



# General Assembly

Seventy-first session

## First Committee

5<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thursday, 6 October 2016, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum . . . . . (Algeria)

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

### Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

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

**The Chair:** All delegations taking the floor are kindly reminded that, although the practice has been to limit interventions to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity and 15 minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations, I count on the Committee's cooperation to limit today's statements to eight minutes.

**Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Paraguay. The delegation of Paraguay would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session and assure you of our cooperation in the work of the current session. The delegation of Paraguay also wishes to acknowledge the work of your predecessor, Ambassador Van Oosterom of the Netherlands, whom we would also like to thank and congratulate.

The delegation of Paraguay reaffirms that the General Assembly, which is the highest democratic expression of States Members of the United Nations, on the basis of the sovereign equality among States, is, and should remain, the forum for discussion related to disarmament issues in all their manifestations. With regard to nuclear disarmament, the delegation of Paraguay is working to achieve compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons and the urgent and total elimination of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-disarmament process must be transparent and irreversible, provide effective verification mechanisms and be based on a universal and legally binding framework. The delegation of Paraguay is concerned about practices aimed at improving existing nuclear weapons and developing new nuclear weapons.

The delegation of Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to the establishment of and respect for nuclear-weapon-free zones. It invites delegations of Member States to discuss the possibility of progressively increasing the number and extent of areas declared free of nuclear weapons, based on the development of a work programme in that regard. It also reaffirms its commitment to the provisions of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — and urges States possessing nuclear weapons to withdraw their interpretative statements concerning the Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The use and threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity, violates international law and international humanitarian law and undermines the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The delegation of Paraguay advocates the peaceful use of nuclear energy through the implementation of programmes that have been developed with extreme precautions, so as to limit the ongoing damage that nuclear energy production can cause to the environment. States that carry out such programmes in their territories must do so on the basis of broad cross-

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border responsibility, while adhering to best practices in international cooperation, risk prevention and due diligence, and respond appropriately to any possible cross-border damage or impact.

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the delegation of Paraguay again urges States that have not yet done so, in particular annex 2 countries, to sign and ratify that Treaty, as appropriate, under the terms of the eighth Joint Ministerial Statement of the Friends of CTBT, adopted in September. In that regard, through its Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Government of the Republic of Paraguay has condemned the recent nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, the delegation of Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and advocates the adoption of a complementary framework for that Treaty that addresses the production of conventional weapons and the reduction of existing conventional weapons. The delegation of Paraguay welcomes the outcome of the recently held 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. Our delegation invites Member State delegations to include ammunition in their regulatory frameworks on small arms and light weapons and in their implementation.

Finally, the delegation of Paraguay highlights the role of technical assistance and international cooperation for developing countries, such as the Republic of Paraguay in particular, in the training of human resources for, inter alia, the use of new technologies for tracking, identifying and marking weapons and creating test-beds.

**Mr. Alhakim** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and we assure you of our delegation's support in the Committee's efforts to achieve a world of stability and security. We also thank your predecessor and everyone who worked with him for the efforts and progress that they made.

We would also like to align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the representative

of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

My Government strongly believes that the maintenance of international peace and security is a collective responsibility that should be shouldered by everyone and that those issues have become an integral concern of international disarmament instruments. We base that conviction on our 2005 Constitution and on the generally recognized importance of international peace and security. We therefore support all efforts aimed at upholding and implementing such instruments.

My delegation expresses deep concern about the continued existence and possible use of nuclear weapons and the threat that that situation poses to us all. We reiterate and emphasize the importance of keeping nuclear disarmament at the top of our priorities, until we achieve the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We emphasize the importance of the role of the Conference on Disarmament, because it is the only multilateral negotiation forum that exists for that purpose, and we express our concern that, for almost 20 years, it has not fulfilled its role, despite an increase in the number of global threats. We must therefore multiply our efforts so that we can reach a balanced and comprehensive agreement that fulfils the aspirations of all of the States Members of the United Nations, in order to achieve the goals that we all desire in the area of disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament, which will benefit international peace and security.

My delegation emphasizes the importance of continuing our work to develop a non-discriminatory, legally binding international instrument that prohibits the possession, use, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. We welcome the results achieved by the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament, which was established pursuant to resolution 70/33, of 2015. We also express our deep concern about the continued failure of all the efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

We reiterate the importance of all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) fulfilling their commitments under the NPT regime. We look forward to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as soon as possible. It is an important tool for building trust among States and halting the production

and testing of nuclear weapons, in the light of the very difficult circumstances in today's world. In addition, it has been 20 years since the CTBT was opened for signature, but it has not yet entered into force. We welcome Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) and we urge States that are not yet parties to the CTBT, in particular the annex 2 States, to accede to the Treaty without delay, so that we can eventually reach our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We must work hard to reduce the unregulated flow of small arms and light weapons and prevent the trafficking in such weapons, whose fatal and catastrophic impact does not differ from that of weapons of mass destruction. We therefore emphasize the role that such weapons play in armed conflict. Today we in Iraq are engaged in a war for our survival against the terrorist organization Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). All members of the international community must therefore support Iraq in that war, take a firm position based on international commitments to that end and prevent terrorist organizations from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. We emphasize the importance of providing assistance and transferring technology to developing nations in order to increase their capacity to combat the various forms of threats that we face.

The problems of anti-personnel mines, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions all pose great risks to our country and cause grave losses of life. What has complicated the situation is the criminal strategy implemented by ISIL gangs in planting mines in our country and elsewhere to terrorize civilians. Iraq thanks all States and parties that have provided support and assistance to Iraq. We emphasize the imperative need for our national institutions to receive support from the international community so that we can rid ourselves of the threat of lethal weapons.

In conclusion, we reiterate our desire for the First Committee to be successful in its work and to fulfil the aspirations of all Member States.

**Mr. Zamora Rivas** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is my first statement in the general debate of the First Committee at this session, I wish, on behalf of my Government, to congratulate you, Sir, on being elected Chair, as well as the other members of the Bureau. We would also like to thank the previous Chair and Bureau.

El Salvador aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

We reiterate our commitment to strengthening and promoting international peace and security through the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the control of conventional weapons and the peaceful settlement of disputes, based on protection and respect for human rights. My Government is aware that there is a long path ahead and many challenges to be overcome in order to make considerable progress in those areas. That is why we call for the Committee to continue negotiations and develop new mechanisms to achieve a world free of such threats. We therefore invite delegations to work assiduously to build international peace, security and stability.

The Republic of El Salvador supports all initiatives and actions aimed at strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as well as all efforts to renew the commitment of the international community to move towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, through multilateral negotiations guided by the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency. Proof of that commitment by El Salvador and the entire Latin American and Caribbean region is illustrated by our having declared the region the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world, as set out in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which my country signed. It is for that reason that we welcome the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the twentieth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which, however, has still not entered into force. We therefore urge the annex 2 countries to make progress towards ratifying that Treaty.

Similarly, the Government of El Salvador condemns the threat posed to humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, as well as nuclear tests or trials for experimental purposes. We confirm that the use or threat of use of such weapons is a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, human rights law and international humanitarian law. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important contribution to the rejection of weapons of mass destruction and a solid foundation for achieving the global prohibition of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we are at a critical moment, given the negative outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held here

at Headquarters in May last year, and we lament the limited support for actions aimed at making a serious commitment in that area. My country reiterates the view that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is essential for world peace and stability, and that the Plan of Action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference is the path towards achieving progress in that area.

Similarly, El Salvador welcomes the report (see A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, established pursuant to resolution 70/33, which held a series of meetings in Geneva this year. It clarified the vision of the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations on the need to negotiate a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in 2017. We believe that, since the international community has prohibited the existence and use of chemical and biological weapons under international law, our essential duty today is to do the same for nuclear weapons, because such weapons pose an even greater threat to humankind.

As a member of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, El Salvador fully supports the mandate of our organization, issued at the highest political level, to achieve such a prohibition. Similarly, my Government urges the international community to continue taking the appropriate measures to comply with the relevant resolutions on that matter. We appeal for the continuation of the discussion on the humanitarian consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and urge the international community to faithfully honour its commitments under the disarmament regime.

We express our concern about the possible placement of weapons in outer space, which should not be used for military purposes of any kind. Such deployment poses a global threat and poses a danger to the environment and to human survival itself. In that regard, my country is concerned about the lack of specific actions to address such actions. We support the measures taken to preserve outer space as humankind's heritage and a zone of peace and development with a view to preventing its militarization and promoting international cooperation.

For my country, the various attacks, conflicts and threats to international peace and security that have been occurring throughout the world are a source of

deep concern, and we deeply regret the suffering and loss of life, particularly of boys and girls, caused by indiscriminate attacks perpetrated in various regions of the world.

El Salvador shares the belief that human development and security are complementary, essential elements that allow all people to freely enjoy their rights and contribute to socioeconomic development, democratic governance and sustainable development. In that context, my Government is committed to preventing violence and combating crime and terrorism, as set out in Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That is why, given the fact that the arms trade affects thousands of lives in our region and the world, El Salvador was one of the first 50 countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty. El Salvador reiterates its commitment to continue working and making an effort at the national, regional and international levels.

**Mr. Ahidjo (Cameroon):** As this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor at this session, allow me, at the outset, to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We commend you for the able manner in which you have steered the session so far, and I would like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in ensuring a successful conclusion to our deliberations.

*(spoke in French)*

Disarmament, non-proliferation and security remain at the heart of the international community's concerns. In that regard, Cameroon reiterates its position in favour of disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. Our hope is that the States Members of the United Nations will, with unwavering political commitment, overcome the differences of opinion that remain on the principle, timeliness, terms, scope and the implementation of the timetable for nuclear disarmament. We are also concerned in particular about conventional weapons, namely, small arms and light weapons, as well as about the new challenges and threats to peace and security, including terrorism.

It must be stated that, even today, nuclear weapons pose an existential risk to humankind, and the system set up to control such weapons remains incomplete. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force. Negotiations on fissile materials and on negative security assurances have not



yet begun. Nonetheless, we hope that the convening in 2017 of a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons, as recommended by the Group of Governmental Experts established for that purpose, will facilitate the speedy launch of negotiations for the adoption of a treaty for their total elimination.

With regard to conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and the explosive remnants of war continue to kill and maim and fuel armed violence in many regions of world. The instruments created to address the challenges posed by such weapons have yet to be consolidated, universalized and implemented effectively. The challenges to disarmament-related security are numerous and continue to elicit serious concern around the world. That is why we must redouble our efforts and demonstrate greater political will to build on the successes achieved thus far and advance the disarmament and non-proliferation agendas. The quest for a safer world must be addressed holistically, with sustained efforts on all fronts, namely, nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic and, simultaneously, on land, at sea and in space.

Cameroon attaches great importance to multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament. My country has consistently supported all initiatives aimed at promoting nuclear-arms control and the reduction of nuclear proliferation. Through its accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocols, the CTBT, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Pelindaba Treaty — to name but a few examples — Cameroon has demonstrated its ongoing willingness to contribute to the advent of a peaceful world, free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The need for the mastery and control of small arms and light weapons and the active quest for solutions to new terrorist threats are of the utmost importance and a priority for my country. It is therefore urgent to provide adequate responses to the situations that jeopardize our development efforts.

With regard to the fight against terrorism in particular, an urgent pooling of efforts is needed. In that connection, thanks to outstanding cooperation among the countries in the Lake Chad basin, the Multinational Joint Task Force was established. It dealt a serious blow to the activities of the terrorist group Boko Haram, despite that group's ability to pose ongoing difficulties.

Our countries must eradicate that group and focus on rebuilding and improving people's living conditions in order to effectively prevent the rise of extremism and all attendant violence. Like all of its neighbours in the Lake Chad basin, Cameroon will spare no effort to achieve that goal.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our Government's appreciation to all of our bilateral and multilateral partners that have assisted us our security, humanitarian, diplomatic and development struggle. A number of projects are already in place in those areas, and we seek greater involvement from our partners, given the needs to be met.

**Ms. Higgie** (New Zealand): The New Zealand delegation extends its best wishes to you, Ambassador Boukadoum, as you guide this year's First Committee in our annual stock-taking of developments in the disarmament and arms-control context and as we set our compass for the year ahead.

You will know from your delegation in Geneva, Mr. Chair, that the discussions that have taken place there this year have breathed new life into the nuclear-disarmament agenda. We wish to place on record our gratitude to Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand for his able leadership and hard work in chairing the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Those fortunate enough to have participated in the Working Group's meetings are able to attest to just how dynamic and innovative a body it was. It was also a very inclusive one — inclusive in its invitation to each and every State Member of the United Nations to join its proceedings. Inclusive, also, in the sense that it brought together, or forged, what I will call a new mainstream.

What began at the outset of the Open-ended Working Group as a set of discrete regional voices — the voices of Africa, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other groupings, such as that from my own Pacific neighbourhood, each with shades of difference in their vision for the pathway ahead — converged, by the time of the final Working Group meeting, into a unified voice with a single vision. That shared vision is set out in the recommendation put forward in paragraph 67 of the Working Group's report (see A/71/371). It is a recommendation for the convening of a United Nations conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding

instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination.

We should not, however, think of that as a novel or revolutionary vision. After all, it is simply a road map for something envisioned much earlier and promised to us all in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Any suggestion that the Working Group's vision fails to take account of the views and security interests of other States overlooks the promise of article VI of the Treaty and the near-universal membership of the NPT. It would also seem to overlook the unequivocal commitment already given in 2000 and 2010 by the five nuclear-weapon States to renounce their nuclear weapons. As the International Court of Justice 1996 advisory opinion on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (A/51/218, annex) served to make clear, it is not a question of whether; it has only been a question of when.

There are some who are saying that now is not the time. Such a view overlooks the point outlined in the ninth preambular paragraph in the new draft resolution in document A/C.1/71/L.41, following up on the work of the Open-ended Working Group, that in fact the current international climate makes multilateralism and the increased attention to disarmament and non-proliferation issues all the more urgent. In times of international turbulence, there is more than usual benefit to be gained from building and sustaining rules-based systems and architecture.

Accordingly, my delegation welcomes the opportunity to move forward on the architecture essential for nuclear disarmament. In doing so we will be building on the established framework of the NPT, thereby providing a firm basis for the implementation of all its provisions and advancing its core values, including respect for international humanitarian law and its fundamental objective of protecting civilians from military action, which lie at the heart of our United Nations. The fact that international humanitarian law is being routinely flouted in the horrific conditions prevailing in Syria — and indeed in a number of contexts elsewhere — is, we believe, no reason to allow one failure to compound another. The international community must not fail to move forward on the promise of the NPT by matching the prohibitions on both other types of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological, with one now on nuclear weapons.

In the interest of keeping well within your time limit, Mr. Chair, I propose to leave New Zealand's review of developments in most other areas of the First Committee's purview to our statements to be delivered during the forthcoming thematic debates. The one topic I would like to comment on now, however, is the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

I would particularly like to thank Nigeria for their careful stewardship of the ATT over the past year — it has indeed been an honour for New Zealand to serve as one of their Vice-Presidents over that period — and to congratulate Finland on now assuming the presidency of the Conference of States Parties. We know that the key issues facing the Treaty at this point — its universalization and implementation — are safe in Finnish hands. We look forward to playing our part, including as a member of the Selection Committee, reviewing projects for funding from the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund. We hope that the Trust Fund will meet the needs of those countries requiring assistance to join and implement the Treaty. New Zealand is pleased to have contributed almost \$100,000 to it for projects in the Pacific and Africa.

We believe the Arms Trade Treaty to be an outstanding example in recent times of the international community meeting its responsibility to move forward and put in place rules-based systems intended to improve the security and well-being of all our citizens. But, at present, it is still very early in the life of that Treaty. After all, it was adopted by the General Assembly only a little over three years ago. As such, we recognize that it has been necessary in this initial period to focus above all on setting up the ATT's governance structures and processes. With those in place and the secretariat now properly established, our ATT community can turn its full attention to ensuring that our Treaty is able to deliver on its humanitarian and security promise.

**Mr. Ri Tong Il** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to extend warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your chairmanship. I am confident that, under your able leadership, the Committee will achieve great success. I assure you of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

It is humankind's common aspiration and desire to live in a peaceful and secure world that is free of nuclear weapons. In building a peaceful world, disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, is of the greatest importance. In that context, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully supports the global struggle for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As far as nuclear disarmament is concerned, whether it is achieved or not largely depends on the nuclear Powers and their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Over the years, the nuclear-weapon States with the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons have been accelerating the qualitative improvements being made to their nuclear weapons to the fullest extent, while doing very little to make any quantitative reductions in their nuclear arsenals.

The United States, the world's largest nuclear-weapon State and the only country in the world that has used nuclear weapons against humankind, recently announced a new programme to modernize all of its existing nuclear weapons, which poses a great threat to international peace and security. The programme will last three years and will receive \$1 trillion, which is an astronomical figure. I repeat, \$1 trillion. Nevertheless, the United States frequently speaks of a so-called vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. That is mere hypocrisy intended to deceive the world, and nothing other than a smoke screen for covering up their strategy of nuclear monopoly and world hegemony. The continuing manoeuvres by the United States to modernize its nuclear weapons is an active challenge to humankind's desire to live in a world free of nuclear weapons.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea firmly believes that the First Committee should focus on identifying the ways and means of achieving nuclear disarmament. In that context, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been an active participant in discussions on disarmament issues and has been playing a very constructive role. The perpetual lack of progress in the discussions on disarmament issues is due to the ongoing controversy relating to which goal should be given priority — nuclear disarmament or non-proliferation. In that regard, it is very important to take into serious consideration the fact that the immediate and imminent nuclear threats are not from non-proliferation but from nuclear weapons at full operational status, ready to be launched in any direction, at any time, be it accidentally or intentionally.

It is regrettable that nuclear weapons are blatantly being used as a means of blackmail in pursuit of global domination and interference, raising serious concerns within the international community. The nuclear Powers that possess the most sophisticated nuclear weapons are increasing the nuclear threat by drafting plans for nuclear pre-emptive strikes against independent countries and continuously staging nuclear-war exercises. A typical example of the nuclear threat is that posed by the United States to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Amid the increasing anxiety of the international community with regard to developments in the situation on the Korean peninsula, a most dangerous war is looming in that part of the world. It could be sparked by a collision of nukes with nukes and arms with arms. In the Republic of Korea, joint military exercises involving the United States and the Republic of Korea were staged yet again this year on several occasions, with the participation of hundreds of thousands of troops and special forces and the means to stage nuclear strikes, which is more than enough to wage a full-scale war with the aim of decapitating the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and occupying Pyongyang.

A few days ago, the United States went so far as to fly fully armed strategic nuclear bombers over the air space of the military demarcation line in the Korean peninsula, and it is continuing to stage near-warlike exercises, one after the other, aimed at precision strikes on the office building that houses the supreme leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its nuclear facilities and strategic rocket bases with their cruise missiles. The innovative aggressive and provocative joint military exercises being held every day by the United States, along with the official decision to deploy Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-missile systems in the Republic of Korea, present a clear indication that the United States programme aimed at a planned nuclear strike has entered a reckless stage of implementation. In the face of never-ending nuclear threats from the United States, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no other option but to make a strategic decision to have its own nuclear deterrent. It is a self-defence measure to safeguard national sovereignty and its right to existence and survival.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unswerving stance is to rely on a powerful nuclear deterrent and fundamentally remove the root cause

of the danger of a nuclear war being imposed by the United States and to safeguard the peace and security of the region and the world at large. However, the Security Council determined, in an arbitrary manner, only that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests, satellite and rocket launches represent a threat to international peace and security and adopted so-called regulations to ban them. There is no article in the Charter of the United Nations or international law that stipulates that weapon tests, including nuclear tests, satellite launches or rocket launches, are to be regarded as a threat to international peace and security. If such provisions existed in the Charter or in existing international law, would the Security Council have remained silent about the 2,000 nuclear tests, satellite and rocket launches conducted long before the Democratic People's Republic of Korea carried out its own tests and launches?

Although the joint military exercises conducted every year in the Republic of Korea are a clear and active threat to international peace and security, owing to their aggressive and offensive nature, the Security Council turns a blind eye to them every time. The true meaning behind the so-called Security Council sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea lies in the fact that their adoption was a pure abuse of power aimed at advancing a political purpose and at misusing the Charter. A dignified Member State should pay due attention to whether or not legitimacy and moral grounds are reflected in the Security Council resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and should make its own objective, even-handed judgement.

The aggressive military exercises involving the use of arms and threats against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Member States are seen as a wanton violation of the principles of the Charter and were denounced as acts of aggression in the final document adopted at the seventeenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held last September in Venezuela. The same final document expressed serious concerns about the sanctions resolutions adopted by the Security Council against non-members, as they lacked the appropriate legal ground and showed disregard for impartiality and justice.

Furthermore, the act of negating or encroaching upon the right to develop and use outer space for peaceful purposes, which is among the legitimate

rights of sovereign States, was opposed and rejected. A declaration was adopted at the recent Group of 77 meeting, held on the sidelines of the General Assembly, which rejected unilateral sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and demanded the immediate lifting of sanctions. That all clearly indicates that more than 100 countries, the majority of the membership of the United Nations, oppose and reject the unprecedented manoeuvres on the part of the United States and its followers in seeking to isolate and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Peace is a long-cherished wish and desire of the Korean people, more than any other country present here. We have been living under the constant threat of nuclear war for over 60 years. I repeat, for over 60 years. Peace, which is most precious to the Korean people, cannot be granted by anyone else, nor can it be bought in return for anything else. It can be secured only when the Korean people are strong enough and can be ensured only through their own strength. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea possesses a nuclear deterrent in order to counter the nuclear threat from the United States of America and to safeguard the supreme interests of the country, the security of the nation and peace. Going nuclear is the policy line of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As long as the imperialists continue to resort to nuclear blackmail and arbitrary actions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will hold fast to the strategic line of simultaneously promoting economic construction and the build-up of nuclear armed forces. It will continue to further bolster itself with defensive nuclear armed forces of appropriate quality and quantity. The successful nuclear warhead tests that were conducted recently were a demonstration of the strong will of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, showing that it is clearly ready to counter-attack an adversary if a provocation occurs. They are part of the substantial countermeasures to be employed against the threat of nuclear war and the hostile attacks coming from the United States of America, which is viciously taking issue with our nation's legitimate rights to self-defence, including through the imposition of illegal sanctions.

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has publicly announced, the standardization of nuclear warheads would enable the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to produce as many varieties of smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear warheads with greater strike power, as required. As the Democratic



People's Republic of Korea has clearly declared, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as a responsible nuclear-weapon State, will not use nuclear weapons first unless the forces of aggression hostile to the country violate its sovereignty with nuclear weapons. As mentioned before, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to faithfully honour its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and strive for global denuclearization. The nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea does not constitute a threat to the non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-free zones in the world.

The peaceful use of outer space is the legitimate, inalienable and sovereign right of all States. The successful tests of high-powered carrier-rocket engines for geostationary satellites, which were first developed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, have provided a firm, scientific and technological guarantee for developing and completing a carrier rocket for geostationary satellites during the five-year national aerospace development programme. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will promote exchanges and cooperation with international outer-space organizations and outer-space institutions of other countries. It will also leave the door wide open, with greater enthusiasm, for conquering the world of outer space, as a proud member of 10 space-faring nations, while ensuring transparency and conformity with international norms and practices.

**Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka): At the outset, the delegation of Sri Lanka wishes to join all other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. I also wish to thank Ambassador Karel van Oosterom, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, for ably guiding the work of the First Committee during the seventieth session.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

We are deliberating in this year's session of the First Committee at a time when the entire world is gearing up to implement at the national level the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 16, which seeks to build peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, targeting significant reductions in "all forms of violence and related

death rates everywhere". In that context, the global reduction of arms and disarmament have assumed an extraordinary degree of significance, as disarmament would be imperative to building peaceful societies and to diverting much-needed resources to sustainable development from armaments.

The use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to humankind and to the survival of civilization. In that context, the need for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction is felt strongly. We believe that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is required in order to achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Strengthening the disarmament treaty regime is essential in order to ensure a rules-based regime for nuclear disarmament. In that connection, we wish to reiterate the paramount value of multilateralism and the overall importance of treaties and international law in reaching the goal of disarmament.

As the international community continues to be confronted by the menace of terrorism, with the increasing threat of the destabilization of established States and the danger of nuclear weapons, their means of delivery and related material falling into the hands of non-State actors, is fast becoming a reality and will have dire consequences for humankind. Our urgent attention must therefore be focused on that grave issue. There is a dire need to enhance the coordination of efforts at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in order to strengthen a global response to such serious challenges and the threat that they pose to international peace and security.

As we have stated many times, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, all States have an obligation to negotiate in good faith to achieve the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. While the nuclear-weapon States must make progress in eliminating their stockpiles, nuclear-weapon tests carried out by States Members of the United Nations, which compromise the peace and stability of the world, must be denounced. Sri Lanka remains committed to striving with all States and other stakeholders to make nuclear disarmament realizable and bring the peaceful uses of nuclear technology within reach. Sri Lanka's commitment to the elimination of the threat posed by nuclear weapons

is reflected in the international treaty obligations that we have undertaken in the field of disarmament.

Today more than at any other time, preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons require concerted efforts on the part of all nations. That is particularly significant in the context of target 4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16, under which the world has resolved to significantly reduce illicit arms flows by 2030. The amassing and spread of small arms and light weapons continue to fuel conflicts and cause suffering in many regions of the world. Sri Lanka, as a country that experienced a nearly three-decade-long conflict and the accompanying senseless destruction that is caused by the illicit trade in such weapons, is well aware of the gravity of that issue. It is known that non-State armed groups make ample use of the current easy and illicit access to small arms and light weapons globally in order to procure and use such weapons with lethal repercussions on people.

As a signatory to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, Sri Lanka established a national commission against the proliferation of illicit small arms so as to be able to deal with the proliferation of such arms in Sri Lanka. In that context, we welcome the adoption of the outcome document 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.

Sri Lanka has always advocated that outer space is a part of humankind's common heritage. All humankind should have an equal opportunity to explore and utilize outer space for peaceful purposes and for the common benefit of humankind through cooperation. In that context, all space actors have a responsibility to ensure that outer space is free from conflict and to prevent it from becoming an arena for the arms race. Possible militarization and the potential weaponization of the space environment have made outer space a contested area and a source of future conflict. Therefore, the existing legal framework on outer space needs to be strengthened, since the political climate concerning the sustainability and security of outer space has changed drastically. We believe that the conclusion of an international agreement on the prevention of the arms race in outer space would contribute to averting its catastrophic effect on humankind.

Today's debate provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the multilateral disarmament machinery as well. In that regard, we recognize the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. However, it is disheartening to note that the Conference has entered its twentieth year of continuing stalemate, and we regret the failure to adopt a substantive programme of work for this year. In order to demonstrate the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament, it is important to commence the substantive work of the Conference at the earliest date, based on a comprehensive programme of work.

We also reaffirm the centrality of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, with its universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the multilateral disarmament apparatus that considers specific disarmament issues and submits concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. However, it is regrettable that the Commission has not been able to produce any tangible outcome for the past 16 years. The failure to find common ground for a way forward is a fact that we all as States Members of the United Nations must give serious thought to and exert every effort to overcome the impasse.

The importance of disarmament education and research must also be highlighted. In that regard, we wish to commend the work carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). It is vital that UNIDIR's work be supported by as broad a representation of Member States as possible, in order for the Institute to effectively carry out its unique mandate.

Regional disarmament mechanisms play a significant role in complementing and promoting the global agenda for peace and disarmament. In that regard, we wish to express our satisfaction at the activities carried out by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. We are grateful to the Government of Nepal for its support for the Centre to operate from Kathmandu. We believe that it is imperative for the Regional Centre, in keeping with resolution 70/65, to move, at the earliest, its operations back to Kathmandu from Bangkok, where the Centre was temporarily relocated following last year's earthquake.

Finally, I am pleased to inform the Committee that Sri Lanka will be introducing in the First Committee the

draft resolution entitled “Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects” under agenda item 102. In keeping with the existing practice, Sri Lanka will be submitting that annual draft resolution in its capacity as the outgoing President of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The text of the draft resolution has already been agreed to by Geneva-based delegations and circulated among New York-based delegations. My delegation looks forward to constructive deliberations at this substantive session of the First Committee.

**Mr. Nardi** (Liechtenstein): The main objectives of multilateral disarmament and arms limitation efforts are the prevention of armed conflict and the subsequent human suffering, as well as the preservation of international stability. All States must do their utmost to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control. More important, disarmament efforts must take due account of applicable human rights law and international humanitarian law in order to maximize the legitimacy of those efforts and implementation by all actors.

Real security will never come about as long as there are weapons of mass destruction. States must take all feasible measures to stop their proliferation and prevent their development and use. Unfortunately, the current trends are not positive. We are appalled by the recurring use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism, and ask for full accountability for the perpetrators of such crimes. We are also alarmed by the reported chemical-weapon attacks in Darfur and urge the Government of the Sudan to fully cooperate with any future OPCW investigations.

The recent nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea deals an additional blow to the non-proliferation and disarmament regime under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is not only that recent nuclear test, but also the lack of progress in bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force that continue to undermine global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. That constitutes an ongoing risk to international peace and security. The balance of the regime established under the NPT has

been undermined by the lack of progress in the area of disarmament, one of its main pillars. There is only one guarantee that gives full protection from nuclear weapons, namely, full disarmament. The NPT is an important building block in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. It is therefore essential that we achieve the universality of the NPT without further delay. But we must in particular become serious about the implementation of all three NPT pillars.

Nuclear weapons are the only type of weapons of mass destruction not yet prohibited by an international convention, even though their massive humanitarian and environmental consequences are well known. We therefore commend the initiative of a cross-regional group of countries to take forward discussions on a nuclear-weapon ban. That initiative is a step towards pursuing nuclear-disarmament negotiations in good faith, as called for in article VI of the NPT. Such a ban should also build on the CTBT and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

We support the convening of a universal and inclusive conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, with active civil-society participation. National action is also crucial to efforts to make nuclear weapons a thing of the past. Liechtenstein has already prohibited all weapons of mass destruction as well as the financing, brokerage, development, production, acquisition, transfer to anyone, import, export, carrying in transit, storage or possession of such weapons. We hope that other States will take similar legislative action.

Conventional weapons remain the primary cause of casualties in armed conflict, especially among civilians. In recent years, one of the key causes of harm to civilians has been the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The humanitarian impact of such weapons is of great concern to us. It is for that reason that Liechtenstein committed itself at the World Humanitarian Summit to promoting and enhancing the protection of civilians and civilian objects by working to prevent civilian harm resulting from the use of such explosive weapons in populated areas. Liechtenstein also strongly supports the Secretary-General's call upon parties to conflicts to refrain from using such weapons and his call to elaborate a political commitment to that effect.

**Mr. Sano** (Japan): At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your

assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation and look forward to closely working with you and your team.

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in wartime, Japan has wholeheartedly promoted nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Against the backdrop of the changing nuclear disarmament landscape over the past several years, the 2015 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), by not agreeing on the substantive part of the draft final document, failed to come up with nuclear-disarmament guidelines towards 2020, while the nearly two-decades-long deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) fuelled the frustration felt by the non-nuclear-weapon States because of the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations in Geneva failed to adopt a consensus report despite the efforts of many States to bridge the differences between their various disarmament approaches. Together, those developments are a serious concern for us.

Japan has consistently maintained that the engagement of the nuclear-weapon States, as the major stakeholders, is imperative in nuclear-disarmament deliberations in order to carry out effective disarmament measures. We are convinced that to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, the most effective way is to take practical and concrete measures while fully taking into account the security considerations in the regions facing security challenges involving the threats of nuclear weapons, such as those of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Whatever paths we take to achieve our common goal, we must avoid further division and fragmentation of the international community and instead pursue consensus-based efforts in taking forward nuclear-disarmament measures.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Japan believes it is imperative to redouble international efforts to further strengthen the NPT, with a view to securing peace and stability throughout the world. In that vein, once again, we call upon the nuclear-weapon States to take the agreed steps set out in the final documents of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. Moreover, we strongly urge the nuclear-weapon States to take further concrete disarmament

measures during the 2015-2020 NPT review cycle. Among other things, Japan underscores the importance of increasing the level of transparency in their nuclear arsenals and strengthening their efforts, including providing more frequent and further detailed reports with numerical data on nuclear forces. We urge all States possessing nuclear weapons to take further efforts to reduce all types of nuclear weapons and eventually multilateralize nuclear-weapon reduction negotiations. Bearing in mind the review cycle towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference, Japan will once again submit to the Committee its annual draft resolution entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", which sets out practical and concrete measures acceptable to most States. We hope that that the draft resolution will garner wide-ranging support, as it has done in previous years.

With regard to a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), regrettably the CD once again failed to launch negotiations this year, despite serious attempts to do so. It is high time, therefore, for all of us to explore further how we may initiate the negotiation of an FMCT, the most extensively discussed legal instrument to date. Japan, for its part, calls upon all delegations to explore every possible way to commence negotiations on an FMCT.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In that regard, Japan welcomes the outcome of the eighth CTBT Ministerial Meeting in New York and the Ministerial Meeting in Vienna and the adoption of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). Japan also welcomes the recent ratifications by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland. Japan once again calls upon the remaining non-ratifying States, the annex 2 countries in particular, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. We affirm our confidence in the international community's continued efforts for the early entry into force of the Treaty. We applaud the effective functioning of the International Monitoring System, which greatly contributed to collecting and analysing data regarding the series of Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests and the tireless efforts made by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, under the strong leadership of the Executive Secretary, Mr. Lassina Zerbo.

Recently, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test. Japan condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the



strongest terms and urges it to immediately comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments. In addition, this year alone, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has launched more than 20 ballistic missiles, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles, some of which fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone. Furthermore, on the occasion of the fifth nuclear test, it claimed to have successfully detonated a nuclear warhead. The series of missile launches and the claim of the successful detonation of a nuclear warhead have brought the threat of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to an altogether different level, a level not experienced hitherto. All States Members of the United Nations have an obligation to steadfastly implement the related series of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 (2016), and should also be categorical in addressing this new type of threat. Japan will continue to coordinate closely with relevant countries in order to adopt a new Security Council resolution that includes additional sanctions.

The universal condemnation by the international community demonstrates that the prohibition of nuclear testing is a *de facto* international norm. To make that prohibition a legal obligation, the early entry into force of the CTBT is imperative.

In June, Japan hosted the third plenary meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification in Tokyo. That partnership deserves more attention from the international community, since credible and irreversible nuclear disarmament requires a robust verification mechanism, and this plurilateral initiative with the engagement of both the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States has demonstrated excellent examples of collaboration between them, including confidence-building measures. In that regard, I would like to commend the active engagement of the United States Government and the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism reached the conclusion that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had used chemical weapons in two locations, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant had conducted mustard-gas attacks in Aleppo. Japan condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons and the violation of

the CWC by a State party to the Convention. Holding those responsible to account is crucial.

Concerning the issue of abandoned chemical weapons, Japan is committed to making the fullest possible effort to complete the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China, through close coordination and cooperation with the people and the Government of China. We have excavated and declared more than 54,000 abandoned chemical weapons to the OPCW. As of the end of September, we had destroyed approximately 45,000 abandoned chemical weapons. In Haerbaling, the largest burial site of abandoned chemical weapons in Jilin province, test destruction and excavation operations are proceeding, with a view to the complete destruction of those weapons by 2022.

With regard to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), Japan expects that the discussions held during the intersessional process, as well as the two preparatory committees, will help us to reach an agreement to strengthen the BWC at the eighth Review Conference, to be held in November. To reinforce the Convention, Japan emphasizes, among other things, the review of the intersessional process, the improvement of the scientific and technological development review framework, the strengthening of national implementation and the promotion of collaboration with international organizations.

Ahead of the fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, to be held in December, Japan, recognizing the growing interest of the international community in the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), welcomes the recommendation of the third Informal Meeting of Experts and supports further discussion of that issue in order to deepen our common understanding on the main elements, including the identification of characteristics, the elaboration of a working definition of LAWS and the application of international law.

I would like to conclude my statement by stressing the potential function of confidence-building in disarmament. Ensuring national security and advancing disarmament should not be viewed as contradictory, as they are in fact mutually complementary. Disarmament will definitely improve the regional and global security environment and enhance confidence among States, thereby creating a virtuous circle for further disarmament. Japan strongly calls upon the States concerned to take action to mitigate the tensions in

each region and share the common goal of achieving a peaceful and secure world, free of nuclear weapons, by advancing nuclear disarmament and strengthening non-proliferation efforts centred on the NPT.

**Mr. Daunivalu (Fiji):** At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the current session, and also extend warm congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. Fiji is confident that, with your able stewardship, the First Committee will reach a successful conclusion. I assure you of Fiji's full support and cooperation.

We align our statement with that made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Once again, Fiji stresses the serious concerns we have about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the harm any detonation can cause to human health, the environment and vital economic resources. Fiji witnessed first-hand the destructive and long-lasting effects that nuclear weapons have had on its people and ecosystem. We are still living with the repercussions today. Fiji and the Pacific region have experienced more than 300 forcibly imposed nuclear tests. That regrettable history puts Fiji and the Pacific in a position to voice our grievances and to support all measures that aim to accomplish global zero.

Fiji supports strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones and encourages other States Members of the United Nations to create nuclear-weapon-free zones in their respective regions. We consider that to be an important first step in our collective endeavour towards complete nuclear disarmament. In 1985, the Pacific Island countries resolved to keep the Pacific free of nuclear weapons under the Rarotonga Treaty. It is a treaty that illustrates the commitment made by 14 States — namely, Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Samoa — to keep the region nuclear-free, but it also constitutes an effective measure and an important first step towards a nuclear-free world. For the people of Fiji and the Pacific, nothing less than a complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and the trade of such weapons, together with concrete steps to provide effective redress for those who suffer the effects of nuclear testing, is acceptable. It is both a moral and a legal issue.

The time has come for us to show leadership in eliminating and prohibiting the use and trade of nuclear weapons. Fiji supports the conclusion of a comprehensive, legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons, to plug the current lacuna in international law, as agreed in the Open-ended Working Group meeting held in Geneva this year. Fiji does not want to witness yet again the catastrophic and long-lasting consequences that nuclear weapons can have for human health, the environment, climate, food production and socioeconomic development. We must move towards complete nuclear disarmament and prohibit all use, development and testing of nuclear weapons.

We made a collective pledge under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to mobilize the global community to end all forms of poverty, fight inequality and, while we do so, to leave no one behind, wherever they live on the planet. We in Fiji and the Pacific do not want to be left behind because of a nuclear accident or the intentional detonation of a nuclear weapon in our region. The vast size of the Pacific Ocean and the sporadic presence of littoral States in the Pacific make the region particularly vulnerable to the risk of trans-shipment and the carriage of nuclear waste and materials through our waters. An accident in our waters could wipe out our environment and our livelihood. Small island developing States are vulnerable, and we are concerned lest, in a nightmare scenario, a single event scoring a direct hit were to wipe out our economy and set us back for decades, making it impossible for us to meet our Sustainable Development Goals.

Fiji is convinced that the assurance provided by the international community must be sufficient to safeguard the interests and territorial integrity of similar States in relation to States that do possess nuclear weapons. Fiji welcomes the recommendation made by the Open-ended Working Group meeting held in August in Geneva that a conference should be convened in 2017 to commence negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination

**Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation congratulates you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections.

We fully support the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2), and

the statement to be made by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The possibility of a nuclear war, in the current context of dangerous and growing tensions, is getting closer and becoming more unpredictable. We emphatically state that nuclear disarmament is an international priority and deserves attention at the highest level. Seventy years ago, in its very first resolution (resolution I(I)), the General Assembly requested that atomic weapons be eliminated from national armaments. Today, however, more than 15,000 nuclear weapons exist, and a new generation of such weapons is being developed through vertical proliferation, which is rarely mentioned. The detonation—whether or not intentional—of a negligible fraction of such weapons would have disastrous consequences for our planet, including the annihilation of the human race. We support the convening in 2017 of a United Nations international conference for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, with a view to their elimination. We hope that that instrument can be formally adopted in 2018 at a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament convened by the General Assembly.

The prohibition of nuclear weapons would be a major step forward, but it would not be sufficient to rid the world of nuclear weapons—the goal to which we aspire. Like the vast majority of the countries in the international community, Cuba will continue to advocate strongly for the earliest possible adoption of a comprehensive convention to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified period of time and under strict international verification. We reiterate that, until nuclear weapons have been eliminated, we will advocate for the development of a treaty that offers universal, unconditional security assurances to States that do not possess such weapons.

For the third time in the history of the United Nations, the commemoration on 26 September of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons reiterated the international community's broad support for the prime importance of nuclear disarmament. The possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons cannot be justified under any circumstances or security doctrine. We reject attempts to legitimize the maintenance of such weapons, including through the recent joint declaration of the permanent members of the Security Council. The policy of nuclear deterrence is totally unacceptable, in

particular since the nuclear Powers still have not met their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We deeply regret that the ninth NPT Review Conference was unable to reach agreement, despite the will and determination to make progress on nuclear disarmament shown by the overwhelming majority of States parties to the Treaty. We take this opportunity to stress that Cuba maintains its full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which also would be a vital contribution to the peace and security of all peoples in that region.

Cuba believes that the only guarantee to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction, including by non-State actors, is the total elimination of such weapons. Our country is firmly committed to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Cuba acts in strict compliance with the provisions of those Conventions. We strongly reject and demand the immediate removal of any kind of limitations and restrictions on exports to developing countries of material, equipment and technology for nuclear, chemical and biological activities, in line with the provisions of the relevant international treaties on the subject. At the same time, we categorically reject the application of sanctions and coercive measures as a means of dispute resolution on disarmament and non-proliferation.

We reiterate the urgency of adopting an action plan to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention. With regard to the Biological Weapons Convention, we hope that the eighth Review Conference of that Convention can contribute to strengthening it, while calling for multilateral negotiations to adopt a legally binding protocol that includes its basic pillars, in particular international cooperation.

Cuba acknowledges the strong commitment and efforts of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and its ongoing and constructive cooperation in the process of destroying its chemical weapons, which took place in the midst of a complex security situation. Cuba reiterates the need to find ways to successfully conclude the ongoing process of investigation in Syria, on the basis of an impartial and objective analysis that

is free from politicization and is based, in particular, on reliable sources of information.

Cuba supports the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Among other issues, the disarmament machinery must be examined with a view to its revitalization; however, we are convinced that it is paralysed and that the reason for this is first and foremost the lack of political will on the part of some States.

Cuba welcomes the start made by the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. We hope that its results will be of a higher quality than those in previous years. Its work should put an end to the covert and illegal acts perpetrated by individuals, organizations and States on the information technology systems of other nations in their attacks on third countries. The hostile use of telecommunications with the stated or surreptitious goal of undermining the legal and political structures of States is a violation of the internationally recognized standards in that area, and its effects can create tensions and unfavourable situations for international peace and security.

Cuba has begun to implement the provisions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, having deposited its instrument of accession on 6 April. We are proud to belong to the first densely populated region of the planet established as a zone free of nuclear weapons and the first zone of peace, after a formal proclamation was made at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014. We require and expect compliance with that proclamation, whose purpose is to banish once and for all the threat or use of force in our region. By virtue of that proclamation and under international law, we demand the return of the territory that has been illegally occupied by the United States Naval Base in Guantánamo, against the will of the people of Cuba.

We reiterate Cuba's proposal for a United Nations-managed fund that would devote the resources released by disarmament to economic and social development and thereby contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Mr. Lupan** (Moldova): At the outset, in line with the tradition of the First Committee, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the

chairship of the Committee at the current session and to wish you success and inspiration in steering its work.

My country aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2), and I take this opportunity to add some additional elements in my national capacity.

Today, widespread armed violence continues to cause the deaths of civilians, including women and children, on a daily basis, to the point that discussing this has become routine. New and unresolved conflicts, including in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, create opportunities for the illegal arms trade and trafficking in weapons and dangerous materials. That is why we, in the Committee, bear a heavy responsibility not only to discuss those issues, but also to ensure that arms control and disarmament actually work.

The universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and of nuclear disarmament remains an important step in our endeavour to reinforce international peace and security and ensure stability among major political forces in the international arena. Last year's NPT Review Conference reiterated once again that this fundamental treaty is not only about deterrence from using nuclear armaments and avoiding a global catastrophe, but also about making the world a safer place.

Like many in this room, the Republic of Moldova recognizes the importance of the creation in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone — an issue that proved critical for the advancement and implementation of the NPT and is vital to the stabilization of security, not only in the Middle East, but beyond it as well. It is also because we, as a small country, generally support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In addition, we consider that measures to implement effective border-control mechanisms, particularly in areas affected by conflicts, need to remain very much the focus of our Committee's attention, also from the perspective of the NPT.

This year, in our discussions we will again address the issue of a legally binding instrument on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we emphasize the imperative for that Treaty's universalization. The Republic of Moldova associated itself with the joint ministerial statement on the CTBT issued at the high-level meeting held in September in New York, within the framework



of the Assembly's general debate. My country's position is that the NPT and the CTBT go hand in hand, as these are the core treaties of nuclear disarmament and their full implementation is indispensable for international peace and security.

Approximately two years have elapsed since the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) — a landmark agreement providing an international legal framework for the regulation of the trade in conventional arms and setting the standards for more responsibility and transparency in that area. The Republic of Moldova deposited its ATT ratification instruments in September 2015, and a delegation from my country participated in the second Conference of States Parties to the ATT, held in Geneva in August. As we did at the Geneva Conference, today we reiterate the importance of the Treaty's being ratified by other States, in addition to the more than 80 countries that are currently bound by the ATT. Clearly, until all countries join that international legal framework for arms control, ATT endeavours will be undermined — a scenario that was surely not envisaged when the Treaty was negotiated.

We are all witnessing how much damage conventional arms can cause to the civilian population in various conflicts, and the last thing we want is for small conventional arms to get into the hands of unauthorized actors, thereby making it even more difficult for the international community to contain wars and conflicts. That is of particular concern for my country, which is confronted by an unresolved separatist conflict in the Transnistrian region, a zone that has been out of the control of constitutional authorities for more than two decades and where foreign troops are illegally stationed and regularly carry out military exercises. The issue of ammunition depots, which had to be withdrawn long ago from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with international commitments, is also a source of serious concern.

*Ms. Urruella Arenalís (Guatemala), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

Throughout the entire process of ATT negotiations, during the conferences of States parties, as well as in the First Committee, my country has never ceased to warn the international community about the danger of so-called black zones for arms-control regimes that can be used both as sources and transit points for international trafficking in conventional arms. That concern grew with the appearance of more conflict zones in our

region. Therefore, in order to prevent that phenomenon, we need all States to show their commitment by joining and implementing the ATT, and in that way to reduce the potential threat of black zones such as the one I mentioned.

The Republic of Moldova has developed a robust national arms-control system, aimed at preventing and curbing any activity involving arms misuse and their export by and to unauthorized actors. An electronic register of small arms and light weapons has been put in place, with the support of our international partners, in order to ensure better management and more efficient control of those arms. As one of the measures to strengthen the capacities of national authorities to control small arms and light weapons, and operating within an integrated modern electronic system, the register allows for the swift exchange of data nationally and internationally and represents a secure channel of information about the transfer of arms. As a State party to the ATT, we envisage more steps to ensure compliance with the Treaty, especially pertaining to brokering, control lists and other procedures.

I would also like to emphasize the role played by regional organizations and arrangements in the international regulation of arms production and the arms trade. They deserve to be supported by the United Nations, and they should be used as platforms to address the issue of arms control in a more targeted way, as complements to the global framework under the United Nations umbrella, thereby strengthening regional responsibility and reinforcing strict compliance in their particular regions. Finally, my country reaffirms its commitment to staying engaged in the advancement of international disarmament efforts and to making a practical contribution to that end.

**Mr. Yaung Chan** (Cambodia): My delegation sincerely congratulates the Chair of the First Committee on his election at the current session and assures him of our cooperation and full support. Cambodia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and that made on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The growing rifts in parts of the world are of concern to us, especially insofar as they pertain to the core value of sustaining peace and security. We are experiencing tensions arising from long- or short-term conflicts. What is important, therefore, is that we have

the mechanisms to guarantee that nuclear weapons are not used. The failure to reach consensus at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May last year was a disappointment to us. Consequently, my delegation wishes to see active engagement from both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States and a positive attitude in order to reach the final goal of the NPT.

Cambodia joins others in commending Myanmar and Swaziland for their recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and believes that, while we wait for the Treaty to become universal through its entry into force, States should refrain from conducting nuclear-weapon tests or any other nuclear explosion that would undermine the objectives of the Treaty. Even though the CTBT has not yet entered into force, the significant role played by that global non-proliferation regime over the past 20 years obliges us to continuously strengthen it.

To reiterate our commitments in line with global efforts, in 2014 Cambodia, in cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, organized two consecutive workshops, one on the Asia 2014 Conference, on responding to a chemical, biological, nuclear or explosives threat or incident, and the other on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In addition, an international workshop on nuclear safeguards and the additional protocol took place in Cambodia in April.

With regard to regional efforts, a region free of nuclear weapons is a core value of South-East Asia, as enshrined in the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and that is why we are working to strengthen the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by setting out and subsequently reviewing its plan of action from time to time. We are making progress to ensure that the Treaty is signed by the nuclear-weapon States.

The presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war still poses threats to human security and the national development agenda. As a post-conflict country, Cambodia, one of the most landmine-polluted countries, is still suffering as a result of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war hidden underground, either in farm fields or at the borders. Although the victims of such explosives and mines are currently fewer in number than in past decades, Cambodia still needs to

carry out and accelerate its mine-clearance activities. We therefore continue to count on support from our dialogue partners and agencies.

Cambodia attaches importance to the Ottawa Convention and highly commends the firm solidarity shown by all the States parties to that Convention, as well as by all concerned international and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders that are collectively contributing to a mine-free world. We look forward to the forthcoming meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, to be held in November in Santiago.

Recognizing the need to address mine issues at the regional level, ASEAN welcomed the official inauguration in May of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, headquartered in Phnom Penh, which serves as a regional centre of excellence in addressing the humanitarian aspects of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war in interested ASEAN member States and facilitates cooperation with other countries, as well as relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

Cambodia shares the concern about the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons as well as their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions. That is why my country joins ASEAN in calling for the Secretariat to strengthen capacity through education and to assist Member States with best practices in physical stockpile management and security.

Recognizing the severity of the small arms and light weapons problem in the region, Cambodia has integrated the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects into its national agenda in order to manage small arms and light weapons, so as to ensure peace and security in the country. Our smooth progress in small-arms management has been driven by assistance from our dialogue partners such as the European Union (EU) and Japan and by our national law on the management of weapons, explosives and ammunition, adopted 10 years ago. The success of our weapons management has helped to stabilize the country and thereby to contribute to economic development.

In March, Cambodia hosted an EU-funded workshop at which United Nations and other instruments on small

arms, notably the Arms Trade Treaty, and regional experience in controlling the movement of small arms were reviewed, and Cambodia's draft convention against trafficking in small arms was developed. We believe that such a convention would complement the Arms Trade Treaty and strengthen ASEAN member States' capability and capacity to identify and track the smuggling of arms in the region.

My delegation believes that we have the shared responsibility to move forward with fruitful negotiations in order to achieve the non-proliferation of weapons and to avert the taking up of arms as the means to address the conflicts that have been raging in parts of the world.

**Mr. Tiare** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Burkina Faso would like to warmly congratulate the Chair on his election to preside over the First Committee. We also extend congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. They can rest assured of my delegation's full cooperation for a successful session.

My country fully aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a genuine source of concern for Burkina Faso, as it is the primary threat to peace and security in Africa and, in particular, West Africa. That is why my country has never wavered in its commitment or skimped on its resources in the fight against the illicit trafficking and unregulated trade in small arms, which are the main supply channels used in rebellions and by terrorists and various armed groups.

We quite rightly commend the determination and political will of all States that have demonstrated the usefulness of multilateral efforts to achieve the common goals of arms control, while achieving a considerable reduction in the number of conflicts and strengthening peace and collective security, through the entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty. That step forward will be advantageous in that it provides an apt and collective response that will allow imports, exports and international transfers of arms to be regulated and streamlined. We also welcome the holding of the second Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, from 22 to 26 August in Geneva, and call for

responsibility and commitment by all stakeholders, in particular States, for its full implementation.

We are confident that the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will allow for greater efficiency and effectiveness by complementing existing subregional instruments, namely, the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, adopted on 14 June 2006. The implementation and monitoring of such instruments will allow our national institutions, such as the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the High Authority to Control the Importation of Arms and Their Use, to curb the scourge of the proliferation of light weapons and their illicit trafficking and guard against consequences, such as terrorist attacks, instability, insecurity, human rights violations and the socioeconomic collapse of our States.

My delegation would like to reiterate the importance of the role and place of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We welcome the convening of the eighth Ministerial Conference on that Treaty, held on 21 September in New York. However, we continue to deplore the fact that, 20 years after its adoption, that Treaty has still not entered into force. While we welcome recent ratifications, including those by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland, we call on the annex 2 States to shoulder their responsibility, as their ratification is required for the entry into force of the Treaty in order to enable that instrument, in the very near future, to fulfil the role that we all assigned to it.

My delegation also welcomes the existence of the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including Africa, through the Treaty of Pelindaba. That Treaty demonstrates the commitment of African States to strengthening the non-proliferation regime and promoting cooperation in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in order to take advantage of any development opportunities it offers. In that regard, we reiterate the need to create such a zone in the Middle East, in accordance with resolution 50/66, and the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We hope that the discussions that started under the auspices of the facilitator will lead, in the very near future, to the holding of that conference.

Burkina Faso's commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is demonstrated by its adherence to various legal instruments and through their implementation. In addition to the adoption of appropriate laws and regulations, my country has ensured that it shoulders its responsibility by creating follow-up structures such as national authorities for nuclear energy, for implementing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and for nuclear safety and radiation protection. We are also working on new national structures in order to implement the Biological Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Burkina Faso acknowledges that the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission are the most relevant forums in which to conduct multilateral negotiations on disarmament issues. However, the lethargy that has plagued those two forums for more than two decades is to be deplored. In addition, we call on the entire international community to overcome the various diverging points of view and to demonstrate greater willingness to show commitment, flexibility and openness in order to address the new security challenges, namely, the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the exponential increase in military spending, the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, the arms race in outer space, the new capabilities for computer and cyberattacks, and the use of armed drones.

We reiterate our support for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with the aim of undertaking a comprehensive reform of the Conference on Disarmament to enable it to meet the expectations of the international community, improving its working methods and expanding it to accommodate the new configuration of the world.

The first year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development invites us to be firmly committed to development in the areas for which our Committee is responsible: disarmament and international security.

Burkina Faso recalls the intrinsic link between disarmament and development and takes this opportunity to invite the international community to become more involved in a genuine disarmament process that would free up considerable financial

resources for development. Goal 16 of the Agenda for Sustainable Development reinforces the position that peaceful societies are vital for eliminating poverty, building a prosperous world, promoting cooperation and safeguarding the planet. We remain convinced that humankind's primary enemy is poverty. It is for that reason that working to eradicate poverty would be the best way to undermine the foundation of war and the need for armaments.

To conclude my statement, we reaffirm our faith in general and complete disarmament, which would be a beneficial measure for the welfare of all humankind, and we hope that the work of this session will be key to our progress towards the eradication of the nuclear threat and arms reduction.

**Mr. Imnadze (Georgia):** I would also like to join with colleagues in congratulating the Chair and the Bureau on their election and look forward to their able stewardship. We assure them of my delegation's full cooperation.

Needless to say, the security threats and challenges our community faces today are asymmetrical, complex, dynamic and transnational in nature. I might have to repeat myself and say a few things that I have said before, but such is the unfortunate nature of unresolved issues and the nature of our work in First Committee as we try to build consensus and political support among us, the member States, on threats and identify measures to counter them.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2), and I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

The recent worrisome practice of forcibly altering international borders poses a serious threat to peace and stability and undermines the fundamental principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity. European security is being challenged by Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine. As the Committee is well aware, that case is not an isolated one in our region. Twenty per cent of my country's territory also remains under illegal military occupation. Since the 2008 invasion, the military build-up has intensified exponentially, in flagrant violation of international law and the six-point ceasefire agreement, posing a serious threat to my nation's security and the well-being of its citizens. Furthermore, as long as international mechanisms are totally absent from the occupied



territories, there are no guarantees to prevent the military arsenal, including the most dangerous weapons systems, from being transferred to terrorist or criminal groups. In fact, during the 10-year period 2006-2016, there were 25 cases of illicit smuggling of radioactive materials, 11 of which involved the occupied territory of Georgia.

We are likewise deeply distressed by the violent developments and security situation in Iraq and Syria. After the recent air strikes on the humanitarian aid convoy in eastern Aleppo, all humanitarian convoys across combat lines in Syria were suspended. It completely undermined everything that had been achieved through arduous work and pain. It is vital to re-establish conditions that would allow for the resumption of humanitarian aid to bring relief to the Syrian people. We condemn in the strongest terms all despicable acts of terrorism and violence against the civilian population. It is only with our joint efforts and commitment that we can stop, reverse and prevent such violent actions from happening. As we have already seen, terrorist groups such as Da'esh threaten not only the nations in the Middle East but also in Europe.

The risk of nuclear terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials and technologies has become one of the major challenges to our common security. The risk of such weapons falling into the hands of unauthorized actors is indeed alarming. In that regard, full compliance with obligations under the relevant international arrangements — such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and so on — must stand out as main priorities for the international community.

The threats posed by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and materials continue to be at the top of the international security agenda. Given the importance of the issue, Georgia actively cooperates with the European Union and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute within the framework of the CBRN Centres of Excellence, to promote an integrated CBRN approach across the area of South-East Europe, the Caucasus, Moldova and Ukraine. With the aim of contributing to the success of that project, the CBRN regional secretariat was opened and is successfully functioning in Georgia.

Furthermore, with the aim of addressing and promoting various CBRN-related topics at the United Nations, the Governments of Georgia, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of the Philippines initiated and established the United Nations Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance. The United Nations Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance is a consultation and dialogue forum aimed at integrating the CBRN component in the international security architecture, sensitizing States about the importance of mitigating CBRN risks, and fostering regional cooperation to overcome CBRN challenges. It will also promote activities aimed at building capacity and developing capabilities between and among partner States and encourage the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent relevant resolutions. Last week, a side event here at Headquarters was organized by the aforementioned Group of Friends to enhance awareness of CBRN-related threats, including the possible use by terrorists of new technological developments such as artificial intelligence for delivering CBRN materials, and to promote cybersecurity.

Georgia fully shares the common approaches of the international community regarding the problem of the illicit trade in conventional arms. The uncontrolled dissemination and excessive accumulation of conventional arms and ammunition represent a serious threat to international peace and security. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), aimed at regulating international trade in conventional arms, is a historic diplomatic achievement and the successful culmination of the determination and many years of efforts by the international community, aimed at fostering global peace and security. As a proud sponsor of the process that started in 2006 and as a signatory to the ATT, Georgia is convinced that that binding legal instrument has the real potential to eradicate the illicit arms trade, to genuinely contribute to achieving humanitarian objectives and, overall, to foster global peace and security.

We are convinced that it is time for the international community to stand up for the principles that are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In addition to elaborating initiatives and ideas to address the existing problems relating to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and to non-proliferation, the First Committee should do its utmost to eliminate the

threat posed by conventional weapons to international, regional and national security — a threat that could potentially undermine the existing international system of nation States.

**Mr. Nkoloi** (Botswana): At the very outset, let me congratulate the Chair on his assumption to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We reiterate the important role that the Committee continues to play in the preservation of international peace and security. In the same vein, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank the previous Chair, His Excellency Mr. Karel Jan Gustaaf van Oosterom, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for his effective leadership of the the First Committee at its seventieth session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Let me begin by reaffirming the importance that Botswana attaches to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security. We firmly believe that the issue of disarmament and international peace and security should continue to feature prominently on the agenda of the United Nations for as long as peace and stability remain unattained. As long as the world remains seized of various conflicts and threats to international peace and security, the noble goals and objectives of the post-2015 development agenda will remain but a dream. The common sentiment is that peace, safety and stability are prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development.

Botswana remains gravely concerned at the numerous serious threats to international peace and security in many parts of the world, as they arguably present the greatest challenge to human development. We are witnessing an alarming rise in instability, insecurity and violent conflict that often result in untold devastation and dislocation of communities through gross violations of human rights and attacks on the fundamental freedoms of peoples.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons, the scourge of international terrorism, the illicit trade and flow of small arms and light weapons and the weaponization of space are some of the challenges that continue to pose a threat to peace and security, stability and, indeed, development. My delegation, like most if not all delegations, is extremely wary

of the lack of progress in achieving a world free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, which can be attributed to the reluctance and non-cooperation of certain Member States that, incidentally, possess such weapons. We therefore join other delegations to reiterate that the total elimination of such weapons of terror is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

The continued existence of these weapons brings into question the commitment by nuclear-weapon States to achieve complete disarmament. While we recognize security concerns as propagated by these possessor States, we maintain that the potential catastrophic humanitarian impact of the use of such weapons should serve as a motivation for us to eliminate them once and for all. Deeply troubling in this regard is the increasing involvement of non-State actors and radical extremists who have the potential to gain possession of these deadly weapons and unleash them on populations with impunity. Should that occur, we only have ourselves to blame because we will have failed as a collective to realize a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation is in total support of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and believes that this type of regional approach will bind States to respect the denuclearization of territories in such zones. Botswana is proud to be associated with the Pelindaba Treaty, which has made our continent, Africa, a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We commend those regions that have achieved a similar monumental task and urge those lagging behind to expedite the process if for anything but posterity.

Regarding conventional weapons, the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is yet another serious and grave challenge of our time. The accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in many parts of the world is a cause for serious concern. There is no doubt that such weapons pose the gravest danger to peace, stability and security across the globe. Their adverse impact, even on the socioeconomic development process, is evident, especially in developing countries.

The twin evils of conflict and crime are perpetuated through the use of small arms and light weapons, and the international community is paying a heavy price as it tries to implement responsive measures. It is against this background that we fully support efforts towards 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 Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. However, we fully appreciate that, due to resource limitations and the different capacities of States, realizing the goals of the Programme of Action remains a challenge.

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, which took place in New York from 6 to 10 June 2016, underscored the fact that new developments in weapons manufacturing, technology and designs have significant adverse implications on an efficient application or implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. It therefore remains imperative that implementation of the Programme of Action and the Instrument be strengthened and new methods considered, if necessary. We applaud the positive spirit that led to the successful conclusion of the sixth Biennial Meeting, and it is our hope that we will carry the momentum through to the upcoming 2018 Review Conference. In this regard, we implore cooperating partners to provide the technical and financial means and capacity-building to those in need in order that we may derive maximum benefit from the Programme of Action and associated instruments.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its continued support for the efforts of the international community aimed at fighting challenges related to peace and security. Recent reviews, such as the review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture and others, indicated a change in paradigm wherein Member States emphasized prevention over reactive behaviour. This is indeed heartening and should herald a new approach to these weighty matters.

Finally, we wish all members of the First Committee fruitful deliberations. It is our sincere hope and expectation that, under the Chair's leadership, the Committee, with its usual positive spirit and determination, will be able to reach consensus on as many resolutions as it has in the past.

**Mr. Varma** (India): We congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election and assure them of our full support and cooperation.

India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

India's support for global, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner remains firm. This goal can be achieved by a step-by-step process underpinned by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. A meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons can build trust and confidence. Reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines, with the aim of increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons, could be an essential first step. The current complex international environment is in need of measures to globally enhance strategic trust. At the same time, there is a need for the international community to stand united against those whose persistent violations increase nuclear threats and proliferation risks.

India considers the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to be the appropriate forum for the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We supported resolution 70/34 and working paper CD/2067, which was submitted by States members of the Group of 21, in support of commencing negotiations in the CD on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention.

Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, India supports the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the CD on the basis of the mandate set forth in CD/1299. India welcomed the adoption by consensus of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (A/70/81) established pursuant to resolution 67/53. We share the widely felt disappointment that one State has continued to block the commencement of such negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

As a responsible nuclear Power, India's nuclear doctrine continues to stress a policy of credible minimum deterrence with a posture of no-first use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States. We remain committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear-explosive testing. India supports the strengthening of the global non-proliferation

objectives and, as such, has engaged actively with multilateral export-control regimes.

During the past year, India became a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime and has subscribed to The Hague Code of Conduct. We have contributed to international efforts aimed at enhancing nuclear safety and security standards through various programmes of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We welcome the outcome of the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, D.C., on 31 March and 1 April.

The international community should continue to exercise the utmost vigilance to prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and related materials and technologies. India would be willing to host a conference in 2018 aimed at strengthening international resolve in facing the challenge of the WMD-terrorism nexus.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are worthy examples of global non-discriminatory treaties for the complete elimination of their respective categories of weapons of mass destruction. India has completed its obligations on stockpile destruction under the CWC. The timely destruction by other States parties of the remaining stockpiles is critical to upholding the credibility and integrity of the Convention.

India contributed to efforts under the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the destruction of Syria's declared chemical-weapon stockpiles. The use of chemical weapons in the ongoing conflict is, of course, a matter of concern.

We share the widespread interest among BWC States parties to strengthen the Convention's effectiveness and improve its implementation through a Protocol negotiated for that purpose. We believe such a step is necessary in view of the new challenges to international peace and security emanating from proliferation trends, including the threat posed by terrorists and other non-State actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins. India is actively participating in the preparatory process leading to the eighth Review Conference to be held in November.

As a major space-faring nation, India has vital development and security interests in space. India supports the strengthening of the international legal regime to protect and preserve access to space for all

and to prevent, without exception, the weaponization of outer space. We support the substantive consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space agenda item in the Conference on Disarmament. While not a substitute for legally binding instruments, transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful and complementary role.

India continues to keep under review the Arms Trade Treaty from the perspective of our defence, security and foreign-policy interests. At the same time, India continues to strengthen its controls over the export of conventional weapon systems and has participated in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. India attaches importance to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons process and the holding of a productive Review Conference later this year. We welcome the consensus outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting on the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light weapons, held in June.

As in previous years, India will be submitting three draft resolutions, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", "Reducing nuclear danger" and "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction". We will also submit a draft decision on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament. We will elaborate on those issues during the thematic debate.

**Mr. Mhura** (Malawi): Malawi extends warm congratulations to Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum, Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, on his assumption of the Chair of the First Committee for the seventy-first session. Malawi takes this opportunity to congratulate other members of the Bureau on their election and expresses its appreciation to Mr. Boukadoum's predecessor, Ambassador Van Oosterom of the Kingdom of Netherlands, for his contribution and constructive ideas as Chair during the seventieth session of the Committee. Malawi also expresses appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, for his thoughtful remarks (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Malawi aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).



The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, in 1946, called for

“the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction” (*resolution 1(1), para. 5 (c)*).

Every year, the General Assembly adopts 40 to 50 resolutions on disarmament and non-proliferation by a majority vote or by consensus, turning the First Committee into a resolution-generating machine, from which repetitive, redundant resolutions are submitted and voted on year after year.

While the First Committee offers many opportunities in principle, it often fails to make good use of its potential. There is discord on perceptions among member States; the way one State perceives elements and challenges to its security often differs widely from the way other States perceive their own situations or the global situation. Discussion in the First Committee is therefore largely static, with limited acknowledgement of other States’ perspectives and a lack of flexibility in examining one’s own perspective.

Some States have become entrenched in their positions and do not listen to the arguments or suggestions of others. They reject the norms of the majority, which has arrived at a common understanding through discussion, debate and compromise and oppose resolutions that would otherwise demonstrate consensus on many disarmament-related issues. In turn, these time-hardened positions have given rise to a number of static resolutions. For far too long, multilateral disarmament negotiations have been at a standstill. We must not allow a small number of nations to continue building up and modernizing their nuclear arsenals with impunity.

The First Committee is supposed to provide the space for States to discuss their positions on disarmament-related matters and to work together to come up with compromises and propose the language or tools to better understand and approach the issues. It should offer the opportunity for States to build consensus on the issues, reach common understanding on principles and agree on norms of behaviour. That is why, I believe, the Committee exists — to build consensus. Indeed, rather than ensuring security through the size of their arsenals, Governments should discuss how best to arrive at cooperative security arrangements that minimize spending on weapons, reduce the production, trade and stockpiling of arms,

and increase global security. Such consensus can subsequently be used in other disarmament forums, such as the Conference on Disarmament, where disarmament treaties are negotiated. I would like to urge the Committee to utilize the opportunity presented by the adoption and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to help us redirect our energies, technical expertise and finances from building more arms to increasing development.

Africa has remained a nuclear-weapon-free zone since the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba, to which Malawi is a signatory. We assure the Committee that our country shall continue to observe and honour this status. We again take this opportunity to encourage the States that have yet to ratify the Treaty, particularly the States listed in Protocol II, to do so and to take the necessary measures to ensure its speedy implementation.

Nuclear weapons pose a present and existential threat to humankind and their use, needless to say, is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and norms of civilization and is an aggravated crime against humanity. We wish to call on all nuclear-weapon States to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and to take measures aimed at the voluntary renunciation and dismantling of such weapons. We are pleased to note that some countries are already doing so, and we applaud them for that.

Malawi welcomes the continued consideration of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including the second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, convened in Mexico in February 2014, and subsequent related meetings. Malawi stands by its commitment to support the Government of Austria on the pledge it made at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. Malawi supports the widely endorsed proposal for a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and will support any resolution submitted to establish the negotiating mandate for such an instrument.

In terms of the adoption and implementation of non-proliferation treaties, Malawi is a party to and fully meets the requirements of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapon Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Malawi attaches importance to implementing all the provisions of these multilateral treaties, including those covering nuclear disarmament. Malawi is also setting

up a technical committee to adopt national rules and regulations to ensure compliance with its commitments under the new multilateral non-proliferation treaties. Malawi is committed to multilateral cooperation within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, in order to achieve common objectives in the area of non-proliferation and to promote international cooperation for peaceful purposes and for the provision of adequate resources and assistance to developing countries.

Developing countries, such as Malawi, need and welcome such assistance. Malawi has developed appropriate ways to work with and inform industry and the public of their obligations under disarmament and non-proliferation laws on an ongoing basis.

In conclusion, Malawi will continue to support confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons at all levels, as this approach will contribute to strengthening international peace and security. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there remains a real danger they will be used again. A ban is therefore urgently needed.

**Mrs. Pucarinho** (Portugal): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair of the First Committee and the Vice-Chairs on their election and assure them of my delegation's full support.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered previously by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2) and would like to make some additional comments in my national capacity.

Portugal believes that achieving a safer and more peaceful world requires a robust framework of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and institutions that fully respect the key principles of inclusiveness and multilateralism, in strict adherence to universal human rights and international humanitarian law. In our view, these are the preconditions for promoting a common understanding of the current security challenges and for making progress towards our goal of achieving sustainable international peace and security. The United Nations is the key actor in effective multilateralism. In these complex and troubled times, the role of the Organization is essential and must be made increasingly relevant in order to address common security challenges, manage shared

disarmament responsibilities and devise collective non-proliferation actions.

Portugal reaffirms its commitment to the common objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. While this goal is a moral imperative, the way to realistically achieve it remains an open question. In our view, a progressive approach combining parallel and simultaneous effective measures, both legal and non-legal, while taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, continues to be the best way to make concrete progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations. However, such negotiations should not undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.

The inability to reach a consensus on a final document at last year's NPT Review Conference is deeply regrettable, but it should not detract from the credibility and relevance of the Treaty itself. We would like to stress the importance of achieving a substantial outcome during the next NPT review cycle, as well as the understanding that its three pillars — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — must be promoted equally and in a balanced way. Portugal therefore reiterates its appeal to all States that have not yet done so to accede without delay to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The recent nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — its second this year and fifth overall — is a deeply troubling development that was firmly condemned by the Portuguese Government. This new provocation by the regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a violation of several Security Council resolutions and poses a very grave threat to regional and international peace, underscoring the urgency of achieving a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We urge North Korea to refrain from conducting any further nuclear tests, cease all nuclear activities, implement the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of 19 September 2005, and return to the NPT and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — a Treaty that regrettably has not yet entered into force. The current moratorium on nuclear tests cannot replace a universal legally binding instrument that is in force. Portugal therefore continues to urge the

countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so, in particular the annex 2 countries.

However, we must recognize that there have been some successes over the past two decades. Besides the almost universal moratorium, progress was made on accomplishing the verification and monitoring systems to ensure that nuclear tests do not go undetected. We also welcome the recent ratification of the CTBT by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland as important steps towards the universalization of the Treaty.

Portugal takes this opportunity to express its support for the ongoing implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme. This historic agreement proves that highly complex issues can indeed be resolved through diplomacy if there is the political will and determination to do so.

In our view, there is a clear need for multilateral disarmament negotiations to move forward in an inclusive way. Created in 1978, the Conference on Disarmament clearly upheld this need, which was expressed in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2). However, 16 years have passed since the Conference's membership was last increased. Since then, the door has remained closed to the admission of additional States such as mine, which throughout the years have reaffirmed their interest and willingness in becoming full members of the Conference. Besides the issue of membership enlargement, the Conference remains in an agonizing stalemate, requiring a renewed commitment and constructive joint efforts to overcome it.

It is also certain that in a number of crucial areas, the framework of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, norms and regimes continues to be strengthened. We commend the work being carried out in Syria by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations, in a very complex and challenging security situation. Despite the Organization's continued efforts, the Syrian authorities have yet to provide sufficient, verifiable evidence that they no longer possess chemical-weapons capabilities and that they have fully declared their chemical-weapons programme and completely dismantled it. It is now widely recognized that the international community lacks a precise, credible and complete picture of the Syrian chemical programme,

whose definitive dismantling remains a priority and is possible only if based on the cooperation of all parties.

In Libya, we welcome the recent removal and destruction of the declared chemical materials through the coordinated efforts of the international community and the OPCW. This is a very positive development for the stability of Libya and the entire region.

On a less positive note, however, the possibility of non-State actors gaining access to means and expertise related to the different types of weapons of mass destruction remains particularly disquieting. The international community must urgently and effectively address this threat.

The negotiation and entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was in itself a major achievement for the international community, setting the standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms. All efforts must now be focused on the Treaty's implementation and universalization. The second Conference of States Parties to the ATT, held last August, was an important step in that direction. Once again, Portugal renews its appeal to all States not yet parties to the Treaty to ratify and accede to it as soon as feasible. On behalf of my country, I would like to particularly highlight the need for the implementation of the ATT provision on gender-based violence, as part of the broader effort to include a gender perspective in disarmament discussions.

The illicit trafficking and production of small arms and light weapons have a significant human cost and fuel crime, terrorism, conflict and regional instability, threatening international peace and security as a whole. My country is contributing to several European Union (EU) initiatives and programmes to reinforce capacities to address this trafficking, including the EU-funded iTrace initiative, and fully supports the United Nations instruments designed to prevent, combat and eradicate the diversion of and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their munitions.

As pointed out in recent reports, the use of cluster munitions deserves our strongest condemnation, and it is with great concern that we face the possible use of those weapons by State and non-State actors. The same applies to the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices, particularly in densely populated areas.

As new challenges emerge, we should consider how the existing disarmament and non-proliferation

instruments can be improved. With regard to current and future developments related to the so-called new-era warfare tools, notably armed drones, fully autonomous weapons, the offensive use of cyberspace and the militarization of outer space, we encourage the continuation of ongoing international work on them, at both the political and technical levels.

From weather forecasting to arms-control-treaty verification, we have become increasingly reliant on space applications. As human space activities steadily increase every year, so too does the need to ensure that they are safe, secure and sustainable. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty next year, Portugal continues to support multilateral and inclusive efforts towards that end.

Finally, while recalling the resolutions adopted during the thirty-second International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, I would like to reiterate Portugal's unequivocal support for taking into account and upholding the principles of humanitarian and human rights law in all disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and initiatives. The Organization's fundamental principles demand nothing less.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that context, I remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

**Ms. Yoon Seoungmee** (Republic of Korea): I would like to speak in exercise of the right of reply in response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's remarks, which are misleading to member States.

It is North Korea — not any other State — that threatens the peace and security in our region and beyond. North Korea has carried out five nuclear tests, five long-range ballistic-missile tests, as well as multiple short- and mid-range ballistic-missile launches. This year alone, North Korea conducted two nuclear tests and fired 22 ballistic missiles of all types, which means that, on average, it has fired almost one ballistic missile every 10 days.

North Korea uses the so-called hostile policy from our side as a pretext to justify its nuclear and missile-development programme. Contrary to its argument, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America have made it clear that the two countries do not have a hostile policy towards North Korea and

have remained open to dialogue on many occasions, including through the 2015 United States-Republic of Korea Joint Statement on North Korea.

I would like to clarify that the Republic of Korea-United States military exercises have been conducted annually for several decades to respond to the military threat from North Korea and are purely defensive in nature. These exercises are designed to enhance our combined readiness to defend against the clear and present military threats posed by North Korea. These exercises have also been conducted in a transparent manner, with prior notification delivered to North Korea and under the observation of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. The armed forces of all other countries also conduct military exercises. North Korea is no exception.

North Korea has made it clear that what it has long claimed to be a satellite launch is, in fact, an intercontinental ballistic missile by publicly stating earlier this year that it is ready to mount nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles. As such, it is now clear that the true intention behind North Korea's launches of so-called rockets or satellites was not for the peaceful uses of outer space but for the development of long-range ballistic-missile-type capability. In this regard, the relevant Security Council resolutions have made it clear that North Korea is not entitled to any launch that uses ballistic-missile technology.

Lastly, I would like to remind the North Korean delegation of the pledge that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made 25 years ago, in May 1991, when it joined the United Nations, that it would abide by the decisions of the Security Council, pursuant to Article 25 of Charter of the United Nations. North Korea now needs to show that, as a State Member of the United Nations, it honours and is implementing that pledge.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply to the comments that were made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Earlier today we heard a hypocritical, delusional diatribe from the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and I think that it should be clear to all in this room that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the clear and present danger to peace and security on the Korean peninsula. As President Obama has said, the United States condemns



in the strongest terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear-missile tests, which threaten international peace and security. The latest test — the second this year — follows an unprecedented campaign of launches of ballistic missiles, which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself says 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.

These provocations serve only to increase the international community's resolve to counter the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's prohibited activities, including through implementing existing Security Council sanctions and seeking new sanctions. We have consistently made clear that we will accept neither North Korea as a nuclear State nor North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons. As President Obama has made clear, we will respond resolutely to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's defiance of its international commitment and obligations.

Our commitment to the defence of our allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan, in the face of such threats remains iron-clad. We remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies, using all the capabilities at our disposal. We continue to call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to end its destabilizing and threatening behaviour and to abide by its international obligations and commitments.

In the interest of time, I will not respond to the issue of the military exercises. I think that my colleague from the Republic of Korea has addressed them more than adequately.

**Mr. Ri Tong Il** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to exercise its right of reply with regard to the remarks made by the representatives of the United States and South Korea.

The United States and South Korea have condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-defensive nuclear and ballistic-rocket development and so-called recent provocations. Our delegation totally rejects such remarks as ridiculous arguments that distort reality and mislead the world.

The present situation on the Korean peninsula is an extremely explosive one, and no one can predict when it will in fact explode. The question is, who is responsible for creating that situation? The responsibility lies with

none other than the United States. For over half of a century, the United States has maintained its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and has been posing a serious nuclear threat to and using blackmail against our people.

Threats and blackmail by the United States began during the Korean war in the 1950s and were followed by the deployment of the first war-ready nuclear weapons in South Korea in 1957. Subsequently, in the 1970s, more than 1,000 nuclear weapons — more than enough to totally destroy the entire Korean peninsula several times over — were deployed. For over half a century, the United States has shipped into South Korea almost every kind of nuclear strategic asset and staged large-scale joint military exercises every year, mobilizing hundreds if not thousands of military troops ready to invade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any time. By 2002, the United States had already designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of the axis of evil and a target for a pre-emptive nuclear attack. The United States is not hiding the fact that the purpose of the large-scale joint military exercises is to decapitate the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and occupy the whole of Korea.

The United States recently officially decided to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence anti-missile system in South Korea, while introducing three key strategic means of nuclear attack in and around the Korean peninsula. These steps suggest that the pre-emptive attack plan of the United States for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is entering its final stages. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no other choice but to go nuclear in order to protect the country's sovereignty, dignity and right to exist from the constant nuclear threats of the United States.

This reality shows that the United States has compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to go nuclear. Nevertheless, the Security Council declared that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing nuclear ballistic-missile-related activities are a clear threat to international peace and security, even if the recent so-called Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) was fabricated to antagonize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

With regard to the content of that resolution, there is no provision in the Charter of the United Nations or under international law that stipulates that nuclear and

ballistic-rocket activities pose a threat to international peace and security. Those countries that have been conducting those activities long before the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have never been challenged in the Security Council for those activities. One might then ask, on what grounds and with what authority did the Security Council adopt the resolution prohibiting nuclear and ballistic-rocket activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea? If the Security Council has such grounds and authority, why is it that it does not take issue with those countries that conduct the same nuclear and ballistic-rocket launch activities? In that regard, five months ago, we presented an official set of relevant questions to the Secretariat, but we have yet to receive a response.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has asked the Security Council twice this year to hold an emergency meeting on the United States-South Korea large-scale joint military exercises that are posing great threats to international peace and security, but it turned a blind eye to those requests. The Security Council sanctions resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, fabricated by the United States, are criminal documents that lack impartiality, legality and morality. The United States has no moral standing to force the States Members of the United Nations to implement such groundless, unfair and unjust resolutions, and Member States have no moral obligation to do so willingly.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will take further measures to expand the State's nuclear force in terms of quantity and quality in order to safeguard its dignity and right to existence and to ensure genuine peace in the face of the growing threats of nuclear war from the United States. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not make nuclear weapons to be recognized by the United States, but by developing nuclear weapons we possess a nuclear deterrent to counter long-standing nuclear blackmail from the United States.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation takes the floor to exercise its right of reply to the statement made by the representative of Georgia.

Once again, the Georgians have made insinuations about what happened in August 2008 with regard to the establishment of two independent States, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Russian Federation would like to

remind the First Committee members that the reason for the separation of two national territories from Georgia and the establishment there of new States was the hostile policy directed at those territories by the regime in power in Tbilisi at the time.

With regard to the mention of acts of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, such statements have nothing to do with what is in fact occurring on the ground. Such comments by Georgia, or by any other State for that matter, cast doubt upon the rest of the statement made by the representative of Georgia and undermine trust in the words spoken by Georgian diplomats in general. As all of us know, trust is one of the most important conditions for working together in the First Committee, especially on such sensitive issues as arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**Ms. Yoon Seoungmee** (Republic of Korea): North Korea must realize that it is not an outside force but rather its own reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons that threatens its survival. As long as North Korea continues to pursue its nuclear and missile programmes, the international community's sanctions will be maintained and strengthened. That will make the development of the North Korean economy more difficult by further isolating its economy.

In addition, committing such a huge amount of financial and material resources, not to the improvement of the quality of life of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through economic development, but to the development of its nuclear-missile programmes, will increase the hardship that its people will have to bear. Again, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must fully understand that it cannot obtain anything by developing its nuclear programme and continuing its provocative acts.

**Mrs. Imnadze** (Georgia): I would like to respond to the statement by the representative of the Russian Federation with regard to Georgia.

It is a well-known fact that, in 2008, Russia invaded and occupied my country. Furthermore, Russia has not complied with the provisions of the 2008 ceasefire agreement brokered by the European Union, and it still has not pledged the non-use of force and the return of hundreds of thousands of Georgians to their places of origin. Moreover, the Russian Federation maintains thousands of troops and advanced weapons systems in Georgia without the consent of the

Georgian Government and contrary to the provisions of the Constitution of Georgia. I would remind First Committee members that the ceasefire agreement was signed by the Russian President. The Russian Federation has only to honour its international commitments. We continue to call on the Russian Federation to withdraw all of its occupation forces from the territory of Georgia without any further delay.

**Mr. Ri In Il** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once more totally rejects South Korea's remarks as ridiculous arguments that distort reality and mislead the world. We have already articulated our position, so there is no need to repeat it. However, one thing that I must clarify is that South Korea is a colony of the United States, and that long ago it handed over military control and the power of its own forces — a symbol of sovereignty — to the United States. Now, it is simply a faithful servant serving its master as it makes its strategic war moves against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Among the 193 States Members of the United Nations gathered here, there is no other country like South Korea, which has relinquished its military control and power — the symbol of State sovereignty — to outside forces. South Korea is viciously involved in implementing shameful pro-United States policies and participating in a conspiracy by cooperating with the

United States in manoeuvres against men and women of its own country. South Korea has no right to talk about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear, ballistic and ballistic-rocket issue or about peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Once again, I would like to draw Committee members' attention to the fact that the statement made in right of reply by the representative of Georgia confirms what I said with regard to trusting statements made by Georgian diplomats.

I would like to remind the Committee that, on 8 August 2008, it was the Georgian authorities themselves that launched military operations against South Ossetia that bordered on the genocide of an entire people. The former leader of Georgia, Mr. Saakashvili, who issued the criminal order to attack on 8 August 2008, is now the target of an international arrest warrant. I would like to underscore that the warrant was issued at the request of the authorities of Georgia itself. The current Georgian authorities now recognize the criminality of the act carried out by Mr. Saakashvili's former regime and accept Georgia's guilt for what occurred in 2008 and its consequences, including the establishment of the two independent States that resulted from that criminal military act.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*