



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

First Committee

12th meeting

Thursday, 12 October 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106 (continued)

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

The Chair: In accordance with the programme of work, the Committee will first hear a briefing by the President of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, Her Excellency Ms. Elayne Whyte Gómez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva.

Following the statement by the President of the United Nations conference, the Committee will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions. Thereafter, the Committee will continue listening to statements on the nuclear weapons cluster.

I now give the floor to the President of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez.

Ms. Whyte Gómez (Costa Rica), President of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to present the report of the United Nations

conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination (A/72/206), in my capacity as President of this important conference. I am delighted to inform members of the First Committee that the diplomatic conference was able to successfully conclude its mandate seven months after the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/258, on 23 December 2016.

The conference negotiated and adopted the text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons — the first treaty on nuclear disarmament adopted in the past 20 years within the framework of the United Nations. The Treaty was opened for signature on 20 September by the Secretary-General, and today it has 53 signatures, unless there has been a recent additional signature, and three ratifications. On 6 October, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), for its role in ensuring that the world's citizens do not suffer from the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and for its contribution to realizing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I would like to extend my warm congratulations to ICAN for this achievement and express my recognition to the entire diplomatic conference for successfully fulfilling its mandate from the General Assembly.

The year 2017 will certainly go down in history as a landmark one in our efforts to build a world that is free of nuclear weapons, which is one of the objectives of the United Nations, as well as an ethical, political and legal imperative of the entire international community, to which all States of the world are committed. To give

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

17-32316 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



some context, we must remember that in 2015, the United Nations acted with great force in terms of its historical responsibility to reach agreements on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was therefore only natural that the Organization would include in the great political processes of its multilateral negotiations the issue of nuclear weapons, which, together with climate change, constitutes the greatest existential threat to humankind.

In 2016, the General Assembly was visionary in convening this diplomatic conference at the precise historic moment when humankind anxiously faces the resurgence of the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Further, against the current international backdrop, it expressly decided that it was more urgent than ever to pay greater attention to the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of multilateral disarmament and make progress towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

It was decided then that a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons would make a significant contribution to total nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, the General Assembly moved forward resolutely to make use of one of the tools it has at its disposal, namely, the development of legal instruments. It had a clear mandate: to negotiate an instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons that strengthens and complements the current architecture, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other system components. It needed to be inclusive and capable of responding to the sense of urgency of the international context. It had to lead as early as possible to the establishment of a categorical prohibition that would also include norms that would facilitate progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

I would like to touch on a few of the factors that led to the success of this conference and were important landmarks in considering the future of multilateral negotiations within the Organization. I would like to touch on a few of these. The conference was able to address procedural matters from its very first day, which is an indicator of the success achieved in laying the groundwork for substantive and constructive dialogue. Above all, the conference benefited from the deep conviction expressed by all delegations that a sense of ethical and moral obligation prevailed as well as strong political resolve, the result of 70 years of building momentum within the process we know as the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear

Weapons in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, and which has led to new ways of thinking, new leadership, doctrines, political approaches, strategies and the growing strength of a multiple-stakeholder process. This was a successful result for the conference and a good point of arrival for the humanitarian-impact process.

A key aspect recognized by the Nobel Committee on awarding the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize was the extraordinary dynamism demonstrated by the world's citizens in the negotiations process, reflected by many civil-society organizations. This provided an opportunity for a truly interactive dialogue and cooperation between civil society and official delegations. In this spirit, the presidency held an informal dialogue with interactive panels consisting of delegations and experts, academics and scientists accredited by civil society.

This innovation was a success. It elevated the discussion, delegations received considerable technical, academic and scientific input, and provided an impetus for civil society to transform its traditional role into a collaborative one, contributing technical expertise as well as inspiration. This successful and unprecedented experiment will change the way in which we work in international forums, especially in terms of the disarmament architecture, as it gave rise to optimism, bringing a sense of shared purpose, transparency and ownership to the process. As President of the conference, I am delighted to have been able to help facilitate the elaboration of a new way of working that will be seen as an effective mechanism for ensuring the participation of the many stakeholders. I would also like to mention the role of academia and that of organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross in support of the conference and the work of the presidency.

The success of the conference in urgently negotiating and adopting the text of a treaty not only fulfils the mandate set out for it under resolution 71/258 but also helps to develop the objectives and obligations established in resolution 1 (I), adopted by the General Assembly in 1946, and in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It also fills a legal gap identified by the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex).

We would recall that the adoption of prohibition norms to counter the problems facing the international community has proved to be an effective path forward

in dealing with apartheid, racial discrimination, chemical and biological weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, to name but a few. International experience shows us that the development of legal norms is necessary to govern the behaviour of States and that it is the obligation of the international community to create such norms in order to bring about the social changes we seek.

I wish to draw the Committee's attention to several key aspects of the Treaty. The conference fulfilled the mandate of the General Assembly by incorporating within the Treaty an unequivocal, strong, clear and comprehensive prohibition that covers a broad range of activities relating to nuclear weapons. States were committed to never, under any circumstance, develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire in any way, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Furthermore, States parties will never transfer such arms or devices, use or threaten to use them or allow them to be stationed, installed or deployed on their territory.

This prohibition norm is a milestone that definitively entails qualitative and profound innovation in the way in which we address, consider, discuss and adopt measures on nuclear disarmament. As was stated by the Secretary-General when he opened the Treaty for signature on 20 September, the Treaty is an important step towards the universally held goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and will reinvigorate global efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

In keeping with the conference mandate that the Treaty go beyond prohibition to also envision norms for the future elimination of nuclear stockpiles, it was necessary to develop norms with special characteristics, that is to say, a prohibition that is moving towards a phased disarmament. That is why articles II to IV include the principal obligations whereby all countries, nuclear-weapon States in particular, can accede to the Treaty and undertake their disarmament processes within established legal obligations, including immediately decommissioning nuclear weapons and removing them from the State in question, and destroying them as soon as possible, but no later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of the States parties in accordance with a legally binding plan and with specific deadlines for the verified and irreversible elimination of the State party's nuclear-weapons programme. This includes irreversibly eliminating or converting all installations that use nuclear weapons and cooperating

with a competent international agency during the verification process.

A particularly relevant aspect of the negotiations process was fulfilling the mandate by ensuring that those legal standards supplement and bolster the current architecture for non-proliferation and disarmament. Therefore, delegations were especially vigilant in ensuring that the provisions complement the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Likewise, article III of the Treaty addresses the link with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, which guarantees that, at the very least, States will meet the currently enforced IAEA safeguard obligations in future. It also explicitly provides for the possibility of further bolstering these obligations in future with potentially relevant and more important instruments. Therefore, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons reinforces the IAEA safeguards system and supplements the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Lastly, I would like to note that the institutional framework of the Treaty includes a wide range of functions that have yet to be developed. At the meeting of States parties, there will be an opportunity to develop instruments or protocols on measures to verifiably eliminate nuclear-weapons programmes by fixed deadlines, as well as protocols additional to the Treaty.

The Treaty also provides for decisions to be taken on aspects of the regime that need development, such as the establishment of a secretariat or agencies to foster the creation of a competent international authority. We are also aware of innovation on provisions relating to victim assistance, which are compatible with international law, human rights law and the provisions on international cooperation that acknowledge the responsibility to help affected States parties and apply environmental remediation measures and international cooperation and assistance.

The risks of nuclear detonation — whether accidental or intentional — and the devastating humanitarian consequences thereof are leading us to urgently and resolutely move forward on the path towards nuclear disarmament. I therefore call for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to promptly enter into force. For that to happen, I first urge the nations that have already signed the Treaty to step up the ratification process. I invite those countries that

negotiated and enabled the adoption of the Treaty, but have not yet signed it, to step up internal discussions, so that we can reach 100 signatories as soon as possible. I urge the 53 countries that have delayed signing the Treaty to adapt their political discourse and actions to the commitments, concepts and norms that already form part of the Treaty.

Particular attention must be paid to the commitments established in article XII of the Treaty — to undertake efforts and urge non-signatory States to accede to the Treaty and promote the standards set forth in its provisions. Moving forward and bolstering dialogue among Governments, civil society and international organizations is key to making progress. Of course, our goal is the prompt entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, so as to begin the work of the meeting of States parties, which is both for the internal development of the regime and to ensure that the Treaty complements other elements of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. I commend the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her statement that we must abandon a binary approach opposing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

One of the main tasks before us is to achieve a principled approach to all components of the current architecture. We cannot continue to work in silos. On the contrary, the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture should be bolstered by different normative components, forums, processes and negotiations. The added value of each of those must be acknowledged respectively and with a clarity of purpose, towards a comprehensive approach. I call upon academia, the scientific community and independent experts to contribute to that process with ideas, analyses and specific proposals on the path towards a principled approach to the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and its revitalization.

Likewise, between now and the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, I invite the academic and scientific community to significantly contribute through technical inputs and proposals. This will help enrich the basis of our conceptual discussion, on which the conference of States parties on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will elaborate with a view to developing internal rules and addressing issues as needed in order to make it coherent with the rest of the architecture.

To conclude, I wish to thank all delegations, representatives of civil society and academia for the tremendous efforts undertaken. I also thank the Vice-Presidents and facilitators of the conference for their ongoing support of the work of the presidency, as well as the staff of the Secretariat and the Secretary-General.

I cannot conclude without expressing my appreciation for the Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to civil society for its contribution to this process and to nuclear disarmament in general. We hope that the Prize and its recognition will also reinvigorate the national and global discussion, leading to signatures and ratifications of the Treaty, in the hope that, in a matter of just a few years, all countries will echo the voice of the Treaty — that of humankind, whose goal is to survive as a species and live in a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Chair: I thank the President of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, for her statement.

In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting so as to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the briefing we just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 3.35 p.m.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico is taking part in today's thematic debate with deep emotion following the decision to confer the Nobel Peace Prize on the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Mexico extends its recognition to ICAN and congratulates its well-known activists on their invaluable support for nuclear disarmament, a longed-for objective that we have had the honour to share with them.

The awarding of the Prize to ICAN highlights the fundamental role played by civil society in the effective promotion, in conjunction with States, of multilateral initiatives and themes linked to the noblest causes of humankind. The award is a recognition of the raising of awareness as to the catastrophic consequences of the existence of nuclear weapons. We take this opportunity also to express our appreciation to our partners and friends from Austria, Ireland, Brazil, Nigeria and South

Africa, for all the common efforts made in recent years in our shared task.

I would like to make a very special mention of the Hibakusha, who, with their testimony, were a living force and profound motivation of the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences.

It is a mission accomplished — the First Committee has made possible the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We must be proud of this. We have been able to demonstrate that with political will, it is possible to find alternative means to the paralysis that still exists in the Conference on Disarmament. We have returned to the path of the progressive development of international law and codification and strengthened the legal framework of non-proliferation and disarmament. We welcome the fact that a large number of countries have signed the new instrument. Mexico is already carrying out internal efforts to ratify the instrument as soon as possible.

The global security situation cannot justify the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, the current context intensifies the need for urgent action to ensure the elimination of this type of weaponry. In that context, the First Committee is especially relevant today. Some speak lightly of the use of nuclear weapons and justify their possession and subsequent use. Let us not deceive ourselves. Nuclear weapons involve the collective and indiscriminate killing of our peoples. They cause indescribable suffering and irreversible damage. Nuclear weapons, as the General Assembly has already stated, are inherently immoral because of their indiscriminate character and the potential for the annihilation of humankind.

That is why Mexico rejects nuclear weapons and acts with recognized consistency in its commitment to the use of nuclear energy in an exclusively peaceful manner and to total, transparent and irreversible nuclear disarmament. The strengthening and consolidation of the global nuclear disarmament regime is clearly on the international agenda as a priority as we welcome the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Today, it is clear that most of the international community shares that view. Our communal interests in international security demand that we act decisively to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive

Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As it does each year, Mexico, together with Australia and New Zealand, will continue to promote the entry into force of the Treaty by means of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). Mexico once again calls upon States whose signature and ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty to accede to it without further delay.

Mexico deplores and condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear tests and missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Those reckless, provocative acts represent serious threats to international peace and security.

Nearly five decades into its entry into force, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the only way to address the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and it is proliferation and disarmament that we must protect. The new review cycle should focus on recalling and fulfilling all our obligations and commitments as outlined in the NPT. Mexico calls on all States to carry out an in-depth evaluation of the factors responsible for the failure of the 2015 Review Conference. Let us work towards a successful Review Conference in 2020.

Mexico will continue to promote non-proliferation and disarmament within the Organization and other international forums as a step towards international stability and security. As we have already agreed, all responsible States have a solemn obligation to take decisions that will protect our peoples and one another from the ravages resulting from any detonation of nuclear weapons. Mexico will continue to be a committed ally of all who share the lofty goals of the United Nations.

Ms. Quinn (Ireland): I wish to align myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/72/PV.10).

The challenges that we face today in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are existential and threaten the very existence of humankind and the attainment of our most cherished global goals. The Nobel Committee, in its statement awarding the Peace Prize to ICAN, recognized that

“[w]e live in a world where the risk of nuclear weapons being used is greater than it has been for a long time. Some States are modernizing their

nuclear arsenals, and there is a real danger that more countries will try to procure nuclear weapons, as exemplified by North Korea”.

Ireland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs has condemned the illegal nuclear and ballistic missile testing by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea unreservedly and has urged the resumption of diplomatic engagement, so that a peaceful resolution leading to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula can come about. Ireland notes with concern that the norm against threats of use of such appalling weapons has been steadily eroding in recent years, not only with regard to developments on the Korean peninsula, but also in other contexts.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is now more urgent than ever. We call on all remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty, so that the international norm against nuclear testing can become legally binding.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to which we are deeply committed, has achieved substantial progress in restraining proliferation of such weapons and in governing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Regrettably, there has not been the same level of success in implementing the NPT’s disarmament pillar. Ireland fully supports the individual elements within the step-by-step approach to the NPT’s commitments. In line with the New Agenda Coalition draft resolution, we would welcome progress on risk reduction, initiatives in transparency and the further development of nuclear disarmament verification mechanisms. We also support the development of benchmarks for assessment of the implementation of NPT commitments.

Ireland views the NPT from a global perspective and has introduced a series of papers showing the linkages between the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and other high-level goals, including with regard to the Sustainable Development Goal, gender equality, climate change and cultural heritage. The findings of the paper of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on gender, development and nuclear weapons should not surprise anyone who takes a look around this room today. It is clear that women are vastly underrepresented in nuclear-disarmament forums. We welcome the NPT Chair’s factual summary, which encourages States party to the Treaty to actively improve the situation.

Another relevant question is the gendered impact of ionizing radiation. Scientific findings on the strongly disproportionate gendered impact of ionizing radiation on women and men have been available to States for some time now, which further supports the cause of nuclear-weapons abolition.

Ireland is keen for the work on the Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction to regain momentum, with the involvement of all stakeholders from the region. We look forward to continuing our engagement on that question, which is vital for a productive outcome to the 2020 NPT review cycle. We would welcome hearing from the co-conveners about their plans on such an essential aspect of the NPT.

Ireland is proud to have played a leadership role in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Recognition of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapons detonation has been a driving force. Ireland was guided throughout that process by the compelling requirement to implement article VI of the NPT. The new Treaty complements and does not undermine the NPT in any way. Indeed, article VI expressly envisages a separate treaty on general and complete nuclear disarmament. The new Treaty addresses that legal gap. We urge all States to sign and ratify it and to support the draft resolution (A/C.1/72/L.6) on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament, which was introduced by our Austrian and Mexican colleagues.

Ireland continues to be deeply committed to non-proliferation, as we recognize the crucial role of export-control regimes in contributing to a safer world. Next week, along with Iceland, Ireland will assume the co-chairmanship of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). As co-Chairs of the MTCR, we have actively engaged in outreach in order to expand and deepen the influence of such an important export-control regime.

Ireland regards the nuclear deal with Iran as a key achievement for non-proliferation and an example of what can be achieved through careful diplomacy and negotiation. We have been pleased to support the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and welcome the International Atomic Energy Agency’s findings regarding ongoing implementation. We call on Iran to strictly implement all provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and refrain

from any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Our President has said that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons marks both a significant moment in history and a high point of international cooperation. The progress reached in nuclear disarmament in 2017 represents fresh hope in an era in which all too many have lost their lives and livelihoods to violence and conflict and at a time when unbridled threats can all too freely spread. It should serve to increase our determination to advance in all areas of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, where at times there can seem to be scant prospect for progress. My delegation truly believes that States can work together during this session of the First Committee and focus on the many aspirations and goals that we share towards a more secure and more peaceful world, for the benefit of all.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States remains committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament and to seeking to create conditions to that end. History makes clear that important progress can be made when security conditions allow. The easing of Cold War rivalries allowed the United States and Russia to make significant steps towards the shared dream of eventual nuclear disarmament after decades in which such movement was impossible. As we look to the future, all States must work together soberly and resolutely to lay the foundations for more of such progress as we pursue effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament, as called for in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

While progress is not always rapid, that is out of necessity, not lethargy. Disarmament success is predicated on patience, attention to detail, effective verification and patient attention to the challenges of effecting the changes in the security environment that are necessary for progress. That last element is critical, considering the crucial role that nuclear deterrence plays in preserving and protecting international peace and security and the potentially catastrophic consequences were deterrence's restraining effect to be removed while it still remains necessary.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons violates all of those tenets. Its obligations are vaguely worded, imprecise and sometimes internally contradictory, while offering only an empty

shell for verification. Worse, it is fundamentally at odds with today's security challenges. It is not simply an unproductive instrument. It is likely to be a counterproductive one with the potential to cause lasting harm to the non-proliferation regime and to the cause of disarmament alike.

The Treaty is based on the premise that addressing crucial international security issues is not necessary for disarmament. Treaty proponents would have us believe that we can do away with nuclear deterrence despite, to cite just one example, the danger posed by North Korea's relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems, which stand in flagrant violation of international law.

Furthermore, the Treaty does not contain a credible verification mechanism, demurring on the issue almost entirely. It runs counter to decades of progress in non-proliferation verification by endorsing the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreement as its standard for safeguarding nuclear material without also requiring the essential additional protocol. Experience has proved that comprehensive safeguards alone are insufficient to detect a covert nuclear programme. The drafters' decision to reject the additional protocol represents a profound failure of judgment and is likely to undermine efforts to universalize the additional protocol.

Finally, the Treaty has the potential to do real damage to the NPT in other ways. It exacerbates political tensions on disarmament, dividing States into overly-simplified camps of nuclear-weapon supporters and nuclear-weapon banners, rather than recognizing shared interests, especially on the challenges involved in creating the conditions that would make possible further disarmament progress. Reinforcing that false dichotomy and worsening the world's polarization on disarmament will make further progress within the institutions that have been vehicles for success, such as the NPT review process, significantly more difficult.

Inspired by the NPT preamble's acknowledgement of the need to ease international tension and strengthen trust between States in order to facilitate disarmament, the United States stands ready to work with others on effective measures to create improved conditions for nuclear disarmament. To take one example, we continue to work through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification to identify and address the complex challenges associated with nuclear

disarmament verification. That work is focused on overcoming technical challenges to make substantive progress when the security conditions improve. We also continue our long-standing work to support and strengthen the global non-proliferation regime against the many challenges that it faces today, for who could deny that there can be no way to envision today's nuclear-weapons possessors ever putting down such tools without rock-solid assurances that no one else will take them up?

There are no shortcuts to nuclear disarmament. Unrealistic attempts to skip to the finish line have the potential to undermine the institutions and standards that we have worked so hard to build. Our collective experience demonstrates that inclusiveness and the search for consensus can lead to progress, while polarization is a recipe for failure. We urge all States to work with us in seeking common solutions to collective problems in pursuit a more secure world.

Mr. Gallhofer (Austria): I shall read out a shortened version of Austria's statement. The full version will be posted on PaperSmart.

Let me start by congratulating the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. We are delighted by the decision. It is a recognition of ICAN's crucial role in raising awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and bringing about the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. At a moment when the danger of the use of nuclear weapons is unfortunately more present than it has been for many years, that is an important signal. Austria will continue its close cooperation with ICAN to advance towards the universalization and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as quickly as possible, as a contribution to our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are top foreign-policy concerns of my country. The current crisis concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programme, to which we already referred during the general debate (see A/C.1/72/PV.3), has moved the issues even higher on our list of priorities. It will soon be 50 years since the fundamental international norm, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), entered into force. Austria believes that the NPT has been an extraordinarily important success, without which

international peace and security would still be far more precarious. We would be faced with even more nuclear weapons and even more actors possessing them.

On the other hand, the situation could also be much better: proliferation could have ceased long ago and the nuclear-weapon States could have given up their nuclear weapons, or at least begun a serious and steady movement towards that goal. By the time of the big anniversary of the NPT, will nuclear disarmament have progressed far enough to bring a world free of nuclear weapons — the aspiration of the Treaty — within reach? Unfortunately, that is difficult to believe. Even the more modest objective of maintaining the number of nuclear-weapon States at five has not been attained.

In this period of ongoing geopolitical realignment, the States currently possessing nuclear weapons seem to be even less prepared to disarm, with one State even more eager to acquire those weapons. In view of the serious challenges we face, it is urgent that we reinvigorate the NPT and put it back on track towards the realization of its dual objective. In order to achieve that, however, States parties must be prepared to do more than just defend the nuclear status quo in a spirit of complacency.

It is a great achievement that the broad international discussion of recent years on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences has promoted awareness of the use of nuclear weapons and deepened understanding of the risks and dangers of these most horrific weapons, especially at a time when the concrete threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes is still not making headlines. As long as nuclear arms exist, their humanitarian consequences must remain high on the international agenda. That is why we, alongside a large number of sponsors, decided once again to present the draft resolution entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/72/L.5), which reiterates all the elements of last year's resolution 71/46 with only technical updates.

The discussion on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons became the catalyst for a political and diplomatic process culminating in the adoption of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by 122 States, on 7 July 2017. The Treaty closes a gap by establishing a legal prohibition for the only category of weapons of mass destruction not yet outlawed. Such a prohibition is a necessary foundation as well as a stimulus for further steps towards the total elimination

of nuclear weapons. We have also put forward a draft resolution (A/C.1/72/L.6) on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, again with many sponsors. It includes changes to reflect the significant developments that have taken place over the course of this year.

Austria and the sponsors invite all States to support those two draft resolutions and to consider becoming sponsors.

While the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons commands strong international support, some States have raised a number of questions and concerns, both during the discussions of the First Committee and outside of it. Let me react to two concerns that we have heard most frequently.

As to the impact of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its relationship to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), both instruments are legally and politically consistent. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in particular establishes a way for nuclear-weapon States to meet their obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT. It also fully takes account of the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards system, requiring an even higher standard for most States than is stipulated by the NPT.

We hear that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons delegitimizes nuclear deterrence. That takes us back to the question of what nuclear deterrence means for security in the first place: nothing good, as Austria and the supporters of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons believe. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons imply that any failure of nuclear deterrence would be absolutely devastating.

Unfortunately, the risk of nuclear war actually occurring has further increased recently. The crisis around the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear programme is a drastic illustration of that. Other serious risks include accidents, cyberattacks or terrorism related to nuclear weapons. The Domsday Clock of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists currently stands at two and a half minutes to midnight. We are balancing on the edge of an abyss. It is therefore urgent that we finally move on from the Cold War concept of mutually assured destruction as the illusionary warrant for the security of ourselves, our children

and grandchildren. By contributing to this necessary tradition, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons actually strengthens security rather than undermining it.

In the coming months, Austria will continue to encourage States to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons so that the instrument can enter into force as soon as possible. That also includes our desire to continue and intensify dialogue with those currently not in favour of the new Treaty. We feel that there is still a lack of knowledge and a degree of misconception, which can and should be removed. Even those currently not prepared to join should be able to appreciate that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons contributes to making the world a safer and more secure place for everybody, without exception.

In conclusion, we have always said that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an important step towards nuclear disarmament but that, in order to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world, many other steps will have to be taken. Austria will therefore continue to pay close attention to these other issues, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, further work on nuclear disarmament verification and other items listed in the 2010 NPT Action Plan, as well as possible new initiatives. There is every reason to hope that the positive momentum created by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will also stimulate progress on other fronts, so that by 2020 we will be able to evaluate the effects of the NPT more positively than is possible today.

Mrs. Granda Averhoff (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We fully support the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Cuba expresses its deep concern about the very existence of nuclear weapons. The detonation, whether intentional or not, of just a small number of the nearly 15,000 existing nuclear weapons would have disastrous consequences for our planet and the future of humankind. The international community cannot remain passive or silent in the face of the grave danger posed by nuclear weapons, the threat of nuclear war and the increase in military expenditures for the development, modernization and manufacture of new weapons.

In that context, Cuba welcomes the adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which constitutes a historic event and a fundamental and urgent step forward on the path towards nuclear disarmament. The Treaty establishes a categorical and comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons, a framework for their destruction and total elimination and ways for the nuclear-weapon States that wish to do so to become parties to the Treaty.

Under this instrument, the use, threat of use of nuclear weapons and all types of nuclear tests are proscribed under any circumstances. Consistent with its principled position on nuclear disarmament, Cuba signed that international instrument on 20 September and supports its early entry into force. We call on the General Assembly to endorse the Treaty and the report of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, in which it was negotiated and approved. All attempts and approaches aimed at preserving the status quo, justifying the existence of nuclear weapons and postponing their prohibition and elimination are unacceptable.

We urge the nuclear-weapon States to show political will and real commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament by signing the Treaty, fulfilling their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and eliminating the role of nuclear weapons from their doctrines and security and defence policies, as well as ceasing the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types of those arms.

Cuba reiterates its commitment to nuclear disarmament, which is its highest priority in the field of disarmament. Major efforts must be made to achieve the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that regard, we urge the General Assembly to endorse, as it did at the recent high-level meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Disposal of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September, the holding in 2018 of a high-level international conference to review progress on nuclear disarmament and to take further action in that regard.

Ms. Walder (Sweden): First, let me congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. In addition to recognizing the crucial role of civil society,

it sends a timely and powerful message regarding the need for progress on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation stated its views on nuclear disarmament during the general debate (see A/72/PV.16). The lack of dialogue on nuclear disarmament among the nuclear Powers, the stalemate in nuclear-disarmament negotiations, the ongoing modernization of nuclear weapons, the nuclear arms build-up in South Asia and the nuclear and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea all give rise to great concern, as does the lack of progress on the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's.

One of the most-often heard phrases in this room is that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. That is more valid than ever today. It is mainly within the NPT process that true and effective multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation can be achieved. But in order to make progress, there has to be political will. The nuclear-weapon States must fulfil their obligations under article VI of the NPT. They must also acknowledge that the NPT does not give them the right to possess nuclear weapons forever. All States parties must respect and implement with urgency their commitments undertaken at previous Review Conferences, especially those from 2000 and 2010. Our objective must now be a successful outcome of the 2020 Review Conference. To that end, we must be both ambitious and realistic.

It would be naive to believe that all disagreements will evaporate. That should not prevent us from trying to find common ground on the many issues where substantive progress could be made. Risk reduction, confidence-building, tactical nuclear weapons, transparency, verification and reporting are some areas where we see room for positive developments.

In the Conference on Disarmament (CD), old mantras are being repeated. Delegations state their willingness to enter into negotiations. However, it is only on their selected issues and only on their own predetermined conditions. We must reinstate the role of the CD as the negotiating body for nuclear disarmament. As one of the six rotating Presidents of next year's session of the CD, Sweden is ready to play its part in facilitating an agreement on a substantive programme of work. We can build upon the constructive discussions held in this year's informal Working Group on the Way

Ahead. However, that demands collective efforts and a true spirit of compromise, as well as flexibility.

The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are irrefutable. Sweden's fundamental perspective on nuclear disarmament is a humanitarian one. That was our point of departure for the decision to participate in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty is the subject of a heated debate. There is widespread and well-founded frustration with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament; the Treaty's process is an expression of that frustration. But we must not let those disagreements on prohibition poison discussions on the entire disarmament agenda. Let us agree to disagree and move forward.

For Sweden's part, we have now started a thorough analysis of the Treaty's provisions and their impact at a national level on a wide spectrum of issues. Those include disarmament and other security and defence policy interests, national legislation, trade and research matters. A decision on a possible signing of the Treaty will be made only after that analysis is concluded. Any decision to accede to the Treaty will subsequently have to be taken by the Swedish Parliament.

The active and equal participation and leadership of women in decision-making and action is crucial for advancing peace and security. That is not least the case in the nuclear field, as nuclear weapons have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, including as a result of ionizing radiation.

It is far too easy to be pessimistic about nuclear disarmament in today's challenging environment. Let us not make those dire straits obscure our common goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Let us leave the deadlocks on far too many issues behind and focus on what unites us, in the First Committee and beyond.

A full version of our statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mrs. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland strongly condemns the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Its nuclear programme serves to highlight the importance of continued efforts in non-proliferation and the swift entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Meanwhile, we support all diplomatic efforts to achieve peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

While we note with satisfaction the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the continued full and faithful adherence by all parties is of primary importance, not only for regional stability but also for the credibility of the non-proliferation architecture. We urge all parties to abide by the agreement and carefully calibrate their actions to preserve that historic achievement.

In recent months, we have noted with great concern an increase in statements running counter to the core principles of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We are particularly worried about unprecedented explicit nuclear threats. The use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or inadvertent, would cause entirely unacceptable humanitarian consequences under nearly all plausible scenarios. Therefore, it is difficult to envisage how any nuclear-weapon use could be compatible with the requirements of international law, in particular international humanitarian law. In that context, expectations for progress in nuclear disarmament remain high. In sharp contrast, we see worrying trends. Nuclear-weapons reductions, which have been significant in the past, have stalled. Nuclear arsenals are undergoing sustained modernization. A number of long-standing disarmament commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have not been implemented. Nuclear-weapon States outside of the NPT are developing their arsenals and adding new capabilities.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) underlines the expectations of progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and the humanitarian concerns raised by such weapons. We congratulate ICAN.

Against that background, it is significant that an explicit and comprehensive international prohibition of nuclear weapons was negotiated earlier this year. While we would have wished for broader participation, in particular by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies, Switzerland took part in the negotiations. We aimed at an agreement with the greatest possible disarmament benefits and with the lowest possible risks for the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. One of our key goals was to ensure complementarity between the new Treaty and existing agreements, notably the NPT, which is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We voted in favour of the final draft of the Treaty because it corresponded with important Swiss objectives and is in line with our humanitarian tradition. However, a number of our concerns were not fully addressed. We have questions about verifiability, verification standards and the Treaty's relationship with existing norms, instruments and forums. In order to define its position in relation to the Treaty, Switzerland has initiated an inter-agency evaluation process. We will also follow closely the manner in which the Treaty is interpreted and implemented.

We are convinced of the need to leave polarization behind and establish a constructive coexistence between differing approaches. In terms of the process, the high-level meeting scheduled for 2018 should provide us with a forum to find common ground. In terms of substance, let me mention three areas that deserve particular attention.

First, reducing operational readiness is an important and urgent interim risk-reduction measure to prevent an unintentional or accidental launch. That issue has seen growing support in recent years. Switzerland fully supports the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the De-Alerting Group (see A/C.1/72/PV.11).

Secondly, while some progress was achieved in recent years in the context of transparency with regard to the NPT, we still do not have a baseline to assess disarmament progress. It is now important to focus on the proposals that have been made in that connection.

Finally, the verifiability of nuclear disarmament is a fundamental principle. We welcome the work moving forward in developing capacities in that area. The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification is an important initiative in that area. We hope that the Governmental Group of Experts that will meet next year will be able to make progress on nuclear-disarmament verification.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): During this year's session the First Committee is reviewing the three-year cycle on the thematic issues related to new types of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and new systems for such weapons in considered in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). This topic is included in the Conference's agenda item 5, on new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems for such weapons, as well as radiological weapons, which, as a rule, are considered together

with items 6 and 7, on a comprehensive programme of disarmament and transparency in armaments, and which shows how fine the line between these issues is.

The topic of new types of WMDs is regularly discussed in the Conference on Disarmament. During this year's session, in-depth discussions on the subject were held in the CD's Working Group on the Way Ahead and coordinated by the delegation of Belarus. The discussions showed that many delegations wanted to address issues related to new challenges and threats, such as cyberweapons, lethal autonomous weapon systems, the weaponization of artificial intelligence and preventing WMDs from falling into the hands of terrorist groups. The development of scientific and technological progress, achievements in robotics, the emergence of improved means of delivery, the potential for doing damage comparable to the results of WMDs and the growing role of non-State actors are all factors that show the importance of substantive discussions within the CD aimed at identifying possible legal gaps and ways of bridging them preventively. The delegation of Belarus is trying to draw the attention of the international community to this issue and to develop discussion of it both inside and outside the CD on possible threats, legal gaps and ways of responding.

In order to improve the internationally recognized procedures that enable us to monitor the possible development of new types of weapons of mass destruction and that can establish conditions for developing concrete recommendations on types of weapons of mass destruction that might be developed, we submit a draft resolution on a regular triennial basis entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament" (A/C.1/72/L.9). The draft resolution is aimed at promoting the idea of preventing an arms race and creating a disarmament mechanism that can be implemented if needed. The text includes wording on Member States' political commitment to affirming their determination to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction. The resolution provides for the adoption of a preparedness mechanism for responding by requesting that the Conference on Disarmament keep the matter under review and make recommendations on specific negotiations on new types of weapons of mass destruction. The text of the draft resolution retains continuity and includes only technical updates. The previous version, adopted

as resolution 69/27 by the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, was sponsored by more than 30 States and adopted by an overwhelming majority of Member States.

We believe that the current international situation, the increasing number of threats and the importance of responding to them, as well as the compromise nature of the resolution, will make it possible to adopt it by consensus during the Assembly's seventy-second session. We affirm our willingness to work with interested States on the topic and urge delegations to become sponsors of the draft resolution, which is already posted on the First Committee website.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): In the face of our most urgent and grave threat to date concerning nuclear weapons, the Republic of Korea remains resolute in its commitment to our common goal of a world without such weapons.

Half a century ago, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was established, the outcome of collective efforts by the international community acting on a keen sense of urgency with a view to avoiding devastation by nuclear war. Five decades later, the NPT is still the most realistic, effective and inclusive tool we have for ridding our world of nuclear weapons. Yet despite that achievement, we are still struggling with an ever-growing threat that undermines the very global non-proliferation regime that we have worked so hard to build over the years.

When North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test in defiance of repeated warnings by the international community, and followed it with yet another ballistic-missile launch, it was met with stronger condemnations and more severe sanctions from the entire international community. In a matter of days following the test, the Security Council adopted its sanctions resolution 2375 (2017) with unprecedented speed and severity. Numerous countries strongly condemned North Korea. The message from the international community has been consistent and clear. It will not tolerate North Korea's nuclear and missile ambitions. My Government welcomes and fully supports those firm actions.

What we need most at this juncture is a strong, united commitment to the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions so that North Korea feels the real pain of sanctions and is compelled to stop its provocations and, ultimately, choose the path of dialogue. All peace-loving countries are fully

committed to our collective efforts to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of North Korea's nuclear programme in a peaceful manner.

Once again, in this forum, we urge North Korea to stop pretending that nuclear weapons will guarantee its security and economic growth and squarely face the fact that denuclearization is its only path to a secure and prosperous future. There is no bigger double standard or arbitrary distortion of facts and the law than what North Korea has been trying to put forward for years. The result is clear. North Korea has no credibility with the international community, and the regime is more isolated than ever. We call on North Korea to stop pursuing a path of self-destruction and make the right choice once and for all.

While this critical problem looms large for us, we should also continue to strive to make greater progress in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament. It is time to focus on what unites us rather than what divides us, considering the complicated security situation, among other things. We must be united, first of all, in reaffirming our strong commitment to strengthening the NPT regime as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including through the fulfilment of the 13 practical steps outlined at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and of the 2010 NPT Action Plan. We should act on all common elements on ways to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, most important of which are the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the early negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, nuclear-disarmament verification, a resolution of the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and renewed efforts by the nuclear-weapon States in accordance with article VI of the NPT. Those perennial common elements show that no disarmament agreement is viable unless it is inclusive. They tell us that decision-making by a numerical majority that fails to give due consideration to the security concerns of all the parties involved is not a realistic and effective way to address questions either of disarmament or international security.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

I would like to conclude by saying that time is not on our side. A renewed sense of urgency and genuine cooperation among all of us is sorely needed.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): The worsening global and regional security environment has significantly undermined international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches demonstrate an unprecedented, grave and imminent threat that challenges the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, which is centred on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Furthermore, we are without clear guidelines to pursue nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation leading up to 2020, due to the absence of an agreement at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Despite those challenges, the 2020 NPT review cycle made a successful start in Vienna in May. We should be united in our efforts to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I would like to note the steady implementation of the 2010 Action Plan and other agreed measures emanating from the respective review conferences. Japan has submitted to the First Committee a draft resolution entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/72/L.35). We fervently hope that it will receive strong support from all Member States.

Japan aligns itself with the statements made yesterday by the representative of Australia on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the De-Alerting Group (see A/C.1/72/PV.10). I would like to deliver this abridged version of my statement to underscore the following points from our national perspective.

First, the NPT is an overarching architecture that ensures international security by promoting nuclear disarmament and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Therefore, to strengthen the NPT regime, we continue to underline the importance of universality and urge non-State parties to accede to it immediately as non-nuclear weapon States, without conditions.

Secondly, given the slow progress in nuclear disarmament, substantial measures should be taken with a sense of urgency. In order to fulfil the obligation under article VI of the NPT, all nuclear-weapon States have to make further efforts to comply with their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total

elimination of nuclear weapons, which is imperative to uphold the NPT regime.

Thirdly, Japan is convinced that practical and concrete nuclear disarmament measures, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and verification, with constructive cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, is an effective way to advance nuclear disarmament. With regard to the CTBT, we urge all countries, in particular the remaining eight annex 2 States — which have a special responsibility for the entry into force of the treaty — to ratify the treaty and overcome internal difficulties in order to take prompt action.

Fourthly, resolving regional nuclear proliferation issues is vital. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sixth nuclear test, on 3 September, is totally unacceptable, as it is an egregious challenge to international security as well as to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. By unanimously adopting resolution 2375 (2017), the Security Council imposed additional robust sanctions to send a clear message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must abide by the relevant resolutions and abandon its nuclear and missile-development programmes immediately. At the same time, all States Members of the United Nations bear an obligation to fully implement a series of resolutions and should demonstrate a firm attitude in addressing this threat.

Fifthly, disarmament and non-proliferation education is a valuable tool to foster momentum for achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. Japan encourages all States to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's 2004 report on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/59/178). In doing so, States should take into account measures in such areas as cooperation among a diverse range of actors, critical thinking, information technology and raising awareness of the realities flowing from the catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

Lastly, the international group of eminent persons that Japan has established includes representatives from diverse international backgrounds, including from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The group is expected to meet in Hiroshima in November and provide standard-setting recommendations for the international community to make substantive progress on nuclear disarmament

to overcome diverse positions. Japan believes that the first key recommendations of the group, to be made of the next session of the NPT preparatory committee, to be held in Geneva in 2018, will provide useful ideas for the 2020 NPT review process. Under Poland's chairmanship, Japan will exert its utmost efforts during the remaining six months of the preparatory process to ensure the success of the committee.

Mr. Kuatbekov (Kazakhstan): In our interdependent and interconnected world, nuclear weapons are no longer an asset but a danger. Fully convinced of that, President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan has been urging the world community to make eliminating the nuclear danger the most urgent task for humankind in the twenty-first century. He has demonstrated through many historic actions his firm commitment to a nuclear-weapons-free future. Kazakhstan's memorable history of closing the second-largest nuclear-weapon-test site and renouncing the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal is well known. The date of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site — 29 August — was the starting point of my country's nuclear-weapon-free history and became a symbol of action against nuclear tests.

As we know, on 2 December 2009, the General Assembly established 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, thanks to the support of each and every States Members of the United Nations. For seven consecutive years since 2010, the President of the General Assembly has convened an annual observance of the Day. The active participation of more than 150 Member States at the eighth observance, held on 30 August 2017, points to the united stand that United Nations countries have categorically taken to end nuclear tests.

Over the past two years, we have been advised by the Office of the President to amend resolution 64/35 (2009), as currently it does not mandate the President of the General Assembly to hold such annual observance meetings. In that regard, Kazakhstan would like only to very slightly modify the resolution, by adding one short paragraph — paragraph 3 — to request the President to conduct the annual observance of the International Day. We hope for the continuation of this noble and worthy tradition, we ask members' support for and co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/72/L.36.

The issue of ending nuclear tests is very relevant as the world is very concerned about the continued threat, even today in the twenty-first century. That

should further compel us to ensure the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As past co-President of the CTBT Article XIV Conference, in 2015, Kazakhstan and Japan have worked with commitment over the past two years and call on the annex 2 countries to ratify the Treaty without delay.

Despite the challenges facing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in recent years, nobody doubts its role and importance as a cornerstone of international security and non-proliferation. Of the three central missions of the NPT, the pace of nuclear disarmament generates the most controversy, as is reflected in the discussions and decisions on the sidelines of the General Assembly. After the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, when the NPT was permanently extended, it somehow made the nuclear-weapon States less proactive in the process of nuclear disarmament. The imperative today is to exert more political will for further substantial reductions and the eventual total elimination of all nuclear stockpiles by all nuclear-possessing States.

This year we saw a historic development with the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That long-awaited legal instrument was the result of many years of intense efforts and tireless work by advocates for the total ban on nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan actively participated in the process and reaffirms its commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament. We underscore that it substantially supplements the NPT and does not detract attention away from it. The support for the Treaty gives us confidence that the views of the absolute majority of non-nuclear-weapon States could, and should, play a significant role in the field of nuclear disarmament.

We completely agree with the Secretary-General that the Treaty is an important step towards the universally held goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and we share his hope that it will reinvigorate global efforts to achieve it. In his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1), the Secretary-General also alerted us in particular to threats involving rapidly escalating developments in cybercrimes, artificial intelligence and outer space, which can affect nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The international community needs to remain vigilant with regard to such threats, and we thank the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for being proactive.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize once again that complex problems do not have simple solutions. In order to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, it is obvious that we have to put our personal ambitions aside for the sake of our general security based on mutual trust and confidence — the pillars of all multilateral action.

Mr. Quinn (Australia): Our proceedings this year take place in the shadow of the grave global security threat posed by North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic-missile development programmes. Its irresponsible and dangerous actions, in breach of the relevant Security Council resolutions, are a major setback to achieving our shared goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. Australia is moving quickly to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions relating to that crisis, as all countries must. Full political, diplomatic and economic pressure must be applied to compel North Korea to change course. The crisis is also a sobering reminder that sustainable and effective nuclear-disarmament measures must take account of the international security environment, including to address the security dimensions of why States possess nuclear weapons.

Despite the difficult global and regional security environment, there is much that we can do to reduce risk, build trust and move forward in practical ways. That requires patience, creativity, innovation and determined effort. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the world's most important nuclear disarmament tool — an essential cornerstone of the modern collective security system, which legally binds more than 190 States parties — and the consensus 2012 NPT Action Plan remains our blueprint for practical action. Implementing the Plan requires sustained commitment on four well-established tracks: bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force; negotiating a treaty to end the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; achieving more transparency in connection with nuclear arsenals; and solving complex, practical problems concerning the verification of steps leading towards nuclear disarmament. Australia advocates the progressive approach to advanced disarmament through those and other concrete realistic steps. We also work to build bridges and find agreement through the cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative.

Australia is pleased to co-present, together with Mexico, as lead this year, and New Zealand, the

annual draft resolution on the CTBT (A/C.1/72/L.42). Continued provocations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea highlight the urgency of the CTBT's entry into force and universalization. The CTBT's influence rests on its normative force and the proven effectiveness of its verification mechanism. It has established and entrenched the de facto norm against nuclear testing.

We are also encouraged by the substantive work of the high-level experts group of the fissile material cut-off treaty, under Canada's strong leadership and in which Australia is participating actively. It is up to all of us to use the group's work as a springboard to start negotiations. The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification continues to advance essential, practical problem-solving work in that area. We look forward to the deliberations next year of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament.

All those strands of activity contribute to confidence-building. Trust must be built by all relevant players. We urge those States possessing nuclear weapons to take the lead in demonstrating concrete progress. Greater transparency with regard to nuclear arsenals would be a welcome next step. Negotiations on a post-New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation will also be important in demonstrating such progress, as well as ongoing dialogue on nuclear doctrine and strategic stability.

The only path leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons is effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. That requires the constructive engagement of all the relevant countries, including those with nuclear weapons. Australia shares the commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, that objective, in our view, is ill served by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That treaty has deepened divisions, undermined some past progress and created damaging ambiguities, as well as unhelpfully established a rival forum for further work on nuclear disarmament. A key problem for Australia is that the Treaty seeks to deligitimize extended deterrence. The Treaty will not advance nuclear disarmament or security.

In conclusion, in Australia's view, our shared focus should instead be on our common interests in supporting and strengthening the NPT. Australia will continue to

work pragmatically and effectively to support the NPT as the cornerstone of the international community's long-term disarmament efforts. That work has never been more important as it is now. Nuclear weapons pose a serious threat to all nations. We will do all in our power to realize the shared goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of India to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.22 and A/C.1/72/L.47.

Mr. Gill (India): India associates itself with the statement on the nuclear weapons cluster in the First Committee delivered previously by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

India remains committed to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament, and to multilateralism in pursuit of that goal. Our position has been firm and consistent over the years. We support the proposal for the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Without prejudice to the priority that we attach to nuclear disarmament, we also support the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of a fissile material cut-off treaty based on Conference of Disarmament decision mandate contained in CD/1299.

As a responsible nuclear power, India has a policy of credible minimum deterrence based on a no-first-use posture and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We remain committed to maintaining a unilateral voluntary moratorium on nuclear-explosive testing. Since there was a reference to India and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by a grouping yesterday (see A/C.1/72/PV.10), let me say that India's position on the NPT is well known and should require no reiteration. The question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State does not arise.

At the same time, we support upholding and strengthening global non-proliferation objectives, in particular the full and effective implementation by States of their obligations arising from the relevant agreements and treaties, including the NPT. Despite being a non-party, India abides by the principles and objectives of the NPT, including its nuclear-disarmament aspirations. India is committed to contributing to strengthening non-proliferation. We

have updated our agenda, and hope our friends will renew theirs and focus on the real implementation deficits on non-proliferation and disarmament.

India did not participate in the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. India therefore cannot be a party to the Treaty and shall not be bound by any of the obligations that may arise from it. As in the past, India remains ready to work with the signatories to the Treaty for progress in multilateral forums on the shared goal of the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

Through its statements on 7 July and 3 September, India made clear its position on the missile tests and nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a matter of deep concern that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has acted in violation of its international commitments and goes against the objective of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which has been endorsed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from such actions, which adversely impact peace and stability in the region and beyond. India also remains concerned about the proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies, which has adversely impacted India's national security. The international community should take a united stand against those who indulge in, or benefit from, clandestine proliferation linkages.

On behalf of the sponsors, India would like to introduce two draft resolutions under this cluster. The first one, entitled "Convention on the prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" (A/C.1/72/L.47), was first introduced in 1982 and is one of the long-standing draft resolutions in the First Committee. It reflects our belief that a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons negotiated in the CD with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States will contribute to the process of the step-by-step delegitimization of nuclear weapons. As such, it is firmly anchored in the humanitarian tradition of nuclear disarmament. We urge those States that continue to vote against the draft resolution to reconsider their position to bring it in line with their professed support for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

The second draft resolution, on reducing nuclear danger (A/C.1/72/L.22), highlights the need for a review of nuclear doctrines and for steps to reduce the risk of the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons,

including through de-alerting and de-targeting nuclear weapons. We welcome the greater resonance in the international community on the objectives of the draft resolution on avoiding the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.50.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): Without question, the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament community is facing serious challenges. This week we have discussed the growing threat that is posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, in repeated and flagrant violation of global norms and successive Security Council resolutions. Heightened tension among States possessing nuclear weapons and a deepening polarization within the international community provide cause for deep concern.

We must also consider the impact of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which, to speak plainly, has contributed to a further divide in the international community. If those divisions cannot be managed, they could place the current review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at risk. To make progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons, the united action of our community is needed.

Although Canada has reservations about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we share the sentiment behind it. Progress on nuclear disarmament has been too slow, and the nuclear-weapon States need to demonstrate renewed leadership. Likewise, non-signatory States to the NPT need to focus on reducing, and then eliminating, their reliance on nuclear weapons.

(spoke in French)

Increased leadership is also necessary given the continuing reluctance of some to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The gravity of the issues at hand warrants more pragmatic and inclusive action. That is why Canada is pleased to chair the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group, which is responsible for developing the elements of a treaty for eventual negotiation.

The value of that work, and informal consultations with the broader General Assembly, cannot be overstated. We are confident that the work will allow us to reaffirm

the critical value of a treaty for strengthening the global non-proliferation and disarmament framework. Allow me to remind delegations that Ambassador Heidi Hulan will brief the Committee on the Preparatory Group's progress tomorrow, at 3 p.m.

Through a voluntary contribution of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, Canada also supports the development of global capacity and new techniques necessary for nuclear-disarmament verification, which are currently lacking globally. While we pursue those efforts, we cannot ignore the immediate threat. We must counter proliferation networks and foster a constructive political dialogue.

(spoke in English)

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) subjects Iran to an extensive international verification regime. As long as it is fully implemented, it will help to ensure that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful in nature. By demonstrating the value of diplomacy in furthering nuclear non-proliferation objectives, the JCPOA also offers an example that perhaps provides hope and possible lessons for responding to North Korea.

Finally, Canada remains concerned about the evolving threat of nuclear terrorism, and strongly supports enhancing the security of nuclear and radioactive materials and facilities globally. Canada committed more than \$30 million last year to support projects to secure nuclear and radiological materials, prevent their illicit trafficking and reinforce the relevant regulatory and legal frameworks. We therefore welcome the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

In conclusion, Canada believes that further progress by the international community on nuclear disarmament is possible. Despite the array of threats and challenges we face, we are not deterred. Canada is devoting significant resources to credible initiatives that are inclusive and help build the trust and confidence required to reduce risk. Rather than focusing on divisions, working together towards our common objective of greater security for all people in a world without nuclear weapons must be our collective focus and commitment.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): I will read out a condensed version of the statement that will be posted on PaperSmart.

Norway has reaffirmed its commitment to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That is a long-term objective that will require sustained efforts along several tracks, such as nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and confidence-building measures. Evidently, the broader security landscape will have an impact on our ability to achieve the goal of the full elimination of nuclear weapons.

Yet the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) includes clear disarmament obligations, which were further elaborated by the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995 and the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. It is essential to foster the confidence needed for balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable reductions of nuclear arsenals in future. That will enable us to achieve and uphold a world without nuclear weapons that is regulated by a legal framework. The prime challenge today is to preserve and consolidate existing instruments such as the NPT, which remains the cornerstone for non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses, as well as other treaties.

Achieving the full elimination of nuclear weapons requires the participation and cooperation of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. While nuclear-weapon States bear the prime responsibility for reducing and eventually eliminating their nuclear arsenals, non-nuclear-weapon States should also contribute. Nuclear-disarmament verification clearly represents a means of achieving that.

The United Kingdom-Norway initiative, which started in 2007, has paved the way for further broadening nuclear-weapons verification research to include other non-nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, together with Sweden, the United States and the United Kingdom, Norway recently entered into a multi-year arms control simulation initiative called the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, which is currently conducting an exercise in the United Kingdom.

Following the adoption of resolution 71/67, a group of governmental experts will be established by the Secretary-General. The group will draw on the verification experience gained and lessons learned from past treaties. We hope, and expect, that the group of governmental experts' report will contain

practical recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

Norway remains an active member of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We need to develop a culture of cooperation and trust and a common understanding of the technical issues of nuclear disarmament verification among a large group of States. Capacity-building is another area that is being explored within the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

In addition to consolidating existing agreements, a number of other mutually reinforcing building blocks are needed to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Norway looks forward to the outcome of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group. Let me flag that Norway considers the Shannon mandate to be sufficiently flexible to cover all the concerns that could be raised in future negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, including the question of phased inclusion of stocks.

The irresponsible actions taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea demonstrate how urgent it is to transform the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) from a politically binding norm into a legally binding instrument. Again, Norway calls upon all annex 2 States to ratify the CTBT. Progress in that area will have a tremendously positive impact on nuclear disarmament.

Our ability to abolish nuclear weapons will depend on a credible non-proliferation regime. As a minimum, all States will have to implement the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol.

Much has been achieved in the field of nuclear security, but more remains to be done. My delegation would like to emphasize the importance of Nuclear Security Summits and the IAEA. We would also encourage all Member States to accede to various instruments, such as the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Norway is concerned about the large quantities of highly enriched uranium still in use in civilian nuclear facilities, which pose significant proliferation and security risks. Norway has hosted two international

symposiums on highly enriched uranium minimization in the civilian sector. A third one will be held in Oslo from 5 to 7 June next year. The event will provide an opportunity for closer dialogue on outstanding technical, economic and political questions, so that we can move forward on the transition from highly enriched uranium to low-enriched uranium for civilian use.

In conclusion, there is no fast track to a world without nuclear weapons. We need to pursue a forward-looking and comprehensive agenda, which must include a number of mutually supportive building blocks.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.18.

Mr. Htin Lynn (Myanmar): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10) and the statement made by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations yesterday (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

I take the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.18, on nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on Earth. There is no doubt about that. One nuclear weapon alone can destroy a mega-city, kill millions and endanger the natural environment—and future generations would live through its long-term catastrophic effects. The dangers of nuclear weapons arise from their very existence. The only absolute guarantee to protect humankind from the danger of such weapons is their total elimination. As the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has pointed out, more than 15,000 nuclear weapons remain in the world, with many on high levels of alert.

Nuclear weapons beget nuclear weapons. We are witnessing such concerning ambitions and actions on the ground. The draft resolution has garnered the following co-sponsors to date: Angola, Cuba, Ecuador, Eritrea, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Samoa, Swaziland, Thailand, Tonga, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and, my own country, Myanmar. Once again this year, we introduce our traditional draft resolution on nuclear disarmament.

The draft resolution is a comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament and focuses on practical and achievable steps. In addition to technical updates, this

year the draft resolution, in its nineteenth preambular paragraph, reflects the efforts by the President and of the Working Group on the Way Ahead in the Conference on Disarmament, in line with the report of the Conference. The twenty-eighth preambular paragraph expresses deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear-weapon use, and the thirty-fourth preambular paragraph welcomes the successful adoption, on 7 July, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The draft resolution unequivocally represents the views, aspirations and convictions of two thirds of the States Members of the United Nations.

In conclusion, my delegation thanks the Member States that have sponsored and supported the draft resolution all along. We also invite all remaining Member States to lend their support by co-sponsoring and voting in favour of the draft resolution this year.

Mr. Arriola Ramírez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to speak on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Paraguay. Paraguay is very pleased to have signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20 September, following a negotiation process. That was a historic milestone for nations, such as Paraguay, which are peace-loving and respectful of the principles of international law. My delegation commends the efforts of civil society representatives in promoting and supporting the successful completion of the Treaty negotiations and its adoption. We especially congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

For a nation like Paraguay, which has enshrined the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction in its Constitution, the adoption of the Treaty has not only filled a gap in public international law and supplemented the banning of biological weapons and chemical weapons in force. It has also reaffirmed its conviction that the prohibition of nuclear weapons and their elimination are necessary conditions for the promotion of international peace and security.

In the context of our national efforts for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, the Government of Paraguay has requested the Counter-Terrorism Committee to undertake a visit to follow up the initial visit by the Executive Director, last March. At that time, the Committee had noted Paraguay's needs in situ for technical assistance and specialized equipment

to strengthen its mechanisms and policies for the prevention of all aspects of terrorism and related cross-border criminal activity, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The use and threat of use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is a crime against humanity, violates international law and international humanitarian law and violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation of Paraguay once again urges nuclear-weapon States to withdraw their interpretative declarations on the Protocols to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We reiterate our repudiation of the nuclear-weapons tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recently, in violation of international law.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and international security are a global challenge. All States have an obligation to undertake in good faith and to conclude negotiations to achieve nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. Bilateral negotiations can never replace multilateral negotiations in that regard.

The delegation of Paraguay calls for the elaboration of a programme of work to gradually extend zones declared free of nuclear weapons, especially in the Middle East, and to develop an international convention giving assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Nuclear disarmament must be transparent and irreversible, with mechanisms for effective verification. That should be based on a universal and legally binding framework. The delegation of Paraguay calls for the universalization of commitments on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We urge States that have yet to do so to ratify or accede to, as appropriate, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as international treaties and international instruments setting out nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The Republic of Paraguay urges all States to refrain from any act counter to the purpose and principle of such treaties. We call especially for nuclear-weapon States to review their nuclear doctrines and adopt immediate and urgent measures to reduce the risk of the use of nuclear weapons, including accidental or unintentional use.

Lastly, my delegation underscores the need to rechannel resources allocated to modernizing nuclear-weapon stockpiles towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.1 and A/C.1/72/L.2.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt): We hold this session of the First Committee amid increasing tensions and open threats of the use of nuclear weapons, in addition to accusations among the State parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of serious violations to the Treaty, which is the cornerstone of the international security architecture and the non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, the Treaty's credibility and sustainability were significantly damaged at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, due to the disappointing decision of three States parties to the Treaty to block consensus, to the benefit of a State that is not party to the Treaty.

Egypt reiterates its concern about the grave threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and reaffirms that the total, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons, which represents the primary objective of the NPT, is the only guarantee against their proliferation, use or threat of use. Attaining that objective is not impossible, as some would want the world to believe. Ridding the world of such an existential threat should not and must not be dealt with as a naive utopian dream. It is, in fact, a commitment that awaits implementation by the nuclear-weapon States, which undertook clear unequivocal obligations in that regard under article VI of the NPT.

It is important to highlight that making the implementation of nuclear-disarmament commitments conditional on unidentified improvements in the international security environment would lead only to counterarguments, thereby making the implementation of non-proliferation commitments dependent upon the same ambiguous conditions. That is a vicious cycle that will lead to the gradual erosion of the credibility and sustainability of the NPT.

Even at the peak of the Cold War, when the international security environment was worse than the one we are witnessing today, there were episodes of détente and constructive cooperation that led to reductions in nuclear-weapon stockpiles. Nevertheless,

those short-lived episodes were, unfortunately, ultimately suspended or sometimes even reversed.

Progress in nuclear disarmament has always been a leading force for improving the international security environment and the levels of international cooperation. Therefore, the stalemate in nuclear disarmament could be viewed as one of the root causes of the deteriorating security environment, which is paradoxically used as a pretext for not making progress in nuclear disarmament.

In that regard, Egypt welcomed the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in July. We congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on a well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize. We believe that launching negotiations on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe is a necessary step that needs to be taken without further delay. Egypt has repeatedly demanded the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the relevant commitments of the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference. The lack of the necessary political will to implement such commitments represents a major challenge.

Egypt considers the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the failure to achieve the universality of the NPT, especially in the region of the Middle East, to be one of the most pressing challenges facing international efforts in the field of disarmament. For over four decades, Egypt has striven to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons and made that objective a top priority in its foreign policy. The grave dangers posed by the possession of such weapons by one State in the region represents one of the most pressing threats to the region's security, leaving it extremely prone to chronic armament races, conflicts and instability.

Although more than 20 years have passed since the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which formed the basis of the indefinite NPT extension package, the resolution has remained far from implementation, due to the lack of sufficient efforts by the international community. Egypt and the Group of Arab States have spared no effort in interacting positively with all the relevant initiatives, and actively participated in good faith in all the meetings and conferences convened to negotiate the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East.

We are still of the view that the right way forward was outlined in the proposal presented by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which was acceptable to all but three States parties. The proposal aimed only to initiate negotiations on ridding the region of all WMDs, and it did not dictate certain outcomes to the negotiations. Convening a conference on freeing the Middle East of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, based on the principle of arrangements freely arrived at, should be considered a historic opportunity for all States of the region and beyond to take a huge step towards achieving peace and collective security for all.

It is in that spirit that we introduce the two annual draft resolutions on the Middle East, namely, draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.1, presented by Egypt and entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the region of the Middle East", and draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.2, presented by the Arab Group, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". We continue to seek the support of all Member States for the two draft resolutions as a sign of their continued support and commitment to the attainment of that goal and honouring the relevant obligations.

A copy of my full statement will be made available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Sene (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to take part in this thematic debate on nuclear weapons. We welcome the opportunity to share our views on the issue, which is rightly commanding international attention within a context of growing tension, persistent competition for armaments and unproductive deliberations among disarmament bodies.

Following the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May 2015, during which States parties to the Treaty were unable to reach consensus on the outcome document, the nuclear-disarmament situation remains concerning, with a growing gap between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. There are currently more than 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world, including some that are able to be deployed under alert procedures and can trigger an incredibly powerful strike in a matter of minutes. In addition, according to several researchers, there have been several cases of evaluation errors or failures of detection systems that could have

led to catastrophic exchanges of nuclear strikes. That is to say, the risks that are posed by the very existence of nuclear weapons constitute a serious danger for the survival of humankind.

Risks that are created by the current geopolitical situation of strategic uncertainty add to those of a nuclear incident, which could lead to direct clashes among protagonists with nuclear capabilities. The situation is all the more dangerous due to the trend of increasing the precision of nuclear weapons, thereby maximizing the risks of nuclear conflict, with humanitarian and ecological consequences that would be more than catastrophic.

Senegal is fully committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, especially as such weapons could fall into the hands of terrorist groups. We therefore remain convinced that their total and complete elimination is the only guarantee against their usage. To achieve that, we need a prohibition regime with very strict rules and verification procedures that are bolstered by strengthened non-proliferation mechanisms, namely, through the internationalization of the fuel cycle.

The historic agreement with Iran on its nuclear programme, which seemed a major step forward in non-proliferation efforts, deserves to be preserved, especially as the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/515) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) — the third of its kind — which the Security Council considered on 29 June (see S/PV.7990), makes it clear that, with regard to nuclear-related provisions, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to respect its obligations, as highlighted in the latest reports published by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Nevertheless, the question of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East remains relevant, despite the conference scheduled to be held on the subject in 2012 not taking place.

Moreover, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July, after more than three weeks of fierce negotiations among Member States, and which was marked by significant contributions from civil-society representatives and the remarkable presence of several survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — the hibakusha — could have been an important step towards nuclear disarmament if nuclear-weapon States and their allies had participated in

the negotiations. I take this opportunity to commend the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) for its work in connection with those weapons of mass destruction, for which it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

It is therefore important for nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Treaty so that the latter might contribute to consolidating the other components of the non-proliferation regime, in particular the NPT — the cornerstone of the safeguards system, whereby strengthening its authority must be achieved through its universalization. We believe, however, that the lack of an international authority to verify compliance with the Treaty represents a gap that needs to be filled. Moreover, the complete ban on nuclear testing and the production of fissile material for military purposes, and the extension of nuclear-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, are of the utmost importance if we want to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament. It therefore seems important to us that States and other actors from civil society work together towards the total destruction of or, failing that, a reduction in, nuclear-warhead stockpiles.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two interdependent and equally important goals. General and complete disarmament will therefore remain unachievable, if, adding to the issue of existing nuclear States, other countries circumvent the NPT so as to acquire nuclear weapons. In that regard, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a leading role to play in adopting effective measures aimed at eliminating the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Lastly, it is necessary to reaffirm countries' right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to the effective and safe transfer of relevant technology to States fulfilling their obligations under the NPT, which would be facilitated by strengthening of the authority and capacities of the IAEA.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): In his statement during the general debate of the First Committee, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador said that, with negotiations leading up to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 2017 would mark a turning point in the quest for a world free of nuclear weapons (see A/C.1/72/PV.3). That became a reality when the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was judiciously awarded the

Nobel Peace Prize. That broad coalition of civil society organizations was one of the main actors behind the series of conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and the process that successfully led to the adoption of the Treaty. The delegation of Ecuador extends to them its congratulations, recognition and gratitude.

In the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons we have a universal legally binding instrument that, among its other provisions, prohibits the possession, development, production, acquisition, transfer, storage, use and threat of use, stationing, installation and deployment of nuclear weapons and nuclear-explosive devices. The Treaty perfectly integrates and complements the current non-proliferation architecture and nuclear disarmament, together with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and those treaties that have established nuclear-weapon-free zones, or will establish them at a future date.

In that context, it is regrettable to note that a few States either possessing nuclear weapons or relying on the deterrent nuclear capabilities of their allies advocate not signing that necessary instrument, or, as reflected in their statements and draft resolutions before the Committee, act as though the Treaty did not exist. Since its adoption, those States' efforts and arguments have illustrated that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been highly effective in stigmatizing the possession of those weapons by explicitly stating that they run counter to international law. We are pleased to note that, three weeks following the opening of signature of the Treaty, there are already 53 signatories, including Ecuador and three other States that have deposited their instruments of ratification.

In that regard, some claim that the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Nuclear Weapons is a cause for division within the international community. As the representative of ICAN said during the suspended informal part of the Committee's meeting a few days ago on 10 October,

“It is not the ban that divides us; nuclear weapons divide us”.

What has unfortunately divided the international community for many years is the refusal of nuclear-weapon States to comply with the ongoing obligation under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the insistence of some of them

that those same catastrophic and indiscriminate weapons somehow bring about security. Those who cause division are those who — including in draft resolutions introduced to the Committee this year — claim that our work must not be directly focused on eliminating those prohibited weapons but on pursuing fantasy conditions that perhaps would allow us to achieve their elimination in the distant and indeterminate future.

Ecuador deplors the fact that, because eight States have not ratified it, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet been able to enter into force. We reiterate that the best demonstration of adherence to that instrument must be through its signing and ratification by those eight States, not through repetitive statements or resolutions adopted in other bodies to the same effect.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate Ecuador's support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We welcome the recent report of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the Board of Governors entitled “Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)”, which reaffirms the Islamic Republic of Iran's compliance with the Plan. The Joint Comprehensive Action Plan has clearly demonstrated that diplomacy and dialogue are the means to resolve disputes. At a time when, regrettably, some would prefer to weaken multilateralism and international organizations, Ecuador calls for all parties to continue supporting and implementing the Plan.

Ms. Shareef (Maldives): I wish to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials for their comprehensive briefing yesterday on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament, and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field (see A/72/C.1/PV.10).

Nuclear weapons pose an existential threat to humankind. The elimination of those weapons is an immediate and moral imperative for the world. Our shared efforts to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world are as old as the United Nations, and we have made significant progress. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), of 1968, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), of 2006, and the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted by the General

Assembly in July, are some of the visible examples of the successes that have been achieved by our collective efforts. Yet we have to go beyond those diplomatic efforts to ensure that our vision for a nuclear-weapon-free world is realized. It is time for bold political decisions. It is time for the States that possess or have the intention to acquire nuclear-weapon capability to dismantle their nuclear-weapons programmes and relinquish possession of nuclear weapons. It is time for the countries listed in annex 2 to the CTBT to ratify the Treaty for so that it can go into force at as soon as possible.

There is a broad consensus on nuclear disarmament within the international community and among the global public. That was most clearly demonstrated with the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That Treaty marks a new phase in the seven-decade-long effort to prevent nuclear war. It is the only single global Treaty that prohibits nuclear-weapon development, production, possession, use, threat of use, and stationing of another country's nuclear weapons on a State party's national territory.

The Maldives is a State party to the NPT and the CTBT. The Maldives has never produced any armaments or weaponry of any type, and we have no desire to do so in future. We believe that our moral obligation is to pave the way towards the strengthening and enforcement of a global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The ongoing developments on the Korean peninsula are troubling. The recent tests of ballistic missiles are a clear violation of international law and of Security Council resolutions. Such actions pose a grave challenge to the international non-proliferation regime. They also pose a serious threat to the region and to international peace and security. The Maldives welcomes the efforts to find a peaceful solution through the multilateral framework.

The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, can do more to accelerate global efforts to achieve a nuclear-free world. The Council has to date adopted two landmark resolutions, the first in 2009 and the second in 2016, both of which represent significant and positive shifts in making the Council more responsive to global public opinion in favour of bringing about an end to nuclear tests and an eventual end to nuclear proliferation. The resolutions bring us a step closer to our desired goal where nuclear weapons will no longer be the most crucial aspect of a country's national security deterrence.

The Maldives hopes, with the support of Council members, to be elected to the Security Council for the 2018-2020 period at the election to be held in June 2018. If elected, we will bring nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation to the centre stage of the Security Council's discussion. The aim will be to focus the Council's attention to the growing risk of nuclear weapons reaching terrorist groups, and close whatever gaps there are in the proliferation and the spread of nuclear weapons technology. With members' support, the Maldives hopes to propel forward the global political commitment to create a facilitating environment to ensure that the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a successful one.

A nuclear-weapon-free world is humankind's shared destiny. To reach that goal, all countries must be united in their response and in crafting shared solutions. The Maldives will always be members' trusted partner in shaping shared solutions.

Mr. Dzonzi (Malawi): Malawi aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

Mr. Kim Won-Soo, former High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, once said,

“A nuclear-weapon-free world is a collective and shared responsibility of the entire international community. There is more than one path to reach that destination. Unfortunately, there are growing differences to get there.”

Building upon the heightened awareness of the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, the General Assembly decided to convene in 2017 a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. That decision carried forward the recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which met in 2016 with a mandate to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

The Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons completed its work on 7 July by adopting a treaty that would ban such weapons of mass destruction with a view to their total elimination. We should always remember the fact, that by the terms of the Treaty, the text was adopted by a recorded vote of 122 in favour with only 1 against and 1 abstention. That is fundamental. The Treaty states that each State party would never, under any circumstances, develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. In addition, States parties would never transfer such weapons or devices; use or threaten to use them or allow them to be stationed, installed or deployed on their territory.

While Malawi does not have nuclear weapons and does not intend to produce any, it is amply aware of the impact of a nuclear-weapon detonation. Irrespective of the cause, it would not be constrained by national borders, but could have regional, even global consequences, causing destruction, death and displacement, as well as profound and long-term damage to the environment, the climate, human health and well-being, socioeconomic development, the social order and could even threaten the survival of humankind. It is in that regard that Malawi signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20 September 2017. The Treaty, to say the least, is a historic breakthrough in the efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. The day we will all sit in this Hall, with all countries having signed and ratified the Treaty, will be a joyous moment.

In the past, Malawi has also signed similar treaties, such as the Pelindaba African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. The Treaty prohibits the research, development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession, control or stationing of nuclear explosive devices in the territories of parties to the Treaty and the dumping of radioactive wastes in the African zone by Treaty parties. Malawi is also a signatory to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

We will post the full text of our statement on PaperSmart.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Germany is fully committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We are convinced that nuclear disarmament contributes essentially to our security and can best be reached on the basis of a pragmatic step-by-step

approach. That must take into account the prevailing security environment and engage the nuclear-weapon States. In order to make that approach work, we need favourable conditions. Germany is actively and consistently supporting various efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

By far the most recent troubling development has been the acceleration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The North Korea case highlights various lessons. One lesson is that we need to redouble our efforts when it comes to strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in its three equally important pillars. Germany is convinced that the NPT is, and should remain, the cornerstone of all efforts in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. That is what we are working for in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI).

Foreign Minister Gabriel, together with Japanese Foreign Minister Kono, just co-hosted the seventh Foreign Ministers meeting of the NPDI in New York in September, where the NPDI confirmed its core mandate to continue to strengthen the NPT based on the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Action Plan. The 2010 Action Plan outlines many of the steps paving the way towards nuclear disarmament, including the pledge by the nuclear-weapon States to undertake additional efforts to nuclear disarmament.

In that regard, we welcome the fact that the United States of America and Russia met in Helsinki from 11 to 13 September to resume their strategic stability talks, including on pertinent arms-control issues and further steps in the area of nuclear disarmament, and declared their readiness to meet again this year. We would be in favour of an extension of the New Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which up to now has successfully implemented the nuclear arms reductions agreed to between the United States and Russia.

Referring once again to the alarming case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is the only country that is still engaged in nuclear testing in the twenty-first century, which underlines the relevance and importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). All States not yet party should quickly sign and/or

ratify the CTBT, and thereby join the international community's resolve to end nuclear testing. While the existing moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions is of course important, we think it is not sufficient.

Likewise, a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) would be a logical next step on the multilateral nuclear disarmament agenda. That is why Germany, together with Canada and the Netherlands, co-sponsored resolution 71/259 last year to launch a new process of diplomatic efforts towards an FMCT. A high-level preparatory group started its work in July and has injected new momentum into a process that should hopefully pave the way for early negotiations on an FMCT.

Nuclear disarmament can happen only if the security context is favourable and not characterized by a lack of trust and transparency. To address the fundamental underlying questions of trust and mistrust, strengthening negative security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States can play an important role, and their value and relevance should be further explored.

Another key to progress in nuclear disarmament is the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which focuses on the development of technical measures for the verification of nuclear disarmament. Germany would like to contribute to that important process by focusing on practical measures, and it strongly supports Norway's initiative that aims at establishing a group of governmental experts on those issues.

Finally, turning to the third pillar of the NPT, the peaceful use of nuclear energy must rest on the highest possible levels of nuclear safety and nuclear security. Nuclear security is in the interest of all of us, as it aims at protecting against the use of nuclear materials by terrorists and unauthorized non-State actors. We must be aware that nuclear threats do not stop at our borders. In particular, maintaining cybersecurity and the security of radioactive sources in civilian use will continue to be a challenge for years to come — not only for my own country.

It took us more than 10 years to find and negotiate a diplomatic solution that fully addresses the many concerns about the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), finally agreed between three European Union members, China, Russia, the United

States and Iran in 2015, has put an end to an imminent nuclear proliferation crisis and further strengthened the NPT. At such a delicate moment, we emphasize that the strict implementation of the JCPOA by all sides remains key and that all decision-makers should refrain from any action that might potentially jeopardize the JCPOA. Let us not put at risk the important progress on non-proliferation that has been achieved by the JCPOA.

Ms. Leong (Singapore): Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/72/PV.11).

The pathway to nuclear disarmament has been fraught with challenges since the first General Assembly resolution, in 1946. While some progress has been achieved over the past 72 years, it seems that, for every step forward, we see other setbacks. Progress has been slow, but we must continue to show resolve and willingness to come to the table for dialogue, especially as the security environment remains uncertain. Singapore believes that there are several concrete steps that we can take to advance nuclear disarmament.

First, States must maintain and strengthen their commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Singapore remains committed to the objectives and to the three mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT. We must work towards the universalization of the NPT and find a way to involve nuclear-weapon-possessing States in disarmament discussions. Looking ahead, we must lay the groundwork to ensure the success of the tenth NPT Review Conference, to be held in 2020. The first Preparatory Committee session, held in May, made little substantive progress on issues. More should be done to overcome the divisiveness and mistrust between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States as part of our collective effort to uphold the legitimacy and relevance of the NPT.

Secondly, we must continue to work towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT was held just last month. That conference has been held 10 times too many. While the established norms against testing are reassuring, they do not replace the need for a legally binding instrument to ensure that the solidity of that norm is never tested, especially in our fragile security

environment. We strongly urge the eight remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Thirdly, we need to strengthen support for nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are pragmatic steps under article VII of the NPT. We encourage efforts to achieve genuine and lasting peace in a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East through open and constructive dialogue involving all relevant parties. Closer to home, Singapore has consistently emphasised its resolve to preserve South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We reaffirm our commitment to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which entered into force 20 years ago. Singapore will continue to work closely with nuclear-weapon States to resolve outstanding issues and to work towards the collective signing and ratification of the Protocol to that Treaty without reservations.

Fourthly, we need to continue to work on our common goal of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is one example of the drive towards that goal. Singapore participated constructively in the negotiations, and we regret that our views were ultimately not taken on board. Singapore remains fully committed to the ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. The priority for us now is not to lose sight of that ultimate endeavour and find realistic and complementary ways within the disarmament architecture to do so. That will not be easy, given the diametrically differing opinions articulated through the course of our debates.

Finally, we need to support other useful initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), that can complement and contribute to the efforts of achieving our goal of nuclear disarmament. In August, Singapore hosted the PSI operational experts group meeting. Experts from 18 countries were brought together to discuss key counter-proliferation policy issues. The meeting discussed concrete ways to strengthen outreach, as well as to modernize the initiative. Singapore's support of that initiative demonstrates our commitment to strengthening international cooperation to disrupt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their related material.

There are various avenues for progress ahead of us. In 2018, a high-level conference will be convened to evaluate the progress we have made towards nuclear disarmament, and in 2020 the NPT Review Conference will take place. The fourth special session of the

General Assembly devoted to disarmament is also on the horizon. Singapore is committed to keeping an open mind and working constructively during our deliberations. We urge our fellow representatives to do the same as we work towards our common goal, which has the potential to transcend national boundaries and affect generations to come.

Mr. Mendoza-García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): With the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in July, the international community made a strong and clear call for all States, and in particular for the nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the use of nuclear weapons from their doctrines, security policies and military strategies. We regret that nuclear-weapon States and members of security alliances decided to dissociate themselves from that process. Especially over the past few weeks, we have seen how inaction on nuclear disarmament is not an option. Maintaining the status quo has only exposed us to situations that are increasingly dangerous to international security.

We also regret the fact that, five years after the adoption of the 2010 Action Plan on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the fulfilment of the commitments related to nuclear disarmament, as well as those related to non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, continues to be minimal. That is why we urge all States to sign the Treaty and those that have already done so to ratify it as soon as possible to begin taking the next steps in its implementation.

There are still more than 15,000 nuclear weapons in the world and, instead of their being destroyed, every year billions of dollars are poured into their modernization, which only exacerbates the nuclear threat. Costa Rica reiterates its complete rejection of the modernization of nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons. Such acts are inconsistent with existing obligations and the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

In addition, limited progress has been made in reducing nuclear-weapon stockpiles. Most of those reductions have been in non-operational warheads and warheads in storage. Costa Rica urges the nuclear-weapon States to adopt new measures to reduce their operational and non-strategic stockpiles in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible way. We also call for decreasing the operational availability of their

systems. There are many nuclear weapons that are in a high state of alert and that could lead to a risk of cyberattacks.

We also stress the need to prohibit the production of fissile material. We regret that we have not been able to reach an agreement in the Conference on Disarmament to initiate talks on the matter. Costa Rica reiterates the need for a Treaty that prohibits the production of fissile material, including regulations on existing fissile material, verification mechanisms and confidence-building measures.

Both non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are fundamental to the effective implementation of the NPT. Today more than ever, we need the resolute and unequivocal commitment of all States to nuclear disarmament. In view of the little progress that has been made in the implementation of article VI of the NPT by the nuclear-weapon States and the lack of implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as the inability to achieve their universalization, nuclear disarmament cannot be left exclusively in the hands of the nuclear-weapon States. It is us, the non-nuclear-weapon States, together with organized civil society, who firmly believe and have advocated and will continue to advocate for the total prohibition of nuclear weapons and to ensure that the nuclear-weapon States fulfil their international obligations in this area.

My country is profoundly concerned about the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and rhetoric that promotes the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. That affects not only the credibility of nuclear-disarmament treaties, but also the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded this year to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which we congratulate once again, constitutes an incentive to continue advancing the cause of a world without nuclear weapons.

As a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and a member of one of the first densely populated areas in the world to be declared a zone free of nuclear weapons, Costa Rica underscores the importance of these zones in the prevention of the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, building confidence and regional security, reducing the role of nuclear weapons and paving the way for the establishment of an entire world free of nuclear weapons.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that it is up to Member States to pool our willingness and initiatives to set in motion the multilateral disarmament machinery, non-proliferation and arms control and initiatives that allow us to address the challenges facing the international community and, in particular, the civilian population. Costa Rica is committed to advancing those goals.

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): We would like to congratulate the Chair, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on their election to preside over the seventy-second session of the First Committee. We assure them of the full cooperation of the Latvian delegation.

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement on the progressive approach delivered by the representative of Australia on behalf of the Group of 29 States (see A/C.1/72/PV.10), including my own, yesterday. I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Latvia remains committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The increasing threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's reckless nuclear and ballistic missile tests is a serious reminder that States must more than ever remain united and uphold and fully implement previously agreed-upon measures for nuclear disarmament. Latvia condemns in the strongest terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's aggressive provocations and urges that country to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes fully, unconditionally and without delay.

Latvia strongly supports efforts aimed at strengthening the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with its three equally important pillars, is a cornerstone of these efforts. We should be cautious not to undermine the strategic importance of the Treaty.

The road ahead will be complex. As the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT approaches, the global community is still faced with an increasing multitude of security challenges, which should be addressed multilaterally. At the current security juncture, a unified approach to proliferation and security threats is required more than ever. Diverging approaches are a luxury we cannot afford. Both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States have to be on board. Latvia strongly advocates the continuous implementation of the progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, taking into account

the wider security context and strategic stability. The building blocks outlined in the 2010 NPT Action Plan are still relevant, and Latvia urges their continued full and substantive step-by-step implementation.

Practical progress achieved in the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group is a very encouraging step. We also look forward to the commencement of the work of the group of governmental experts on nuclear-disarmament verification.

Latvia places particular importance on the promotion of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Treaty is an indispensable tool in our efforts to advance global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is crucial to ensure that the nuclear tests conducted in the past are the last tests ever conducted. We continue to urge all States that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Treaty.

Latvia welcomes the ongoing implementation by all parties of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and we reaffirm its long-standing support for it. The JCPOA is a major diplomatic achievement and an important step forward in our joint disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

In that regard, we would like to stress the importance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Its safeguards system plays an essential role in the implementation of the non-proliferation obligations under the NPT. The IAEA's assistance to Member States in ensuring the highest levels of safety and security to facilitate the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be underlined.

As I stated, it is of paramount importance that disarmament and non-proliferation commitments under existing treaties be honoured. In that regard, we also call on all parties to ensure the full and verifiable implementation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Latvia remains deeply worried that one party has violated core provisions of the Budapest memorandum on security assurances to Ukraine. Such actions significantly erode the level of trust and undermine nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Latvia's full support and commitment to the instruments and initiatives I referred to, which will lead us to a safer world with undiminished security for all. Latvia is committed to contributing to a rules-based international

order, including through its chairing of the Nuclear Suppliers Group for the period of 2018-2019.

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

Mr. Ri In II (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Today I am going to exercise my right of reply in response to the countries that falsified facts and to the provocative allegations made by the United States and other followers or representatives.

For all intents and purposes, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is one that was created and developed into its current phase today because of the United States. That country bears full responsibility for it. The United States has been threatening my country for more than 70 years — since 1945. Early in the twenty-first century and recently, the United States has expanded the level of its nuclear threats, with clamour of fire and fury and total destruction. Fewer than 48 hours ago, the United States deployed nuclear submarines and a B-1B Lancer nuclear bomber towards the Korean peninsula, a project whose purpose is to decapitate our headquarters and military facilities. That is a typical example of the nuclear threats by the United States against my country.

The position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles is that they constitute a legitimate option for self-defence in the face of the clear and real nuclear threats posed by the United States. Since their emergence, the impact of nuclear weapons has been proved. Our people experienced the disastrous disturbance of war on the Korean peninsula caused by the United States. Nuclear weapons are an inevitable strategic option for national defence, a precious strategy that cannot be reversed for any reason. Nuclear deterrence as self-defence is a powerful sword that reliably guarantees sovereignty, the right to existence and development. No one can say whether our powerful nuclear deterrence self-defence strategy is right or wrong.

In response to the groundless remarks of representatives, including those of Ireland, Canada, Australia, Germany and some other countries, I would say that they should understand correctly whether our position on nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles poses a global threat, as the United

States insists, or whether that threat is confined to the United States alone. In essence, the situation on the Korean peninsula is a confrontation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, in which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is trying to defend its national dignity and sovereignty against the United States hostile policy and nuclear threats. Our national nuclear force is to all intents and purposes a war deterrent meant to put an end to the nuclear threats of the United States and prevent its military invasions. Our ultimate goal is to establish a balance of power with the United States. It is a daydream to hope that sanctions could work against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea when sanctions have failed to stop it from becoming a fully fledged nuclear-weapon State and making rapid progress in becoming an economic power for more than half a century.

Next I will respond to the representatives of South Korea and Japan, who made irresponsible and despicable remarks against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In particular, the groundless accusations, lies and stories cooked up by South Korea against my country are totally unacceptable. South Korea is the only one among the Member States gathered here that has passed control over the symbol of sovereignty — military power — fully to outside forces. South Korea should know the position of its country, which cannot even shed blood without the permission of the head of its alliance. It would be better for South Korea not to stick its head between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States or to run amok recklessly. Furthermore, Japan should give up its attempts to find an excuse in our nuclear and ballistic rockets launch test to revive the building of its military power and the resurgence of militarism. Japan should apologize for its outstanding crimes against humanity and past crimes committed against Asian people and the Korean nation.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): First of all, this concerns what was said by the representative of North Korea, and everyone knows it. Concerning sovereignty, there is no need to reply. Why would we be sitting here? My point is that North Korea, through

repetition, seems to be intent on driving a wedge into the unity of the international community, which stands against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over their nuclear programme. With that objective, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is using every available occasion to harangue the world into misunderstanding the facts. However, that is futile, as we have witnessed every day here in this room. Many delegations are speaking against what North Korea is doing. That is a fact and no matter what one tries to do with them, they remain unchanged. The facts speak even louder. The inalterable facts are, first, that what North Korea is engaging in is not self-defence. It is simply breaking the law, over and over again. The second fact is that it is not the world that has a hostile policy, as they claim. It is they that have a hostile attitude and policy against the entire outside world. That is shown clearly through their provocations and harsh rhetoric. These are plain, clear facts that underlie the situation that we all know, and no one can deny or disguise them. Any effort to do that is futile. I would like to conclude by saying that factual truth will set them free.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I take the floor to exercise my right of reply in response to the ridiculous charges made by the representative of the Pyongyang regime. North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes pose a grave threat to the Korean peninsula, Asia and beyond. Its continued nuclear threats and provocations have united the international community against Pyongyang like never before. The Security Council has imposed some of the most stringent sanctions the Council has adopted in years. We call on all States to fully implement Security Council sanctions against the regime. North Korea must comply with its international obligations, and do so now. Should it not, the regime will only increase and deepen its isolation and further solidify its pariah status.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation totally rejects the unreasonable and illogical and groundless arguments made by the Washington regime and the South Korean representative.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.