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Seventy-first session

First Committee

6th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: Although the practice has been to limit statements to 10 minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 15 minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations, all delegations taking the floor at this meeting are asked to kindly limit their statements to 8 minutes and 13 minutes, respectively. I count on members' cooperation.

Mr. Van Der Kwast (Netherlands): Allow me, first, to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship, and also to congratulate the Bureau. You yourself have a long tradition in disarmament, which I think will help our work here. You can count on the full support of my delegation.

The Netherlands remains fully committed to the goal of a world in which nuclear weapons have been permanently and irreversibly abolished. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament structure and deserves our full support. Article VI of the NPT guides our disarmament efforts, providing the legal framework through which to reach global zero. We work towards its implementation through effective measures. Examples are the fissile material cut-off treaty and the verification resolutions. I will elaborate further on nuclear issues during the thematic debate.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which came into effect in January this year, reinforces the viability of the rules-based non-proliferation regime established by the NPT. It also demonstrates the power of multilateral nuclear diplomacy. The Netherlands calls on Iran to continue to adhere to its commitments under the JCPOA, including the provisional application of the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement.

A low point was reached on 6 January with the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That test was followed by multiple ballistic missile tests, and ultimately another nuclear test on 9 September. The Netherlands condemns that provocative behaviour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the strongest terms. The regime should fully comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, implement the NPT and subject all its installations to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

The eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction will take place later this year. An ambitious outcome that reflects present-day scientific developments and threats and improves the effectiveness and scope of the Treaty is crucial. The Netherlands contributes to that both bilaterally and multilaterally, through confidence-building measures and through financial and in-kind support.

With regard to chemical weapons, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-

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United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism concluded in its third report that the Syrian regime is responsible for the use of chemical weapons in two of the cases investigated. We reiterate that those responsible must be held to account for those crimes. The Netherlands calls upon Syria to comply with all its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, to cooperate fully with the OPCW and to be completely open about the full scope of its chemical weapons programme.

The Netherlands assumed the presidency of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) after the successful 2015 Dubrovnik Review Conference. Our goals for the presidency were to build upon the Dubrovnik action plan through further universalization of the Convention, stronger implementation and promotion of adherence to the norms of non-use of cluster munitions. During the sixth Meeting of States Parties, a new political declaration was adopted by consensus. In that declaration we condemned any use of cluster munitions by any actor and introduced an end date. All parties to the Convention committed themselves to fulfil their obligations under the CCM by 2030.

The Netherlands emphasizes the role and importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which marks its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. The Register continues to be a great transparency and confidence-building measure in the field of the conventional arms trade, and we encourage all States to use this valuable instrument.

We are deeply concerned about the current financial situation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and especially about the possibility that there is not enough money available for the fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, to be held in Santiago de Chile. To reach our common goal of a mine-free world by 2025, much work still needs to be done and cannot be postponed. We therefore would like to call on all Member States and observer States to pay their contributions in full without delay so that the fifteenth Meeting of States Parties can go ahead as planned.

Now that the structure and organization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has been established, we face the most important challenge, which is to effectively

implement the Arms Trade Treaty and to work towards its universalization. To further increase the speed and quality of the Treaty's implementation by States parties and signatories, the Netherlands welcomes the recently established ATT trust fund. The Netherlands will contribute to this voluntary trust fund.

We greatly value the important international discussion about autonomous weapon systems. We therefore strongly call for the establishment of an open-ended group of governmental experts under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, as a next step in these discussions. The increasing availability of unmanned aerial vehicles, armed and unarmed, not only to States but also to non-State actors, is of concern to us. With regard to non-State actors, we see an increased risk for unmanned aerial vehicle proliferation among terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. The existing international legal framework applies to the use of armed drones. However, it is of the utmost importance that existing laws should be upheld and increased transparency should be provided with respect to export and usage. The Netherlands remains committed to an open international dialogue on this matter in order to guarantee transparent and responsible use.

The innumerable possibilities provided by the ever-increasing development of the cyberdomain spur development and connect people throughout the world. However, cyberspace can also be used, by both State and non-State actors, to threaten international security. In order to reduce the risk of that happening, the Netherlands promotes the applicability of international law, transparency and stability. We do so in many ongoing initiatives, such as in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts. Protecting the core functionalities of this cyberdomain is of the utmost importance to ensure that all can reap its benefits.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is an acute problem that demands a speedy solution, as an increasing number of players are active in outer space. In the long run, the Netherlands sees benefits in a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. But negotiating a treaty takes time. In the meantime, therefore, we should consider voluntary guidelines which can be implemented immediately.

As I have just highlighted, there are many issues that demand our careful attention. We look forward to working together with you, Mr. Chair, during this session of the First Committee.

Mr. Camilo Diaz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. I offer you my delegation's support so that we can successfully conclude our work. I should also like to express gratitude to your predecessor, His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, for his leadership and his good offices during the previous session.

As everyone is aware, we are continuing the negotiation process to finalize as soon as possible a concluding agreement to put an end to the conflict and to build a stable and lasting peace with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). We are convinced that we need to put an end to the last remaining internal conflict in the Americas, and one of the few that still exist in the world. I will focus on four specific issues in my statement. They are: anti-personnel mines, conventional weapons, cluster munitions, and weapons of mass destruction.

Turning to the first issue — comprehensive action against mines — after three years of very complex negotiations with the armed group, we were able to reach a critical understanding at negotiations in Havana and to take a firm step forward in eradicating anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, unexploded ordnance, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war in general. Colombia reaffirms at the domestic level its historic commitment to the international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control regime. In addition, I should like to highlight the central role that the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has played in building trust between my Government and the FARC-EP. The parties agreed to mitigate, without delay, the pernicious effects of anti-personnel mines. The Government, the armed forces, civil society, demining organizations, humanitarian demining organizations and the guerrillas, working together, agreed to clean up by 2021 199 highly contaminated municipalities, accounting for 60 per cent of the mined territory in Colombia. Our goal is to declare those municipalities mine-free and

thereby to substantially improve living conditions for the affected communities.

The second issue I should like to touch upon is conventional weapons. I am pleased to inform the Committee that, in April this year, the Arms Trade Treaty was approved by Congress and is currently under constitutional review. For Colombia, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, ammunitions and explosives is what might be described as a cross-cutting problem, in that it interacts with other threats to international peace and security such as international terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

Our participation in international, hemispheric and subregional forums on conventional weapons is based on three guiding principles, that is, the inclusion of a prohibition on the transfer of such weapons to non-State actors; penalizing the illegal carrying of these weapons and illicit trade in them; and inter-institutional and international cooperation as well as exchange of information.

We have a commitment to fight the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives, and this has been reflected year after year through the submission of a draft resolution entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”. Last year, we submitted that resolution (resolution 70/49) together with South Africa and Japan; it highlights the need for States to step up their efforts to build national capacity so as to be able to effectively implement the Programme of Action.

The third issue is cluster munitions. We deposited our instrument of ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions with the Secretary-General on 1 March this year, thereby reinforcing our commitment to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and to outlawing the use of weapons with a humanitarian impact. We welcome the interest of the international community in prohibiting a category of weapons that has taken such a heavy toll in lives and aggravated conflicts, contrary to the tenets of international law. In addition, it bears repeating that eliminating this category of weapons is a moral obligation for the international community and will soon, we hope, be a legal obligation as well, incumbent on all States and rooted in solidarity and cooperation.

For a country such as my own, which envisions and longs for peace, the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a cause for concern. We work tirelessly with regional and other partners to build national capacities for controlling and monitoring radioactive and chemical substances and biological agents. And we are part of the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation and have done so in a range of forums, including the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Conference of States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

We support initiatives to achieve the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, and we are concerned about the possible proliferation of such weapons to non-State actors. We call for compliance with the obligations set out in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). That resolution is extremely important because it effectively complements the legally binding instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Colombia, with the support of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism and pursuant to resolutions subsequent to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), has therefore prepared a national action plan to strengthen its national capacities with a view to ensuring the effective application of the resolution in our country.

My country voted in favour of resolution 70/33, which established an Open-ended Working Group to substantively address the question of effective and specific measures, provisions and legal norms that would need to be adopted to establish and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. We welcome the possibility of establishing complementary processes between the Working Group and the Disarmament Commission in order to contribute to the discussion and to develop relevant recommendations for the General Assembly. We invite all Member States to actively participate in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group.

We will continue to work effectively and inclusively in the Open-ended Working Group and in many other forums, including the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, to achieve the sole objective of benefit to all humankind, a goal that the United Nations set for itself 70 years ago, which is to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

For Colombia all disarmament and non-proliferation efforts need to be supported by inclusive measures, confidence-building, transparency and ongoing dialogue. That will not be possible without the will and flexibility of the nuclear-weapon States. Moreover, no peace effort will take on its full meaning if humankind continues to have to deal with the threat of nuclear weapons.

Finally, despite the results of the referendum that was held on 2 October, in which our citizens rejected the approval of the Peace Agreement signed with FARC-EP, Colombia continues to be committed to negotiating and seeking peace as a means of ensuring an inclusive and united society in which challenges are addressed with solidarity, under the rule of law, and with respect for differences.

The Chair: I take this opportunity to congratulate Colombia and President Santos Calderón on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. I hope it will be a good omen for everyone in Colombia, and elsewhere in the world, looking for peaceful solutions. Perhaps this will be an inspiration even for us here in the First Committee.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of my delegation's fullest support in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Bangladesh aligns 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).

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is anchored in our Constitution and remains a fundamental pursuit of our foreign policy objectives. That perhaps explains why Bangladesh has usually been one of the first to come forward in South Asia in assuming obligations under all major multilateral disarmament treaties.

For obvious reasons, we note with concern some egregious political rhetoric emanating from our region in recent times on the possible threats of using nuclear weapons. Even as we wish to believe any such fall-out to be a remote possibility, the inherent danger underlying such threats can only further escalate regional tension and a sense of insecurity. We remain convinced that the ultimate guarantee of peace and security in our region, and in other parts of the world, can be ensured only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that to be the resounding message we heard on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which we observed here on 26 September.

There is no doubt in our mind that all responsible Member States share a firm commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. There are, however, divergences of views on the ways, means and pace of achieving that objective. That is perhaps to be expected in a multilateral system striving to uphold a rules-based system in a rather volatile international context. We are therefore inclined to hear all the diverse views and approaches, and we would favour a way forward that is built on synthesizing the various approaches culminating in our shared objective.

In the course of a sustained preoccupation with the nuclear disarmament agenda on the part of Member States, we have indeed gathered sufficient understanding and insight into the complexities involved to propel us into meaningful action. Yet despite our professed political will, we have reached a stage where we have allowed the United Nations disarmament machinery to yield no tangible results for decades, resulting in a deepening sense of frustration and insecurity all round. There is perhaps no compelling reason for us to point the finger at a large part of the membership for seeking alternative, yet legitimate, routes for getting us out of this impasse.

We as a delegation make no mistake in recognizing the steady nuclear arms reduction efforts by two of the major nuclear-weapon-possessing States. Like many others, however, we share concerns over the pace and progress of such reductions — and more so with the backdrop of continued qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. We hear arguments in favour of retaining nuclear weapons in the interests of strategic stability, and yet we see regular cases being made about the alleged actions or designs to undermine any such notion of stability by one actor

or the other. Perhaps in parallel measures we witness the proliferation of a number of exclusive groups or initiatives that tend to prescribe the norms and standards for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, maintaining the so-called prerogatives of the nuclear-weapon States.

It is our contention that the notions of stability, security and deterrence from a strategic point of view are not necessarily premised on the possession of nuclear weapons. The claim of having the right international environment for renouncing nuclear weapons would perhaps be short-lived, since the perception of any such favourable situation would most likely be clouded by subjective interpretations. From our vantage point, with three nuclear-weapon States in our neighbourhood, any tenuous notion of security assurance provided by nuclear weapons pales vastly in comparison with the humanitarian exigencies resulting from the use, or even the threat of use, of nuclear weapons.

It is crucial to recognize that, without universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament, the threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism are likely to persist notwithstanding all efforts at finding solutions, imposing sanctions or building firewalls. Bangladesh has therefore always joined others in advocating a mutually reinforcing implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with matching priority given to both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Likewise, we have consistently supported the call for a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that addresses the entire spectrum of issues concerned. Pending such a development, we remain open to exploring other possibilities that can essentially serve as building blocks towards that goal and also complement the existing legal regime, particularly the NPT provisions. We believe certain new approaches being brought to the table for negotiations in this Committee should merit our consideration from that perspective.

In the same spirit, we recognize Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), adopted last month, as yet another shot in the arm for promoting the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We remain seriously concerned about recurrent reports of the conduct of nuclear tests, which casts a shadow over the overall security situation in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

We are similarly concerned about reports of the continued use of chemical weapons in a protracted conflict situation in the Middle East, and flag our abiding support for any constructive initiative to investigate such reports, eliminate any remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles and ensure accountability for those responsible for such use, if proven beyond reasonable doubt.

We are equally disturbed by the grievous harm caused by the use of improvised explosive devices in populated areas, particularly in the same conflict situation. The chilling prospect of terrorists and other non-State actors seeking and obtaining access to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is perhaps becoming more real than previously assumed. With rapid progress in new technologies, including nanotechnology and artificial intelligence, there is the potential for such threats to be further aggravated.

Without causing undue alarm, it is perhaps advisable to further mainstream these issues into our discussions in the First Committee and other relevant forums. We see merit in a recent proposal for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to consider negotiating an international instrument on suppressing acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

In Bangladesh, as we enlarge our initiatives to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development purposes, we remain committed to working with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other international partners in ensuring due diligence in nuclear safety and security. We look forward to the Nuclear Security Summit to be convened by IAEA later this year to mobilize further international support for ensuring nuclear security across the board, including in the area of cyberoperation of nuclear facilities.

With our development pursuits now gradually extending to the oceans and outer space, Bangladesh is taking a greater interest in preventing an arms race in those domains, including through a legal codification of norms. While trust and confidence-building measures can be useful for preventing the weaponization of outer space, there is no denying the importance of concluding an international, legally binding instrument to this effect under the purview of the CD.

Bangladesh is considering the possible ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty as we continue to attend the meetings of the States parties in our capacity as

an observer. We appreciate the consensus reached at the sixth Biennial Meeting on Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in June. The recognition of the emerging threats posed by new technologies in manufacturing and reproducing small arms and light weapons should help gear up international cooperation efforts to prevent such proliferation, especially in resource-constrained settings. In that context, we reiterate our appreciation for the support we continue to receive from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Development in Asia and the Pacific, based in Kathmandu.

As a nation in transition, Bangladesh has a legitimate interest in aligning itself with the cause of general and complete disarmament and exhorting the channelling of the massive resources deployed for an arms build-up to the deserving concerns of sustainable development and sustaining peace. In our modest way, we have continued to make efforts to exert moral leadership for collective international action to combat poverty, hunger and the impacts of climate change. In a similar fashion, we will continue to pursue the disarmament agenda within the United Nations and beyond. Our record of refraining from voting against any draft resolution or motion in the First Committee perhaps speaks for itself.

The Chair: This morning we had good news for Colombia and President Santos Calderón. I have more news now, but it is sad news. I have just received the information that Girma Asmerom Tesfay, the Permanent Representative of Eritrea and our personal friend, has passed away. On behalf of all the membership of the First Committee I present my sincere, heartfelt condolences to Girma's family and to Eritrea. May his soul rest in peace.

Mr. Shutenko (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. I look forward to a constructive and results-oriented dialogue during our meeting today.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Ukraine consistently supports a multilateral approach to the disarmament and international security agenda. We recognize the difficulties in implementing existing international treaties and bringing new ones

into force, as well as the deadlock in the disarmament negotiations. Nevertheless, my country remains fully committed to maintaining and strengthening the current disarmament machinery and international cooperation. We strive to reinforce the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We share the view that the use of nuclear weapons is the most serious threat that humankind faces at present. We believe that it is essential to strengthen international cooperation in order to reinforce the existing international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Even though affected by the Russian military aggression and occupation of its territories in violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Ukraine continues to regard the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We comprehensively support its effective implementation, further strengthening and universalization. Ukraine consistently stands for reducing nuclear arsenals, halting the modernization of nuclear weapons, and decreasing the role of nuclear weapons in the military and strategic doctrines of States.

The historic decision of my country to renounce its nuclear weapons and to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State was primarily based on the clear international security guarantees provided by the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, signed by Ukraine, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation. The signatories of the Memorandum reaffirmed their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and undertook never to use their weapons against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We deem it necessary to re-emphasize that the Memorandum was signed in connection with Ukraine's commitments to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within a specified period. As a result, we gave up all our nuclear arsenals. And now, in return, our sovereignty and territorial integrity are expressly violated by the Russian Federation, one of the guarantor States under the Budapest Memorandum. We take the position that this Memorandum is valid and should be adhered to by all its State signatories.

Meanwhile, we understand the vital importance of further negotiating a legally binding multilateral

document on security assurances provided for the non-nuclear-weapon States. We should use all existing institutional mechanisms to promote the consideration and eventual fulfilment of this goal. In that regard, the NPT review process could provide one of the appropriate forums for conducting the related negotiations.

The other relevant forum for the negotiations could be the Conference on Disarmament (CD). But, to our great disappointment, we witnessed the inability of the CD Member States to engineer a real breakthrough during the 2016 session, a breakthrough that would enable it to fulfil its mandate. Ukraine appeals for greater political will to be shown in disarmament efforts. Ways of unblocking the negotiation process within the CD framework must be found. We believe that, despite the protracted period of foot-dragging, the forum's potential has not yet been exhausted, and that the CD Member States will show the necessary keenness to consolidate efforts in order to overcome the existing stalemate.

Russia seized Ukraine's nuclear facilities, installations and materials located in Crimea. The aggressor State declares its right to deploy nuclear weapons, restoring Soviet-era nuclear storage facilities and deploying the means of their delivery on the peninsula. The eventual implementation of those plans will violate the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It engenders the risk of further endeavours in this sphere. We should always remember that Ukraine's Crimea is occupied by Russia and is a place for military experiments now. Moreover, Russia's decision to suspend the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement is one more piece of evidence that the Kremlin is keen on accelerating a new arms race. Crimea, which had beautiful sea resorts before the occupation, now provides a launching site for the Russian military.

We express our strong protest against such actions. The ongoing aggression has left the radionuclide sources in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions without due control. The many high-risk sites of the chemical industry were destroyed as a result of Russian military aggression. The current situation is highly vulnerable to the perpetration of terrorist acts, including the use of hazardous chemicals, dangerous pathogens or radioactive material. It also gives much food for thought about real and potential threats far beyond the region.

In such a toxic environment Ukraine attaches great importance to maintaining the highest standards of nuclear safety and security. Over the past two years, Ukraine has significantly improved and strengthened the national regime for the physical protection of its facilities and material. Comprehensive plans of action in case of sabotage and crisis were developed and introduced at all Ukrainian nuclear power plants. The projects for the modernization of systems of physical protection of nuclear facilities were thoroughly examined and updated. A national integrated nuclear security support plan for the period 2016-2018 was developed.

Besides taking all the necessary national measures to ensure the highest level of physical protection of its nuclear facilities and material, Ukraine fully performs its international obligations in the area of nuclear safety and security. We make every effort to prevent and avert all possible attempts of terrorists to conduct subversive activities against nuclear power plants and other critical nuclear infrastructure. The State system of physical protection of nuclear sites functions in a high-alert mode, and the plans for interaction between Ukrainian State bodies are put into action in case of subversion.

Ukraine is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles and goals enshrined in the final documents of the Nuclear Security Summits of 2010-2016. We welcome the decision to establish a contact group aimed at advancing the implementation of the nuclear security commitments.

Ukraine supports the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and considers that its entry into force will constitute a tangible stride towards attaining the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. In that respect, Ukraine supported the joint ministerial statement issued at the eighth CTBT Ministerial Meeting, on 21 September 2016, as well as, in its capacity as a non-permanent member State, Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), adopted on 23 September.

We are encouraged by the fact that the CTBT has been signed by 183 States and ratified by 166 States, including 36 of the 44 annex 2 States, whose ratification is needed for its entry into force. While we believe that the nuclear-test moratorium voluntarily declared by different States plays a necessary role, it is not sufficient and will never replace the legally binding nature of the CTBT. Therefore, Ukraine calls upon

all States that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT, in particular the eight remaining annex 2 States, to do so without delay. The fifth nuclear test announced by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — following its nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013 — on 6 January 2016 proves the urgent necessity of the entry into force of the CTBT and its universalization.

We continue to insist that negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) will be essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. Ukraine strongly appeals for States to find common ground on the issue of existing fissile material stocks and the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT.

Addressing the enormous destructive power of conventional armaments continues to be of the utmost importance for the international community, especially in the context of regional security. Today we must tackle the issue of the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of conventional arms with the highest level of responsibility. The Russian military aggression against Ukraine with the use of regular military forces armed with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition has significantly damaged the existing system of conventional arms control. The Russian Federation continues its massive transfers of military goods to our territory, to both Crimea and eastern Ukraine, through Kremlin-controlled channels, thus deliberately destabilizing not only the subregion but the security of the entire European area. It totally ignores persistent calls from the international community to establish effective border controls.

During numerous specific meetings, we have brought photographic proof of weapons and equipment on our territory that only Russian forces possess, including versions of the T-72 and T-90 tank, armoured personnel carrier BTR-82A, the so-called Pantsir-S1 air defence system, Radar Zoopark-1, Grad-K rocket systems and the tragically remembered BUK-M1. We have no right to be blind with regard to illicit supplies of conventional weapons from the Russian Federation to Ukraine.

Ukraine condemns the conduct of the military exercise "Caucasus 2016", which is being held in the occupied territories and near the border of Ukraine. From 25 to 31 August, Russia moved in a south-western direction a joint military force made up of approximately 100,000 soldiers, including 41,000

near the borders of Ukraine, together with more than 2,500 combat vehicles, 60 ships and 400 aircraft and helicopters. Command and staff exercises by the 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the Russian occupation troops in Donbas were held from 5 to 9 September. Such a practice has recently become regular.

Most members know of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Their daily reports clearly show evidence of Russian military activity in the east of my country, which the United Nations has also noted. Over the past weekend, the Special Monitoring Mission reported more than 700 explosions in the Donbas region of Ukraine. Similar reports with similar numbers have been issued every day since the start of the Monitoring Mission.

Ukraine recognizes the important role of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) in addressing post-conflict remedial measures in order to minimize the occurrence, risk and effects of explosive remnants of war. As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction for more than 10 years, Ukraine acknowledges its fundamental role in minimizing the occurrence, risk and effects of landmines. Despite facing current significant security challenges owing to the hybrid war waged against our country, Ukraine fully complies with its obligations under those treaties.

As a result of the Russian armed aggression and the offensives carried out by the Russian-controlled illegal armed groups operating in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, our country is having to deal with a drastically increased number of dangerous explosive remnants of war, which cause severe casualties among civilians, including children. These explosive remnants of war, as well as anti-personnel mines with indiscriminate effects, are planted by illegal armed groups in residential areas and on roads linking inhabited areas, thereby violating the Convention. They pose more threat to the civilian population than to military personnel. Ukraine believes it is vitally important for the international community to make every effort to ensure the proper implementation of the CCW and the Mine-Ban Treaty. Ukraine attaches

great importance to further deepening cooperation with international partners in this field.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to remind delegations to kindly limit their statements to 10 minutes when speaking in a national capacity, as we agreed at the beginning of our work in the First Committee.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): Permit me to begin by saying that I, like you, Mr. Chair, am profoundly shocked to learn of the untimely passing of our dear friend and colleague Girma Asmeron Tesfay, Permanent Representative of Eritrea, and wish to convey my deepest condolences to his Government, his colleagues at the Permanent Mission and, above all, to his family and friends.

I align my statement with those delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

I also wish to warmly congratulate you, Ambassador Boukadoum, and the other members of the Bureau on your successful elections to steer the work of the First Committee throughout this session. You can be assured of my delegation's full support as you guide our deliberations.

Our discussions this year take place against the backdrop of a continuation of heightened security concerns and anxieties throughout the world. The pervasive and seemingly intractable nature of the security threats that confront us stand as stark reminders to us, as an international community, that our duties and obligations with regard to maintaining international peace and security impose a heavy responsibility that is not to be taken lightly. As we consider our agenda, we must not only reflect on those challenges but strengthen our resolve to effectively respond to them. For my delegation, that remains at the forefront of our approach to the work of the First Committee.

We must also be conscious of the fact that our citizens cannot live meaningful, productive lives if they do not live in peaceful, secure environments. Consequently, at each juncture our deliberations must be grounded in the reality that our actions must positively impact and transform the lives of ordinary citizens. To that end, our deliberations must continue to be informed by the recognition that there is a mutually reinforcing and indivisible relationship between peace and security and disarmament and development. We are mindful that that

fundamental and integral relationship should underpin our actions as an international community. Unless we are prepared to confront and address the root causes of conflict, then efforts to respond to the social, economic and political factors that sow the seeds of discontent and insecurity will be futile.

As my own Prime Minister reiterated in his policy statement to the General Assembly recently (see A/71/PV.18), we cannot expect to secure sustainable peace and security without creating the enabling economic conditions that will present opportunities to empower individuals. As we have collectively underscored with the adoption of Agenda 2030, a multifaceted and multidimensional approach is central to our attempts to arrest the causes of instability and insecurity in our societies. My delegation is therefore reassured by the Secretary-General's report (A/71/152) entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", which outlines the areas in which work in this field is already being pursued. We are also encouraged by the ongoing efforts to strengthen inter-agency coordination and to integrate security-related themes into the follow-up to the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Our discussions must be open, honest and frank. They must place as much emphasis on the urgency of eliminating weapons of mass destruction as they do on controlling the proliferation, possession and use of illicit conventional arms. Jamaica reiterates its long-standing commitment to the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and has been fully supportive of efforts to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We participated actively in the inclusive work of the Open-ended Working Group and support the important recommendations contained in its report (see A/71/371), not least of which is the convening by the General Assembly of a conference in 2017 to commence negotiations on a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination. We remain convinced that pursuing a comprehensive prohibition on nuclear weapons is the next realistic step on our collective path to attain and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons.

Turning to conventional weapons, we welcome the outcome of the second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), as we seek to create a robust framework for the effective implementation of the Treaty. In the past year, we have undertaken a number of legislative and regulatory activities in support of our efforts to fully implement the Treaty.

We are particularly grateful for the assistance we have received from the European Union-Arms Trade Treaty implementation support programme.

Our efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are a top priority for our Government. Jamaica was honoured, therefore, to chair the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We view the ATT and the Programme of Action as complementary tools in our efforts to tackle the illicit trade in those weapons, which cause untold damage to our society and retard our developmental aspirations. We deem it of significance, therefore, that the outcome document of the sixth Meeting recognizes the link between illicit trade and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, it paves the way for the third Review Conference, which will take place in 2018, as we seek to reinvigorate the Programme of Action process.

The institutional framework for advancing discussions on disarmament and international peace and security must be responsive to the challenges of the present security environment. For that reason, we must ensure that the disarmament machinery functions fully and effectively. Where it is obvious that such effectiveness is compromised, we must be bold enough to take the kind of action that would enable us to remain true to our obligations to ensure that international peace and security can be maintained. For years, the Conference on Disarmament has been stymied in its efforts to address the issue of nuclear disarmament. Viable alternatives must be sought so that we are not lulled into inaction on account of a sole reliance on a mechanism whose work has been rendered ineffective for decades. We therefore concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that breaking the deadlock in the United Nations disarmament machinery and modernizing its approach are critical to enabling real progress.

The invaluable support provided by the Secretariat to Member States in building capacity to respond to challenges to international peace and security will remain critical to our collective endeavours. My delegation is therefore pleased to note from the Secretary-General's numerous reports of the work being done through the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme, the United Nations Institute

for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Regional Peace and Disarmament Centres and the range of other United Nations entities. Their work ensures that countries like mine can benefit from a broad span of technical and capacity-building support to effectively respond to our contemporary security challenges.

In that regard, I recognize and publicly acknowledge the assistance provided by the Regional Centres, which mark the thirtieth anniversary of their establishment this year. We well recall the early discussions and deliberations that informed the important role that the Centres could play in supporting and advancing the goal of maintaining international peace and security. We are appreciative of the work that the Centres have undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Africa.

There is also scope for cooperation between the United Nations and other entities charged with supporting and complementing disarmament efforts aimed at maintaining international peace and security. We look forward, therefore, to the introduction of the inaugural General Assembly draft resolution devoted to increased cooperation between the United Nations and INTERPOL. We also continue to value the support given by specialized agencies, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, which are broadening their outlook to determine how they can support the holistic approach to disarmament and development, of which I have already spoken.

My delegation is convinced that the First Committee is poised to make a difference. Let us ensure that the opportunity to do so is not only seized but fully maximized. You, Sir, can be assured of Jamaica's unswerving commitment in supporting that endeavour as we strive to have a world in which we can all coexist peacefully.

Mr. Cortorreal (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and myself, I should like to join in the expressions of sadness at the loss of the Permanent Representative of Eritrea.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 33 members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee for this session of the General

Assembly. We also express our appreciation to Ambassador Van Oosterom of the Netherlands for his work as Chair during the previous session.

Our region has a long-standing tradition of promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We are determined and firmly committed to the continued promotion of full and verifiable nuclear disarmament as the highest priority of our Community, as well as the need to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Today, CELAC reaffirms the need to advance towards the primary objective of nuclear disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, we oppose the enhancement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons as inconsistent with the obligation of nuclear disarmament. We also reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies.

The Community welcomes the discussions and conclusions of the three sessions of the Open-ended Working Group established by resolution 70/33 to develop proposals to substantively address concrete and effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that would need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

We are committed to a multilateral process to negotiate a legally binding instrument for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, as proposed at the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which was held in Vienna in December 2014. Such an instrument is a necessary measure to achieve nuclear disarmament and would fulfil the obligation of all the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as expressed in article VI of the Treaty. CELAC furthermore welcomes the report (see A/71/371) of the most recent session of the Open-ended Working Group, in August, in which the Group recommended that at this session of the General Assembly members should work on convening a conference in 2017 open to all States, international organizations and civil society for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons with a view to their total elimination.

We reiterate that the indefinite extension of the NPT, agreed upon at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, does not entitle any State to indefinitely possess nuclear weapons. We therefore reject the

assertion presented in the joint statement of the nuclear-weapon States on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), issued on 15 September, whereby those particular States maintained that their nuclear stockpile maintenance and stewardship programmes were consistent with NPT and CTBT objectives. In our opinion, that is an incorrect assertion.

On the twentieth anniversary of the CTBT, CELAC reiterates the vital importance and urgency of the early entry into force of that Treaty. We urge the annex 2 States, whose ratification is essential for the Treaty's entry into force, to accelerate the process of signing or ratifying this important international instrument as soon as possible. We also underline the urgent need for progress on this and other effective measures of nuclear disarmament so as to give effect to article VI of the NPT. CELAC calls upon all States to refrain from carrying out nuclear-weapon-test explosions, other nuclear explosions or any other non-explosive relevant experiment, including subcritical experiments, and those performed by super-computers for the improvement of nuclear weapons.

We celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and stress the importance and pioneering nature of this initiative to promote transparency and confidence-building measures. Its effectiveness is reflected in its close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We commend the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 and urge the continued engagement of all parties, and of the IAEA, towards its full implementation.

CELAC emphasizes that work must continue at the multilateral level within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It should be carried out in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner and should lead to the adoption of legally binding instruments on marking and tracing and illicit brokering, in order to prevent the diversion of small arms, light weapons and ammunition to the illicit market.

We take note of the outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, held in June, and thank Jamaica for its role as Chair of that process, as well as of the outcome of the second meeting of the Group of

Governmental Experts in June 2015. We look forward to the third Review Conference, to be held in 2018, so that we can address persistent challenges regarding the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We look forward to addressing the need for enhanced international cooperation and assistance, the implications of new developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing and the attendant risk of diversion to illicit markets.

CELAC member States acknowledge the difficulties inherent in dealing with the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, their parts, components and ammunition. The excessive accumulation of such weapons and their uncontrolled spread throughout many regions of the world give rise to a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic problems and pose serious threats to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development on many levels.

CELAC expects that the Arms Trade Treaty, the first legally binding instrument on the arms trade, can contribute to provide an effective response to the serious consequences of the illicit trafficking and non-regulated trade in arms. We venture to hope that the Treaty will contribute to the prevention of armed conflict, armed violence, and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. At the same time, in the light of its entry into force, in December 2014, we call for the Treaty to be applied in a balanced, transparent and objective manner and for the sovereign right of all States to ensure their self-defence to be respected, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The issue of anti-personnel landmines continues to require the attention of the international community. We recall with appreciation the proclamation of Central America as a mine-free zone. We recognize the value of the work performed by the United Nations Mine Action Service. We stress the importance of cooperation for humanitarian demining and assistance to victims and hope that the successes achieved in recent years will continue.

CELAC supports international efforts to mitigate the suffering caused by cluster munitions and to reduce their use against civilian populations, in clear violation

of international humanitarian law. We recognize and appreciate the wish of any State to take immediate action, in accord with multilaterally agreed norms, in response to humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. We recognize the ratification by Colombia, in September 2015, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the deposit by Cuba of its instrument of accession to the Convention in April 2016, and the establishment of Central America as a cluster-munitions-free zone during the fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Costa Rica in September 2014. We also take note of the outcome of the first Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention, which was held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in September 2015.

CELAC stresses its firm conviction that the complete elimination of chemical and biological weapons is a priority for disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of universal adherence by all States to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Furthermore, we highlight the importance of full compliance by all States parties with the provisions and requirements of those two instruments.

CELAC recognizes the very significant opportunities that are offered in the fields of information and communication technologies. We believe that those technologies can help to spur the social, economic and scientific development of nations.

We welcome the convening of the two sessions of the Open-ended Working Group to discuss the disarmament agenda and the possibility of establishing a preparatory committee for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We welcome the election of Ecuador as Chair of that Open-ended Working Group.

In conclusion, CELAC reaffirms the role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Once again, the Community expresses its deep regret that the CD has not yet been able to fulfil its mandate. CELAC also recognizes the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin

America and the Caribbean in providing assistance to the countries of the region to implement disarmament measures in a number of areas. As part of our commitment to the work carried out by the Regional Centre, the region will, during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, introduce a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean", which has been facilitated every year by Peru.

Mr. Brown (Liberia): My delegation joins in the expressions of deep condolence to the Government and the people of Eritrea and the bereaved family of the late Permanent Representative of that country.

I am honoured to address the First Committee for the first time and to both congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and assure you and other elected members of the Bureau of the support of the Liberian delegation.

Liberia associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2) and wishes to emphasize the following national perspectives.

We feel compelled again to insist that the attainment of peace and the maintenance of security cannot become a reality unless the forces responsible for raising the levels of nuclear-weapon-related anxieties are brought under some reasonable form of effective international control. Therefore, as important as unilateral and bilateral actions continue to be, Liberia believes the real fears posed by the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons are best addressed through multilateral approaches and actions. As together we can all become victims, so too must we stand together to remove that threat.

That is why Liberia was proud to join other countries in signing the Humanitarian Pledge against the use of nuclear weapons. We hope that the realization remains strong that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons presents our human family with its most serious existential threat, and our collective will to act against that threat must continue to be equally unwavering. And that is also why we were firm in our recent condemnation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear actions. The world does not need more nuclear tests. It needs more elimination of nuclear weapons.

Liberia is committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We believe, furthermore, that our support for the total elimination of nuclear weapons reflects an urgent and reasonable priority in the search for universal peace and security. We must not ignore, at our peril, the increasingly chilling and frightening consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Like many represented in this room, that real fear has emboldened us further to call on all States with nuclear weapons not only to fulfil all their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons but also to resist the temptation to undermine the efforts of the international community to realize the total elimination of nuclear weapons and its attendant threats to our peace and security.

Liberia shares the view that nuclear-weapon-free zones are indispensable to strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We therefore reaffirm the value of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, which cements Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We call for continued international support for further strengthening of the capacity of the Treaty of Pelindaba and the other nuclear-weapon-free-zones throughout the world.

Liberia recognizes the efforts of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). As a State party, we believe that scrupulous implementation of the ATT will assist States in their efforts to curb the illicit acquisition of small arms, light weapons and other conventional weapons. We continue to take national action in support of the ultimate goal of strengthening the legal regime of the conventional arms trade, so as to prevent the diversion of weapons to unauthorized recipients.

With the goal of preventing persons from trafficking in or gaining unauthorized access to weapons, the Liberian Government is working, in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to strengthen the capacities of security personnel tasked with patrolling our borders, especially in the wake of the assumption of full security responsibilities by Liberian securities from the United Nations Mission in Liberia on 30 June. My country has also passed into law the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act of 2015, which provides a legal framework for regulating the possession and use of small arms and light weapons.

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

In order to further curb the proliferation of conventional weapons, on 9 September 2016 the Government of Liberia declared full amnesty for all persons who surrender small arms and light weapons under the ECOWAS-European Union weapons collection programme. We know that such projects, which entail voluntary weapons surrender by civilians in targeted communities, will continue to contribute to the consolidation of peace in Liberia, as well as to the safety and security of our subregion.

The Liberian Government also supports the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Clearly, the Programme can assist in filling the technical and capacity gaps that could otherwise pose serious challenges to the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and other small-arms-related objectives.

Similarly, we know that strengthening State and civil-society partnerships and increasing international training and assistance, including through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in Togo, are crucial to ensuring Africa's success in addressing the flows of illicit weapons.

We do not have to live with the threat of nuclear weapons. We know this to be possible, and we know we can do this for ourselves and for our children.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I should first like to congratulate the Chair on his election to the chairmanship of this Committee and to assure him of my delegation's full support. We look forward to a very productive session under his able leadership.

I should also like to express my deepest condolences on the untimely passing of Ambassador Girma Tesfay, Permanent Representative of Eritrea.

I should like to start with the most urgent proliferation and security issue for my country, my region and the world, namely, the nuclear issue relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This year started with the fourth nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, followed by the fifth just last month. In addition, North Korea has launched 22 ballistic missiles of all types, defying repeated warnings from the international community and violating international law, including the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the numerous relevant Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is getting close to full nuclear-weapon capacity.

Even more troubling are its repeated announcements that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is ready to use such weapons pre-emptively. More than 100 countries have condemned North Korea's nuclear tests in strong terms. Our task now is to work together to make North Korea change its course towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. If North Korea's provocations are left unchecked, the international community will risk condoning an illegal new nuclear-weapon State, which will seriously undermine the foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In that regard, the Security Council should adopt a robust new resolution containing effective sanctions measures as soon as possible. We will also work with Council members to ensure the full and complete implementation of all relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 (2016) and the new one currently being worked out.

The North Korean nuclear issue further strengthens my Government's unwavering commitment to maintain and strengthen the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. After the 2015 NPT Review Conference ended without a final document, we are witnessing a new trend. Recently, a draft resolution calling for the negotiation of a new treaty banning nuclear weapons was circulated in the First Committee. However, we are of the view that hastening towards a conclusion on such a draft resolution would neither achieve the goals of substantial disarmament nor resolve the current deadlock. We believe that for a viable breakthrough in nuclear disarmament we need a practical approach based on article VI of the NPT, not a new legal instrument.

In that regard, I should like to highlight the importance of taking up the long-overdue tasks that have been before us for two decades, namely, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force must be at the top of our agenda. At the CTBT Friends ministerial meeting last month, my Foreign Minister called on the remaining eight annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date.

At the same time, kick-starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material is another urgent task. We call for joint efforts to begin the negotiation as soon as possible, based on the 2015 reports of the Group of Governmental Experts on the FMCT. We also support transparency and confidence-building measures, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which can help to facilitate dialogue between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

On non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea will accelerate its efforts to strengthen the international regime against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as we serve as Chair of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime in 2016 and 2017. The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors must also form a vital part of our discussions on non-proliferation.

We appreciate the positive contributions that the Nuclear Security Summit process has made over the past six years. As President of the International Atomic Energy Agency International Conference on Nuclear Security this coming December, my Government will emphasize the importance of preventing and addressing the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is also instrumental in advancing global efforts to prevent weapons-of-mass-destruction terrorism. We look forward to a successful, comprehensive review this year and will continue to fully support the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). The Republic of Korea hosted the first Council resolution 1540 (2004)-oriented regional industrial outreach conference within the Wiesbaden process aimed at promoting the implementation in Asia of Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Finally, the Republic of Korea and Australia will jointly submit to the First Committee a draft resolution on preventing and combating illicit brokering activities. It is currently the sole international instrument comprehensively addressing the threat posed by illicit brokering. We hope that the biennial draft resolution, which has been introduced since 2008, will once again renew our collective commitment to combating illicit brokering activities and gain wide support.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I should also like to join others in expressing my sincere condolences on the passing away of the Permanent Representative of the State of Eritrea.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Chair and other members of the Bureau on their elections to guide the work of the First Committee. My delegation assures the Chair and the Bureau members of its full cooperation and support.

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

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their possible use or threat of use pose an existential threat to humankind. It is a conundrum that nuclear weapons, by far the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction, are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited under international law. To add insult to injury, such weapons are being further modernized and upgraded. Curbing the escalation of the nuclear arms race is a task that must be accomplished without any further delay.

The step-by-step approach has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The need to take concrete action in order to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons is critically urgent. In that vein, Ethiopia supports the recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group on the disarmament agenda, which, *inter alia*, called for the convening of a conference by the General Assembly to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. Those negotiations, however, should not be in lieu of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, but should rather complement and strengthen it.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The three pillars of the NPT still represent an unparalleled framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. We must draw lessons from our failure at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and exert maximum efforts to agree on an outcome document at the next review cycle of the NPT in May 2017.

My delegation would like to reiterate that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We join the call for nuclear-weapon States to pursue and conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument that provides negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons pending their total elimination.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have contributed immensely to the attainment of a world free of nuclear weapons. By the same token, the establishment of a nuclear-free Middle East is essential for global peace and security and for the stability of the region. We call on all stakeholders to show flexibility and engage in a spirit of mutual understanding in convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Africa is a nuclear-weapon-free zone pursuant to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, which clearly demonstrates the commitment of African States to the non-proliferation regime. Ethiopia is proud to be part of that effort and remains committed to that Treaty.

Much to our dismay, 20 years have passed since the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and yet the Treaty has not yet entered into force. The universalization and implementation of the CTBT is in our collective security interests. For that reason, we call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call upon the States in annex 2 of the CTBT, whose ratification is crucial for the Treaty's entry into force.

We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to the achievement of effective and long-term results in the field of disarmament. Ethiopia joins other Member States in reaffirming the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and expresses its concern at the impasse that has prevented the CD from fulfilling its mandate.

Conventional weapons, particularly illicit small arms and light weapons, pose a grave security challenge to the African continent and its States. The use of such weapons by non-State actors and their widespread and unfettered access to such weapons remains a source

of threat and of great concern. The illicit traffic and trade in those weapons must be checked as a matter of urgency. The role of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is immense in mobilizing international cooperation in that regard. We welcome the successful convening of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and the consensus outcome document. We look forward to actively participating in the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action in 2018.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating Ethiopia's unreserved commitment to disarmament and international security. We hope that the seventy-first session of the General Assembly will serve us as a platform for registering a meaningful leap in the disarmament regime.

Mr. Khoo (Singapore): At the outset we, like others, would like to convey our deepest condolences at the passing of the Permanent Representative of Eritrea.

As this is the first time that Singapore is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their elections. My delegation looks forward to working constructively with the Chair towards a successful outcome.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, for his tireless efforts to advance disarmament and bring us closer to our shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Singapore reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We must work towards the universalization of the NPT and find a way to involve nuclear-weapon-possessing States that fall outside the ambit of the NPT in disarmament discussions. The next NPT review cycle will provide an opportunity to step up our efforts in the search for common and practical solutions. That will not be easy. The onus lies on all of us to begin narrowing the gaps

at the upcoming May 2017 session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference. Singapore fully supports the three pillars of the NPT. Progress on disarmament and non-proliferation, which are mutually reinforcing, is essential in order to strengthen international peace and security. That imperative is even more crucial in our uncertain world, where the risk of nuclear proliferation is being compounded by the threats posed by terrorism and the illicit activities of non-State actors.

We welcome the series of Nuclear Security Summits, which have contributed significantly to increasing our preparedness against nuclear terrorism. For our part, Singapore recently hosted Exercise Deep Sabre 2016, our third multinational Proliferation Security Initiative exercise. This year, the Initiative included a table-top exercise involving a nuclear-terrorism scenario. That comprises part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen international cooperation and vigilance against the increasing risks of a terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction.

Singapore also welcomes the report (see A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We recognize that the recommendation to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination, has garnered widespread support from Member States. My delegation believes that the proposed conference is a potential avenue to advance nuclear disarmament. However, we need to ensure that any negotiated instrument is meaningful and does not end up as just another empty agreement. To that end, we call for all parties, particularly those with nuclear weapons, to engage constructively in the process.

Singapore believes that several other concrete steps would contribute to the advancement of nuclear disarmament: first, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); secondly, the opening of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty; and, thirdly, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones through open, genuine and constructive dialogue involving all relevant parties.

In relation to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Singapore reiterates its commitment to work closely with the nuclear-weapon States to resolve all outstanding issues and to work towards the collective signing and ratification of the Protocol to the

Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by the nuclear-weapon States without reservations.

Singapore calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any further provocative actions. We reiterate our long-standing call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by its international obligations and commitments, and to integrate itself with the region, so that it can share in the regional peace and prosperity.

My delegation has consistently supported global efforts to establish common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. In that regard, Singapore has signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and is actively working to review and assess existing frameworks and legislation with a view to ratifying the Treaty. We support the continued universalization of the ATT, which would serve as a significant contribution to the reduction of uncontrolled and destabilizing flows of conventional arms to unintended end users.

Beyond nuclear and conventional weapons, my delegation believes that the First Committee should devote more attention to emerging issues, including outer space and cybersecurity. The advances in technology made less than 60 years after the first successful satellite launch have been unimaginable. Today, space systems are integral to our daily routines. Even as our dependency on such systems increases, the challenges faced, including space debris and orbital congestion, have to be adequately addressed. A possible avenue for tackling that issue would be through a multilateral framework on rules of behaviour in outer space. We should work to build consensus on norms that encourage the peaceful use of outer space as a global commons.

Singapore is pleased to co-host the fourth ASEAN Regional Forum Workshop on Space Security with the United States, which is to take place on 24 and 25 October. Building on previous iterations, the workshop aims to explore in greater detail several pertinent issues, including space security and hazards, transparency and confidence-building measures for enhancing space security and possible areas for practical international cooperation.

Another area of rapid technological growth has been in the field of information and communications technologies (ICTs). Smart phones are ubiquitous, and ICTs have become indispensable. However, enhanced connectivity will inevitably be accompanied by an

increased susceptibility to cyberattacks. For that reason, cybersecurity is crucial in order to ensure that our way of life is not disrupted. Cybersecurity serves to instil confidence so that societies can interact and transact digitally, providing opportunities for social development and economic progress. That is another area that the First Committee should consider more thoroughly.

On that front, Singapore is taking concrete steps to address the issue. At the national level, Singapore established a Cyber Security Agency in 2015. The Agency aims to raise cybersecurity awareness, provide centralized oversight and develop a robust cybersecurity ecosystem in Singapore. We will be hosting the inaugural Singapore International Cyber Week in several days. The Singapore International Cyber Week will serve as a platform to deepen collaboration on cybersecurity regionally and internationally. Regionally, discussions at the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity will focus on efforts to build a cybersecure South-East Asia. Internationally, the cyberleaders' symposium will bring together thought leaders to exchange perspectives on the measures needed to build a resilient and secure cyberspace.

In conclusion, the task before us is not easy. We have to redouble our efforts towards the goal of general and complete disarmament. My delegation pledges its utmost support to the Chair as we endeavour to have a successful outcome.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating the Chair and other members of the Bureau on their assuming their very important posts and assure them of my delegation's full support.

Hungary associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). I should like, therefore, to make only a few remarks from our national perspective.

First, let me turn to issues related to nuclear weapons. In that respect, I cannot but reiterate once again that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and, through its article VI, the fundamental framework for multilateral nuclear disarmament, which should be built upon rather than neglected or replaced by some other instrument. We therefore need to recommit ourselves to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Treaty and to the comprehensive Action Plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference,

thus ensuring the successful outcome of the current review cycle, which will start with the first session of the Preparatory Committee to be held next spring in Vienna.

As far as multilateral nuclear disarmament is concerned, that goal can, in our view, be achieved only through a gradual and inclusive process by taking concrete and practical steps that fully engage nuclear-weapon States and at the same time promote international security and stability. We regret that, although the report (see A/71/371) of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established by the General Assembly, contains a number of references to concrete and practical measures that could bring us closer to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, the recommendations of the report completely fail to take those measures into consideration.

It is our firm view that, without the involvement and consent of nuclear-weapon States, the negotiation and conclusion of any new legal instrument that would stigmatize and ban nuclear weapons cannot yield any practical or legal result. There is no fast track in that area, only an incremental approach can make tangible progress.

One of the essential building blocks still missing from the legal architecture of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests. We welcome the recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland. We regret, however, that 20 years after its adoption it is still not in force. In that respect, we welcome the ministerial meeting commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Treaty for signature and the new Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), reaffirming the importance of the CTBT.

Owing to the almost unanimous support it enjoys, the CTBT can be considered as a *de facto* universal norm, but it is no substitute for a legally binding ban. The two nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea earlier this year were momentous reminders of the fact that we all need to continue to work to move ahead the process leading to the entry into force of the Treaty.

Another concrete step towards a world free of nuclear weapons would be to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), verifiably banning

the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Concluding a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable FMCT limiting the amount of direct-use materials would constitute a significant contribution to the implementation of the NPT in the areas of both non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament under article VI.

Since in our view it is important to maintain the momentum created by the substantive and consensus report (see A/70/81) adopted last year by 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, which was set up by the General Assembly, we welcome the proposal put forward by Canada to take the process forward.

Hungary considers nuclear security to be an important aspect of non-proliferation efforts and also a critical element in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Although the responsibility for nuclear security rests with States, in our globalized world no State can ensure effective nuclear security on its own. Hence, international cooperation in that field has greatly facilitated national efforts and has become indispensable.

The Nuclear Security Summit process has been an excellent example of that fact. The Summit held in Washington, D.C., last spring contributed significantly to strengthening the control of weapons of mass destruction in general and to improving nuclear security in particular. We are confident that the second ministerial-level International Conference on Nuclear Security of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which plays a central role in that area, will be another important milestone in our endeavours.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has been an important priority for Hungary since the very beginning. The fact that my country was among the first to sign and ratify the Treaty is clear testimony to that fact. We are pleased that, with the decisions taken in August this year at the second Conference of States Parties, the Treaty has become fully operational. Since the institutional framework has now been created, it is now the responsibility of the States parties to fulfil their Treaty obligations and implement them in the most efficient and transparent manner, especially when it comes to reporting.

The universalization of the ATT has been progressing well so far. However, there is a particular need to reach out to major arms exporters and to take them on board in order to turn the ATT into a real milestone in the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms.

This year has been marked by the Review Conferences of two important Geneva-based disarmament Conventions, namely, the Convention on Prohibitions of Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), both Conventions offering us a good opportunity to strengthen them and advance their universalization.

The CCW is a unique and important tool in efforts to assert and enforce the norms of international humanitarian law in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. The CCW and its Protocols play an important role in responding to the challenges posed by new technologies and the need to adapt international disarmament norms to new situations. In that context, we welcome the substantial consideration of the issues posed by improvised explosive devices, lethal autonomous weapon systems, and mines other than anti-personnel mines in the current review cycle and we support the continuation of those discussions after the fifth Review Conference this December.

Hungary has a long-standing commitment to the BWC, the fundamental pillar of the international community's efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are therefore greatly honoured to be presiding over its eighth Review Conference this November in Geneva. The Review Conference offers an excellent opportunity to recommit ourselves to the preservation and further strengthening of the Convention's relevance in a rapidly changing political and scientific environment.

The States parties chose to take an innovative approach to the preparations for the Review Conference, enabling us to settle not only procedural questions but also to discuss substantive matters related to the Convention's operation. We are pleased about the constructive atmosphere and the outcome because all the essential procedural issues for the efficient

planning and preparation of the Review Conference were agreed upon by consensus. Moreover, the States parties considered comprehensively all the provisions of the Convention and presented a record number of concrete and interesting proposals for consideration by the Review Conference, which will be decisive in shaping the mid-term perspective of the Convention.

Last, but not least, let me remind delegations that Hungary, following the practice of previous years, has prepared a draft resolution on the BWC. We hope, as has been the case every year so far, that it will again be adopted by consensus.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): Before delivering my statement, I should also like to add my voice to those of my colleagues who have expressed their condolences to the family of the Permanent Representative of Eritrea, Mr. Girma Tesfay. We shall all miss his wisdom, his passion for peace and his focus on peace both for his country and for his region.

(spoke in Arabic)

At the outset I should like to congratulate the Chair on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the current session of the General Assembly. We are confident that he will be a skilful guide of the proceedings. In that regard, I should like to affirm that the United Arab Emirates will lend its full support and cooperation to making the work of the Committee a success. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to his predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, for his leadership of the proceedings at the previous session.

The United Arab Emirates associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

We gather here today to reiterate our desired goal of achieving regional and international peace and security, especially in the face of the present grave security challenges threatening the gains made in the areas of disarmament and international security over the past seven decades. In that context, the United Arab Emirates expresses its firm belief in the importance of utilizing the international forums that deal with disarmament and international security issues, such as the First Committee, in reaching consensus in the

area of disarmament. We support international efforts aimed at creating a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the designation of 26 September as International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

The United Arab Emirates attaches particular importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in keeping with its concern about and commitment to global security. My country pursues a steadfast national policy and adopts clear positions regarding disarmament and non-proliferation issues. It believes in taking a transparent approach to the acquisition of nuclear energy for peaceful uses and the fulfilment of non-proliferation obligations and considers that accession to and the full implementation of international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments are of great importance.

The United Arab Emirates, which has expressed and continues to express its concerns regarding the Iranian nuclear activities and the development of its ballistic missile programme, stresses the importance of Iran's full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with the nuclear agreement reached with the 5+1 States. We hoped that the agreement on Iran's nuclear programme would encourage it to open a new chapter and promote confidence as to the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. However, Tehran has continued to undermine the security of the region through its aggressive rhetoric and by supporting and arming militias, not to mention its alarming designation as a State sponsor of terrorism. Tehran has refused to give up all these policies. Therefore, we call upon Iran to ensure its full compliance with international obligations and responsibilities under the NPT.

The United Arab Emirates reiterates the importance of taking further steps towards declaring the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Achieving progress in this field would significantly support stability and security in the Middle East. In that regard, we recall our disappointment over the outcome of the 2015 Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT, inasmuch as it failed to convene a conference in 2012 on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, my country renews its call on Israel to join the NPT, since Israel is the only State in the region that has not yet acceded to this Treaty.

The United Arab Emirates regards the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as a useful step towards achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament. In that context, we express our dismay regarding the lack of progress made in bringing the Treaty into force. My country also urges States to meet their international commitments and to refrain from conducting any nuclear tests. We have expressed our deep concern regarding North Korea's development of its nuclear and ballistic capacities and the carrying out of regular tests, thereby threatening the security of its neighbours and international peace and security, as well as contravening the most fundamental rules of international law.

In conclusion, we call on the international community to reach consensus on how to develop the work of the First Committee with a view to promoting regional and international peace and security. We look forward to highlighting the efforts of the United Arab Emirates in the area of disarmament during the thematic discussions of the Committee.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to convey my sincere condolences to the family of our friend Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay, Permanent Representative of Eritrea, and to the people and the Government of Eritrea. I very much hope that his human approach will prevail among us and that this will fuel our initiatives.

I should like to congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their elections. We fully believe that, thanks to his wisdom and that of the Bureau, the Committee's work will proceed smoothly.

I should also like to commend Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the statement he delivered at the beginning of our work.

I should like to align myself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). The Chair may be assured of the fact that we will work assiduously and effectively during the deliberations of this Committee.

The Sudan is a committed partner in the international efforts to achieve disarmament. We were among the first countries to join some of the instruments and international conventions in this area, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation on Nuclear Weapons

(NPT), and we assisted in the efforts to draft a treaty creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. In 2004, we acceded to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty after taking part in a workshop held in Vienna on the aims of the treaty and the working mechanisms in the centres established worldwide.

Furthermore, in 2004 Khartoum hosted the first conference for African national organizations for the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). That conference issued some significant recommendations, including the recommendation to set up a chemical-weapon-free zone in Africa. The conference underscored the importance of restricting the activities of countries in this area to peaceful uses, without prejudice to the full, legitimate and inalienable right of countries to use nuclear and chemical technology for scientific, technical and development purposes. In that regard, we reaffirm our full commitment to all the provisions of the CWC and to upholding its spirit.

Small arms and light weapons are of great significance in terms of disarmament. Like other countries, the Sudan suffers as a result of small arms and light weapons. They have frequently caused social and economic damage, and their impact has been made even more complicated by natural disasters, such as climate change, drought and desertification. For example, there has been competition for water and pastureland as a result, and the possession of weapons has become an integral facet of the conduct of some tribes and communities as a demonstration of their power. Hence the importance of the effort to achieve disarmament and arms control. We are aware of the gravity of the phenomenon and the importance of eradicating it. This is what motivates us to be present and active during the various international and regional forums that address this issue. A further reason for our efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is the existence of an intrinsic link between the proliferation of these weapons and transnational crime, terrorism and narcotics trafficking, which will take years to eliminate.

As I have just mentioned, we need also to combat organized crime and terrorism and narcotics trafficking. The Sudan is undertaking efforts to that end multilaterally, within the African Union and the Arab League, as well as through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We play a leading role

in the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons, headquartered in Nairobi. In 2013 we hosted a regional workshop on combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, we have engaged bilaterally with neighbouring countries to review boundaries and to strengthen border controls and customs.

At the same time, we emphasize that, in terms of combating such weapons, the major obligation lies with the producing and manufacturing countries, not with the affected countries. Those countries need to commit to not exporting such weapons to non-State groups and individuals if we are to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands. In that regard, we reaffirm the importance of extending support, especially technical support, under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We have undertaken significant national efforts to implement the Programme of Action, including the establishment of the necessary administrative bodies. In addition, we have set up a national focal point in the Ministry of the Interior, which has become the hub for the implementation of the Programme of Action and for the design of policies and strategies, and a team consisting of representatives from various ministries and other bodies. Offices have been put in place in various provinces with the task of combating the scourge of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in accordance with a carefully thought-out plan, which is to be implemented over the next five years.

The plan will focus on aligning legislation with United Nations requirements; digitizing the arms register and ensuring that routine arms control is carried out; ensuring that small arms registers are properly credited and that citizens' possession of small arms is in accordance with the legislation in place; awareness-raising campaigns; building the capacities of the bodies engaged in seizure and oversight operations; setting up border controls and check-points; coordinating with the relevant regional and subregional organizations; developing arms stocks management systems; developing archiving and certification systems for end users; and developing tracing, marking and follow-up mechanisms.

My country is convinced of the need to accelerate disarmament efforts and to create zones free of

weapons of mass destruction. To that end, we call for the convening as soon as possible of a conference on making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to the resolution of the 2010 Review Conference. All States of the Middle East must participate, and all facilities need to be overseen by the International Atomic Energy Agency. We stress the importance of Israel's acceding to the NPT. In that regard, we would recall that regional international developments, especially in the Middle East, point to the fact that there can be no other way to strengthen international security than through multilateral initiatives, including the holding of a conference on the Middle East.

I believe that we are all in agreement about the fact that the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development clearly demonstrated the intrinsic link between development and armed conflict. This needs to be taken into account by the Security Council when it deals with issues of conflict in developing countries, the deployment of peacekeeping missions, and peacebuilding efforts in those countries. Frequently, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes need to be accompanied by a study of the root causes. The development dimension is especially important in that regard, especially given that the common denominator in all current conflicts is the depletion of resources, which is compounded by natural phenomena such as drought, desertification and climate change.

The model we see in Darfur further reaffirms this intrinsic link. We see farmers and nomads fighting to hold on to their water resources and pasture lands. For this reason, development needs to be a key factor which accompanies the struggle against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We therefore need to support and build the capacities of developing countries rather than deploying expert groups, as the Security Council is doing at present. The current methodology of expert groups hinges on symptoms alone. It fails to tackle the root causes of conflict and the rising proliferation of weapons among groups and individuals.

Ms. Nolan (Ireland): I wish to align myself with the statements made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) and by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). In the interests of brevity I shall read out an abbreviated text.

Allow me first to add my congratulations to the Chair on his election and assure him of my delegation's support to him and to the members of the Bureau. He has our best wishes for his stewardship of the Committee at this significant moment in the history of disarmament. Let me also thank the Chair for his opening address, which, together with the words of the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, has provided strong impetus to our work.

Truly it is time for change. It is now 46 years since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, and 21 years since its indefinite extension. It is 20 years since we welcomed the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which has still not entered into force, and 20 years since the Conference on Disarmament was last able to adopt a programme of work, and it has not increased its membership since 1999. Multiple challenges abound in our work, whether on issues relating to weapons of mass destruction or on those relating to conventional weapons. In turn, those challenges impact and make more acute the many threats to the peace and stability of our States and societies and undermine our collective desire to make our world a more secure, more peaceful and more prosperous place for all our citizens.

Just over one year ago, our Heads of State and Government in this building adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was nothing less than a promise for humankind. The work of this Committee is not just relevant but crucial to the achievement of those Goals. We must, for the sake of humankind and for the sake of the planet, ensure that our work here supports and does not thwart the achievement of our other global goals.

It is also 21 years since the United Nations met at Beijing to adopt a far-reaching and ambitious Platform for Action for women, peace and development. It is 16 years since the Security Council adopted its ground-breaking resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, with its strong commitment to the inclusion and empowerment of women. Ireland believes that women's engagement and empowerment in disarmament negotiations is crucial to achieving success in the challenges that face us. We look forward to working this year to see how we can also make progress on this question, and we commend the draft resolution that our colleagues from Trinidad and Tobago are bringing forward.

Ireland would also like to acknowledge the deep commitment and invaluable contribution of our civil society partners. It had been our hope that, as proposed by us last year, their work could be even more integrated into our deliberations here, as has happened so successfully in other forums. We look forward to the meeting with civil society next week and trust that this question can be revisited then.

It is Ireland's view that disarmament, and most particularly nuclear disarmament, is now more urgent than ever. For this reason, Ireland is one of the 127 countries that have now joined the Humanitarian Pledge. As part of this commitment, we were lead sponsors and are again this year, together with Austria, Mexico and South Africa, of the resolutions on humanitarian consequences (resolution 70/47) and the Pledge (resolution 70/48), as well as resolution 70/50, on ethical imperatives for a nuclear-free world. We are pleased that these resolutions were adopted by large majorities, along with resolution 70/33 — which we also sponsored, together with Austria, Mexico and South Africa — to convene the Open-ended Working Group taking forward negotiations on multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Together with our NAC partners, Ireland has been working for many years to elaborate effective measures. We had hoped that the Open-ended Working Group would lead to further progress and that it would provide the opportunity for the type of open, inclusive and interactive discussions that are so necessary to the nuclear disarmament debate. Regrettably, not all States participated in this United Nations-mandated process. But more than 100 States did engage, constructively and in good faith, along with our civil society partners and a wide range of experts. My delegation and many others made our best endeavours to reach general agreement on the final report (see A/71/371) and recommendations. A consensus adoption would have sent a powerful message about our ability to work together towards our common nuclear disarmament objective — a world free of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the final report and recommendations adopted by the majority represents a strong basis for future progress and a clear path forward. We commend the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group and look forward to the presentation of the final report and recommendations next week. This year Ireland, together with Austria, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa, is lead sponsor of the draft resolution that will give effect to those recommendations.

Ireland is pleased to recall that the Open-ended Working Group final report and recommendations are firmly and expressly framed and situated in the context of strengthening and complementing the NPT. This has always been, and continues to be, our starting point and the force behind our actions. Ireland's historic commitment to the NPT is unchanged, and we are consistent across all platforms in that commitment. Our objective is to see the NPT implemented and the disarmament machinery functioning in a credible and inclusive manner.

Inclusivity and diversity are important in this arena, as in all others. One of the most significant features of the Open-ended Working Group sessions in Geneva was the range of powerful new voices we heard on this issue, including those from less developed or smaller States, and also the notable gender balance of speakers. All of this served to reinvigorate the debate, to remind us of the breadth of impact of this issue, of our common humanity, and of the need for a human and humanitarian response to what for far too long has been a siloed issue.

Ireland firmly believes that nuclear disarmament is a global governance issue, connected to other key international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change. We submitted a working paper to this effect to the Open-ended Working Group and look forward to relaunching an updated version during this session of the First Committee. We will also, with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, present new findings on the gendered impact of nuclear weapons and the need for gender-balanced engagement in the nuclear debate.

We look forward to working with others here in the First Committee and at meetings of the NPT Preparatory Committee and beyond to ensure the necessary progress on nuclear disarmament commitments, made all the more urgent by the current global security situation. In that regard, Ireland believes that the convening of a conference to negotiate a new legally binding instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination, is an important step in ensuring full implementation of article VI of the NPT, to which all States parties are committed.

Sadly, other weapons of mass destruction also continue to pose challenges. We are deeply disturbed by the findings contained in the third report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-

United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (S/2016/738), which confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The use of such weapons is completely contrary to international law, and we strongly condemn such actions. Those responsible for such atrocities must be held accountable.

Ireland regards the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) as a critical instrument in the global community's efforts to achieve a world free of all weapons of mass destruction — chemical, biological and nuclear. The Review Conference provides us with an invaluable opportunity, and Ireland looks forward to working with colleagues so that real sustainable progress towards a world free from the threat of biological weapons can be achieved.

As we meet here in the First Committee we are witnessing a terrible loss of life, humanitarian harm to civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure from the use of conventional weapons in current conflicts. This is true in particular of Syria, where we are witnessing disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks, with correspondingly high civilian casualties, with terrible regularity. Reports from Yemen and Ukraine, in particular with regard to cluster munitions use, are also deeply concerning.

Ireland regards the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas as one of the most serious challenges facing us with regard to conventional weapons questions at this time. Our Minister, Charles Flanagan, raised this issue in his recent speech to the United Nations. We acknowledge and welcome the attention being given to this question by the Secretary-General, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the International Network on Explosive Weapons, a civil society group. Ireland believes that it is now a matter of urgency to explore how we can raise consciousness and strengthen the application of international humanitarian law in relation to preventing civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

With regard to developments in conventional arms, there have been some welcome successes in recent years. We see the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the

Convention on Cluster Munitions continuing to gain adherents and acceptance of the norm banning these weapons. We welcome the Arms Trade Treaty, with its aim to regulate illicit and irresponsible arms transfers, which still represents a rare success for the international community in recent times. Ireland is also a strong supporter of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We welcome the outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties, and we were particularly pleased at the inclusion of language relating to gender and the Sustainable Development Goals in the final report.

The mandate of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and its Protocols is at the heart of our debate on how to control and regulate the use of conventional weapons. Ireland looks forward to the upcoming Review Conference as an important opportunity to renew and invigorate this crucial instrument of international humanitarian law. In particular, we are encouraged by the active consideration that was given to the question of lethal autonomous weapons systems at the CCW, and we welcome the consensus recommendations that were adopted at the meeting of experts last April. Ireland believes it would now be timely for the Review Conference to establish a group of governmental experts to take this important work forward.

Ireland also views the question of mines other than anti-personnel mines as one of continuing humanitarian urgency. My delegation believes that the limited provisions on mines other than anti-personnel mines in Amended Protocol II have not proved adequate to address the humanitarian harm arising from their use. We believe, therefore, that States parties should engage with this issue at expert level to determine how the CCW can best take this work forward in an inclusive and cooperative manner without prejudging the outcome in any way in order to address the humanitarian harm arising from the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines.

We began our work this week with an exhortation from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs that there could be no more business as usual and that succeeding in our ambitions requires the jettisoning of old mind-sets. In that vein I hope I might be allowed to conclude with a very old proverb: "A talent for

following the ways of yesterday is not sufficient to improve the world of today.” Following in the tradition of Frank Aiken, a former Foreign Minister of Ireland and the driving force behind the first General Assembly resolution concerning the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons, now 70 years ago, my delegation looks forward to our working together in this Committee to achieve our global aims for a nuclear-free world.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): At the outset, I should like to thank the Chair and the Committee for the condolences expressed to my delegation on the untimely death of our member Girma Asmerom Tesfay, Permanent Representative of the State of Eritrea, who passed away two days ago. He is indeed a great loss to his family and my country Eritrea, and to the United Nations community as well.

I wish to congratulate the Chair and other members of the Bureau on their elections to steer the work of this important Committee. I assure them of my delegation’s full support.

My delegation 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).

Economic growth and inclusive development are at the centre of Eritrea’s foreign and national security policy, which promotes regional peace and cooperation. Eritrea is of the belief that ensuring and maintaining international peace and security require stable and inclusive global economic and social development and full respect for the United Nations Charter, international law and treaty obligations.

To foster peace and safeguard security on a national, regional and global level in a highly integrated and interdependent world is a shared responsibility. As violent extremism, transnational crimes and massive population movements continue to evolve and threaten global peace and security, robust partnerships are necessary to secure our borders. In order to counter any transgressions, stronger multilaterally negotiated, transparent, comprehensive and non-discriminatory instruments must be at the forefront of our cooperation. In that regard, Eritrea reiterates its commitment to the work of disarmament and international security, as disarmament can be achieved only on a multilateral

basis. Only through collective political will can we achieve our shared goal of a nuclear-free world.

The global community, and in particular the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region, continue to fall victim to the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. With the expansion of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the volume of weapons diverted through illicit trade is fuelling instability, transnational crime and terrorism and propelling them to an alarming level. In that connection, the sovereignty of States to protect their borders is their inalienable right and duty. Therefore, an unjustified arms embargo that obstructs the defence capabilities of a State is a threat to regional and international peace and security. Eritrea believes that, in order to combat this phenomenon and prevent opportunities for extremists and terrorists to acquire these weapons, States must be allowed to enhance their capacities to protect their sovereign territories.

In addition, strengthening institutional capacities at the regional and subregional levels would make significant strides towards addressing the global plague of illicit small arms and light weapons. Eritrea will continue to work closely with sister countries to advance the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa and the work of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons from the Horn of Africa.

Nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humankind and to the survival of civilization. Eritrea believes the only assurance against the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We also believe that legally binding negative assurances, the establishment of nuclear-free zones and the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are critical steps towards general and complete nuclear disarmament. Eritrea regrets the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to adopt an outcome document. However, we reiterate our support for the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In conclusion, Eritrea believes that disarmament is the only viable way forward for a more secure planet, and that international and regional security can be realized only through the pacific settlement of disputes, adherence to the rule of law and global

economic cooperation. In that regard, we must go beyond regulation and disarmament to address the factors that contribute to and exacerbate conflicts; they include underdevelopment, insecurity, weak States and external intervention and occupation.

The Acting Chair: I have received a request from His Excellency Mr. Abel Ayoko, Under-Secretary for Regions and International Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, who wishes to give a short statement of no more than five minutes, since he is leaving the country this weekend. I ask the Committee's indulgence to give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Ayoko (Nigeria): The delegation of Nigeria joins others who have spoken earlier to congratulate the Chair on his election to the chairmanship of the First Committee for this session. We have no doubt of his tremendous experience, expertise and commitment. We assure him of our full support and cooperation. I also commend his predecessor, Ambassador Van Oosterom, for his leadership and admirable efforts.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2) and wish to make this statement in our national capacity.

On this day, 7 October, in 1960, Nigeria joined the United Nations. In his maiden speech at the United Nations General Assembly the first Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, noted

“We are committed to uphold the principles upon which the United Nations is founded” (*A/PV.893, para. 173*).

I am convinced that even today, 65 years afterwards, Nigeria is still committed to that laudable ideal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Last year, my delegation joined other Member States at the seventieth session of the General Assembly to highlight the daunting challenges confronting our world. Sadly, little has changed that would promote confidence or show any reduction in the enormous challenges to global peace and security 12 months later. We are, in fact, faced with more challenges and quandaries, all of which justify the need to redouble the efforts and the careful attention that we witnessed only one year ago. In that regard, building the right multilateral environment involves more concerted efforts and a new plan of action to confront the challenges.

In the context of threats to international peace and security, my delegation will continue to highlight the astronomical proportions of the global defence budgets, including the enormous resources devoted to the maintenance and upgrading of nuclear-arsenal systems by nuclear-weapon States, as well as the unfettered access to a wide-ranging collection of conventional weapons available to unauthorized non-State actors.

The dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, is seen all around us, from Africa to the Middle East, and across Europe to the Americas and Asia. The carnage has become unprecedented, as has the bloodshed foisted on innocent populations by mainly terrorist insurgents and other gangs. We have seen cities and communities emptied, destroyed or deserted, with heavy losses of precious lives and property, livelihoods and forced mass migration.

Sadly, those mindless forms of aggression are largely enabled and effectively supported by arms illicitly purchased or transferred by non-State entities. Those weapons are illicitly procured and indiscriminately used by terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and unprecedented massacres of innocent civilians, including women and children. Member States bear the collective responsibility to act with a deep sense of urgency in dealing with the global insecurity and anarchy ravaging our world almost unabated.

The *raison d'être* for the overwhelming support and adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on 2 April 2014, was the need to present a common front so as to be able to respond robustly to the threat posed to international peace and security by the non-regulation of conventional weapons. Today, most sadly, those tangible threats to global peace and security do not appear to be diminishing. We no longer think of the risk that terrorists might obtain and use these weapons on a large and devastating scale. That is because they already possess them and effectively deploy them to optimal use.

In that regard, Nigeria welcomes the outcome of the second Conference of States Parties to the ATT under the presidency of Ambassador Imohe of Nigeria. We must do what is called for by standing with the States parties and other signatories to the Treaty. Recent acts of terrorist activities and the preponderance of insurgent groups across many regions of the world, including mine, have presented us with another unique

opportunity to take a second look at our positions and obligations and where we stand as nations.

While small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and other armed groups have continued to decimate lives indiscriminately, let no one be in doubt about the fact that nuclear weapons remain the ultimate weapon of mass destruction and that their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the spectrum of the goals being pursued by the United Nations.

We also restate our opposition to the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types. My delegation will continue to support the call for this Committee to consider actively the humanitarian consequences of the detonation of nuclear weapons, and for States with these weapons to take the necessary measures to renounce and dismantle them.

If good will and common sense will not rid the world of such doomsday weapons, we believe that enlightened self-interest should prevail on those possessing nuclear weapons to get rid of them. That is because they offer no credible defence against other enemies possessing similar weapons, and they pose an existential threat to those who do not possess them at all. It is in that context that my country full supports the extensive work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations as a comprehensive arrangement that can enable us to commence — this is the opportunity of a lifetime — the process of convening a conference in 2017 to start negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. That would, of course, be without prejudice to other efforts put in place to address the challenges of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including in the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a fissile material cut-off treaty, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, among others.

With regard to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we remind Committee members of the need to reflect on whether the current impasse is serving the purposes and objective of the establishment of that body. While some are of the opinion that some form of work has been done by that body, there is no doubt that the long-standing inability to agree to act on concrete issues has adversely affected the reputation and credibility of the CD. It is our hope that the members

of the CD will hasten to do what is necessary and fulfil the objective of its establishment.

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in the multilateral disarmament machinery and the concern about the lack of progress on a number of issues, my delegation remains committed to the objectives of that process as the only measure put in place to fulfil the ethos and objectives of disarmament and international security. We remain hopeful that good judgement will prevail, reflecting our understanding of the need to act concertedly and decisively to address those issues, which are of grave concern to humanity.

Finally, Nigeria will submit three draft resolutions in the course of the session, for which we seek the support of all delegations. They concern the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty; the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, on behalf of the African Group; and the United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services, in our national capacity.

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

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to exercise the right of reply regarding remarks made by the delegation of South Korea.

South Korea has again condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-defensive nuclear and ballistic rocket development as so-called threats and provocation. Our delegation totally rejects those remarks as ridiculous arguments that distort reality and attempt to mislead the world.

The present situation on the Korean peninsula is extremely explosive, and nobody can predict when it will explode. The question is: Who is responsible for the creation of that situation? The responsibility lies with none other than the United States. The United States maintains its more than half-a-century-long hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and has been posing an extreme nuclear threat to and blackmail against our people.

The United States nuclear threats and blackmail started in the 1950s during the Korean War and was

followed by the deployment of an initial war-ready nuclear weapon in South Korea in 1957 and then by the deployment of more than 1,000 nuclear weapons in the 1970s, more than enough to totally destroy the entire Korean peninsula several times over.

For more than half a century the United States has shipped to South Korea almost every kind of nuclear strategic asset, annually staging large-scale joint military exercises that mobilize hundreds and thousands of military troops to invade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any time. In 2002, the United States designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of the "axis of evil", a target for a pre-emptive nuclear attack, and does not hide the fact that the purpose of the large-scale joint military exercises lies in the decapitation of the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the occupation of Pyongyang.

Most recently, the United States made an official decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System in South Korea, while introducing three key strategic nuclear attack means in and around the Korean peninsula. That indicates that the United States pre-emptive nuclear-attack plan is entering a reckless stage against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has had no choice but to go nuclear to protect the sovereignty and dignity of the nation and its right to exist from the constant nuclear threats from the United States. Reality shows that it is the United States that 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- and ballistic missile-related activities represent a clear threat to international peace and security, even in so-called resolution 2270 (2016), which was fabricated most recently against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

That resolution has many defects, such as the fact that there is no provision either in the Charter of the United Nations or in any other international law that stipulates that nuclear and ballistic-rocket activity pose a threat to international peace and security. Countries far from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that have begun to engage in the same activities have never been called into question by the Security Council. One cannot but ask: On what grounds and with what

authority did the Security Council adopt the resolution prohibiting the nuclear and ballistic-rocket activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea? If the Security Council has such grounds and authority, why has it not taken issue with those countries that conduct the same nuclear and ballistic rocket activities?

We submitted an official questionnaire to the Secretariat in that regard, but the Secretariat has not answered those questions, although nearly five months has elapsed. Even this year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has twice asked the Security Council to hold an emergency meeting on the United States and South Korea large-scale joint military exercises that pose a great threat to world peace and security, but our request was turned down.

The Security Council sanctions resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which have been fabricated by the United States, are criminal documents lacking impartiality, legality and morality. The United States has no moral qualification to force United Nations States Members to implement such unmerited resolutions, and Member States have no moral obligation to implement those unfair and unjust resolutions.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will take further measures to develop the State's nuclear force in quality and quantity in order to safeguard its dignity, its right to exist and genuine peace from the increasing nuclear threats from the United States. The reality of the Korean peninsula shows that the continuation of the United States hostile policy, nuclear blackmail and military threats towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, along with unprecedented moves to isolate and stifle our country, have produced the outcome of making our country a full-fledged nuclear-weapon State with powerful nuclear-attack capabilities.

The more South Korea keeps on distorting reality and misleading the world, the more clearly the undeniable responsibility of the United States for aggravating the situation on the Korean peninsula will be revealed, while greater worldwide recognition will arise of the fact that the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and the world is being reliably defended because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has a self-defensive nuclear deterrent.

Moreover, South Korea, which, under the nuclear umbrella, has allowed the deployment of United States nuclear weapons and joined the United States in its

hostile policy, nuclear threats and blackmail targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for more than half a century, has no legal and moral ground to talk about the nuclear-war deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which represents the exercise of a self-defensive right of the country.

Ms. Yoon Seoungmee (Republic of Korea): I am taking the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply in response to the remarks made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My delegation's position on North Korea's nuclear and missile development programme was fully explained in my Ambassador's remarks this morning and my intervention in yesterday's meeting (see A/C.1/71/PV.5). I will not repeat all those words, but let me emphasize that North Korea will not gain anything by blindly pursuing its nuclear-weapons programme. That programme is one of the most serious security threats, and the international community is determined to counter it with the strongest measures.

In this room, I have heard many voices that have condemned and called for an end to North Korea's nuclear programme. I have not heard a single voice that supported North Korea in that regard. As long as North Korea continues to threaten the peace and challenge the global non-proliferation regime, its diplomatic and economic isolation from the world will only grow.

Regarding the very inappropriate points made by the North Korean representatives, I should like to clarify that the real-time operational control of the allied forces in the Republic of Korea is exercised based on guidance from the Presidents of the Republic Korea and the United States, and on structured strategies from the two country's Defence Ministers and the Chairmen of the two country's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Let me also affirm that no nuclear weapons exist within our territory and that it remains our unchanged policy to observe and implement the 1992 Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, to which North Korea is also a party. It is North Korea that continuously violates the Joint Declaration with its nuclear weapons. We strongly urge North Korea to reverse its dangerous course and make a wise choice to join the international community as a peace-loving country and carry out their obligations under the United Nations Charter, as it once pledged to do when it joined the United Nations.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of the United Arab Emirates made a baseless accusation against the Islamic Republic of Iran in her statement this morning. My delegation will not dignify her comments and categorically rejects them. I should, however, like to make the following points for clarification.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been committed to its commitments and rights under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It has also been committed to the full implementation of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified and approved that fact.

It looks as though the representative of the United Arab Emirates, aligned in her views with a few other countries, has decided to intentionally and deliberately remain ignorant of those facts and has failed to understand the JCPOA and digest it. We invite her and her friends to put aside and abandon their unfriendly approach to the JCPOA and Iran, to try to understand the post-JCPOA environment, and to come to terms with the realities of the post-JCPOA environment.

The JCPOA is an internationally recognized agreement between Iran and the 5+1, which was endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2231 (2015). It has contributed, through sincere and painstaking diplomacy, to maintaining peace and stability by solving an unnecessary crisis. It has removed cruel sanctions against the Iranian nation and has enabled the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully implement its rights under the NPT for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear enrichment, for its economic development, within the requirements of and under the monitoring of the IAEA and in full transparency.

Iran, in cooperation with its friends in the region, is at the forefront of fighting terrorism, violent extremism and terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Jabhat Al-Nusra. Iran is a force for stability in the region, but the United Arab Emirates, like the Israeli regime, is engaged in supporting terrorism, spreading violent extremism, supporting terrorist groups in the region, especially in Syria, and is one of the main sponsors and suppliers of weapons and money to terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Jabhat Al-Nusra, which are engaged in massacring people. In doing so, the United Arab Emirates is fuelling terrorism in the region.

Another fact is that the United Arab Emirates has been engaged for more than a year in committing aggression against the Yemeni nation, and, by violating all of its obligations under international law and international humanitarian law, is killing thousands of civilians, especially children, in savage air attacks. We believe that it is very destabilizing to export arms to the United Arab Emirates, a country that is violating its international humanitarian law obligations and is committing war crimes, and we call on the exporting countries to cease the export of such arms to the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor, but I need to respond to the comments made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It is unfortunate that we have to listen, for the second day in a row, to those very stale delusional talking points from the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But let me say, very briefly, that North Korea continues to violate Security Council resolutions through its nuclear testing and rocket-launching activities. If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wants to get back into the good graces of the international community, it needs to stop its provocative behaviour, end the delusional rhetoric and fulfil its obligations. Until then, I am afraid that it will remain an outcast pariah in the international community.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation is compelled to exercise its right of reply in order to respond to the baseless fabrications put forward by the Ukrainian representative, who referred to an alleged violation by Russia of the Budapest Memorandum.

The Budapest Memorandum, as a security guarantee for nuclear countries and non-nuclear States, stipulates one chief obligation, namely, the renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons or the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. That chief obligation under the Budapest Memorandum is something that Russia has not violated and will not violate. The rest of what was stated in the Memorandum were political obligations, among which there is no obligation to acknowledge an anti-constitutional armed overthrow for the purpose of ousting a legitimate Government.

Furthermore, there is no obligation therein to reject the expression of the will of the people. The

people of Crimea freely chose to voluntarily join the Russian Federation. I should like to recall the fact that a genuinely democratic referendum was carried out in Crimea during the spring of 2014, the outcome of which was that nearly 100 per cent were in favour of reunification with Russia. That was formalized in line with the relevant international legal practice. For the Ukrainian authorities who have become accustomed to seeing Moscow's hand in everything, it is high time for them to give serious thought to the situation and, rather than accusing others, they should acknowledge their own guilt for what has occurred and what continues to occur in their country.

As for Russia, we are a sovereign State. We are bound to uphold peace and law and order on our territory, which in turn includes the maintenance of our armed forces at a sufficient level of combat readiness. As regards the nuclear facilities in Crimea, it behooves me to note that the same high level of nuclear security applies to them as that which applies to the rest of Russia.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea again wants to exercise its right of reply regarding the remarks made by the representatives of the United States and South Korea.

The United States and South Korea again condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-defensive nuclear and ballistic rocket development as so-called threats and provocations. The responsibility for the creation of the extremely explosive situation in the Korean peninsula, one in which nobody can predict when it will blow up, lies with none other than the United States.

The United States has not dropped its more than half-a-century-long hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and has been posing an extreme nuclear threat to and blackmail against our people. The United States nuclear threats and blackmail started in the 1950s during the Korean War and were followed by the deployment of an initial war-ready nuclear weapon in South Korea in 1957. That was followed by the deployment of more than 1000 nuclear weapons in the 1970s, more than enough to totally destroy the entire Korean peninsula several times over.

For more than half a century, the United States has shipped to South Korea almost every kind of

nuclear strategic asset, annually staging large-scale joint military exercises, and every year mobilizing hundreds and thousands of military troops to invade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any time. In 2002, the United States designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as an "axis of evil", a target for a pre-emptive nuclear attack, and does not hide the fact that the purpose of the large-scale joint military exercises lies in the decapitation of the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the occupation of Pyongyang.

Most recently, the United States made an official decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System in South Korea, while introducing the three key strategic nuclear attack means in and around the Korean peninsula. That indicates that the United States pre-emptive nuclear-attack plan is entering a reckless stage against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has had no choice but to go nuclear, so as to protect the sovereignty and dignity of the nation and its right to exist from the constant nuclear threats from the United States. Reality shows that it is the United States that has compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to go nuclear, and the United States has never denied its responsibility for that.

The United States representative mentioned the Security Council's sanctions resolutions. Those resolutions have defects, in particular the fact that there is no provision either in the United Nations Charter or in any other international law which stipulates that nuclear and ballistic rocket activities pose a threat to international peace and security.

South Korea, as a colony of the United States, long ago handed over the symbol of its sovereignty, namely, the military control over its own forces, to the United States, and it is nothing other than a servant faithfully serving the master's Asia strategy and war moves against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Among all the United Nations Member States gathered here there is no country like South Korea that has fully transferred that symbol of its sovereignty, namely, the military control over its own forces, to outside forces. It is viciously involved in disgraceful pro-United States policies and joint conspiracy cooperation manoeuvres against their fellow countrymen.

South Korea has no right to talk about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic rocket issue and the peace and security of the Korean peninsula. Moreover, South Korea is under the nuclear umbrella and has allowed the deployment of United States nuclear weapons on its territory —

The Acting Chair: With all due respect, I have to apply the time limits allocated strictly and in accordance with the rules. As I mentioned earlier, the second intervention is limited to five minutes.

Mr. Shutenko (Ukraine): I should also like to exercise my right of reply.

I will start by saying that I am not going to engage in debates about obvious facts that are clear to everyone except the Russian Federation. I should just like to quote the Budapest Memorandum. In the Memorandum, the State signatories reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine and affirm that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence.

Maybe by occupying Crimea and waging war against Ukraine the Russian Federation feels that it used its right to self-defence, but I doubt that. The Ukrainian delegation stands by its statement delivered earlier, and I would like to underline that the conflict in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions was caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which started with the attempt to illegally occupy the autonomous Republic of Crimea. Were it not for constant and sustained flows of weapons and fighters, as well as regular Russian troops, into Ukrainian territory from Russia, the lives and well-being of millions of Ukrainian citizens would not have been adversely affected. The Russian delegation would do right to stop embarrassing itself by denying the obvious.

Ms. Yoon Seoungmee (Republic of Korea): I will be very brief.

It seems that the North Korean representative did not hear what I said just 10 minutes ago. It is extremely regrettable that North Korea turns a deaf ear to the clear, loud and united call of the international community and keeps repeating its unjustifiable arguments. We totally reject its position, and as a fellow Korean I sincerely ask our North Korean colleagues to show more concern for the future of their country and its people.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.