out of control. It is creating all of the problems in that part of the world.

With regard to legality and legal issues, sanctions were once again mentioned — in particular new sanctions. Sanctions have never worked and never will work because they are neither legal nor moral, or fair. It is the United States that has created and fabricated resolutions full of legal contradictions. The United States is the leading manufacturer of nuclear weapons and possesses the largest nuclear-weapon stockpiles in the world. Yet the representative of the United States highlights the nuclear activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and determines that they are a threat to international peace and security. There is no provision about that in the Charter of the United Nations or in international law. I would like to ask the representative of the United States to carefully study every article of international law and the Charter, because no such provision exists. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea raised that contradiction with the Secretariat and asked Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for clarification on it, but no answer has been forthcoming.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): As I said the other day, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes the floor here at the First Committee, its sole purpose is domestic propaganda, aimed at inciting hatred among its people in the mistaken hope that it will help to ensure the survival of a system that is simply unsustainable, for many reasons. In a recent press release, the Democratic People's Republic

of Korea cited the proverb “The dogs bark, but the caravan moves on”. But who is the dog and who is the caravan? Whether the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea chooses to bark, howl or growl, the international community will move on. It will move on with stronger sanctions and an outright rejection of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s provocative language and behaviour. Its self-imposed suffering will result in nothing but self-destruction if it continues along the wrong path.

Mr. Hall (United States of America): I regret having to take the floor for a second time. Our annual joint military exercises are transparent and defence-oriented, and have been carried out regularly and openly under the Combined Forces Command for roughly 40 years. They are designed to increase our readiness to defend the Republic of Korea, protect the region and maintain stability on the Korean peninsula. They are a clear demonstration of the commitment of the United States to the alliance. Security Council resolutions are international law. I would suggest that the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea study how the United Nations works.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of the United Arab Emirates claims that his country has invaded Yemen to fight terrorists there. However, in practice they are covertly fighting Yemenis alongside Al-Qaida in Yemen. Together with Saudi Arabia, they have been bombing Yemeni civilians for around 20 months. There is well-documented evidence from international and humanitarian organizations, and the United Nations bodies present in Yemen, that in its 20-month aggression, the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has destroyed 3,000 civilian sites and has been responsible for 60 per cent of the deaths of Yemeni civilians.

Mr. Alotaibi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Iran has tried to tarnish Saudi Arabia’s name not only in his main statement but also in his right of reply. According to international law, every State has the right to buy weapons for its own defence and that of its territories. However, buying weapons to give them to terrorist groups for their use, as Iran does, is contrary to the principles of the United Nations.

Since the Khomeini revolution, Iran has tried to undermine peace and security in the Gulf countries by sending them weapons and drugs, which exemplifies its negative attitude towards those countries.

The Acting Chair: We have exhausted the time available to us this afternoon.

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee for some announcements.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to make an announcement regarding the Committee’s action phase, which will hopefully begin on Thursday, 27 October. Earlier today we circulated two papers, A/C.1/71/CRP.3/Rev.3 and informal paper 1/Rev.1. I would like to announce one small change to informal paper 1 on cluster 1 on nuclear weapons, A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1. There will be an oral statement rather than a statement on programme budget implications.

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform delegations that the e-Speaker function relating to the action phase has been activated. Delegations will therefore be able to use it to inscribe themselves if they would like to make a general statement before the vote or an explanation of vote or position before or after the vote. In that regard, in order to complete our work in a timely manner, particularly on Thursday, the Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage delegations to explain their vote after the vote rather than before it. Delegations of course still have the right to explain their vote before the vote, but explaining it afterwards will help us to conduct the meeting in a timely manner.

The Acting Chair: The next meeting of the Committee will take place tomorrow afternoon, at 3 p.m. sharp. The Committee will hear from the remaining speakers on the list for the cluster on regional disarmament and security, and will take up the cluster on disarmament machinery. The meeting will be suspended at 5.30 p.m. in order to follow the annual tradition of accommodating the presentation ceremony of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.