



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

First Committee

6th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

The Chair: I would like to warmly congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

I also take this opportunity to recognize the contribution of the First Committee in making possible the Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading towards Their Total Elimination.

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

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: I remind all delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic discussion segment starting next week, Wednesday, 11 October, will remain open until Monday, 16 October, at 6 p.m.

Turning now to our list of speakers for today, I remind all delegations taking the floor to kindly bear in mind the suggested time limit for statements.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Since this is the first time that I am speaking formally in the First Committee, at this session, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on the assumption of your role and assure you of my full support and that of my delegation.

I have the honour to read out a statement on behalf of France, the United States and my own country, the United Kingdom.

The United States, France and the United Kingdom condemn the repeated, reckless and illegal acts by the North Korean regime in conducting ballistic missile and nuclear tests, in violation of the will of the Security Council, and the whole international community. We are united in our determination to tackle the threat to international peace and security posed by North Korea.

Since the Committee last met, North Korea has carried out further ballistic missile tests, in clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. Its missiles have flown farther, bringing more countries in range of such threats. It has fired missiles over Japan, showing yet again its disregard for its neighbours. It has conducted a sixth nuclear test — its largest yet.

North Korea's reckless, incendiary behaviour in violation of Security Council requirements and resolutions is inherently escalatory and truly poses a threat to international peace and security. North Korea's unlawful actions pose a grave and global threat. It is not only a threat to the region or to the United States, but to the international community. North Korean behaviour should be of deep concern to the First Committee. North Korea is not only destabilizing the strategic situation in East Asia, it is challenging the non-proliferation norm established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which underpins global security. That can only undermine our efforts to create the trust and security to advance disarmament.

The Security Council has responded with three new resolutions so far this year. They have slashed the exports on which North Korea relies to fund its illegal programmes. They have cut or capped its imports

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of oil and oil products, on which the North Korean military relies for those programmes. By tightening the web of sanctions around North Korea, both through United Nations measures and national steps, we aim to significantly increase the cost of North Korea's weapons programmes, reduce the resources available to support its weapons-of-mass-destruction activities and impede its ability to acquire key technologies. The goal of that pressure is to convince the Government of North Korea to abandon its prohibited programmes and activities, not to punish the people or the economy of North Korea or other countries.

Together with the international community, we have redoubled diplomatic and economic efforts to show North Korea that the only path to a secure, economically prosperous future is to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, but our efforts will be successful only with the full cooperation of the international community and nations willing to use decisive leverage against North Korea's increasingly dangerous and destabilizing actions.

We firmly reject any false equivalency between North Korea's illegal weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes, which are enormously destabilizing and have been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council, and the long-standing joint activities with allies, which are transparent and defensive in nature. We are united in our determination to make clear to the North Korean regime that it must change course. The object of the ongoing peaceful pressure campaign is the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, not regime change or the accelerated reunification of Korea. Sanctions are designed to seek a change in North Korean policy, not to inflict harm on the long-suffering North Korean people, who are victims of the hostile regime in Pyongyang.

By changing course, North Korea could open a path to dialogue and a peaceful resolution. But North Korea has shown no willingness to do so, and so we must all fully implement the measures adopted by the Security Council. We urge all States to go further in cutting the funds on which the regime relies for its weapons programmes. We continue to call upon countries to use whatever leverage they have to compel the North Korean regime to abandon this destructive path. North Korea cannot maintain normal political engagement and economic relations with the international community while it defies international law with its dangerous and destabilizing actions.

All States Members of the United Nations have a responsibility to fully implement their Security Council resolution obligations so as to put diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea. Those obligations are the floor and not the ceiling of what nations can be doing, and we will continue to urge all those who have direct influence on North Korea to use their leverage urgently and to the fullest extent with the aim of restraining North Korea and guiding its leader towards a peaceful settlement. North Korea has deliberately chosen, repeatedly, to defy the collective security architecture, in disregard of multilaterally agreed rules against nuclear and ballistic missile proliferation. The credibility and durability of the global security architecture, especially of the non-proliferation regime, would be at stake if we were to overlook the scale of the threat North Korea poses today.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session. I assure you of my delegation's full support for the work of the Committee, and look forward to a productive session under your able leadership.

On 24 January 1946, the very first resolution of the United Nations, resolution 1 (I), on the establishment of a commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy, was adopted in London. Seventy-two years have passed since then, but a significant portion of the Committee's work is still focused on the issues of that resolution, namely, non-proliferation and disarmament. What further complicates our task in that regard is North Korea, the only country that has conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century.

Following its two nuclear tests and numerous ballistic missile launches of all types last year, in defiance of the stern warnings of the international community, North Korea went ahead with its sixth nuclear test this past month. North Korea's reckless provocations indeed pose the gravest threat to international peace and security and to the global non-proliferation regime. We must stop North Korea before it crosses the point of no return. In order to do so, the international community should unite and speak in one voice and act in solidarity by fully and thoroughly implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions.

For its part, North Korea should make a strategic decision, without further delay, to give up its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, for the sake of its own future. Whether to stick to its current path of self-destruction or redirect itself towards the path of prosperity is entirely the choice of North Korea. The Republic of Korea remains committed to the peaceful resolution of the issue and stands ready to help North Korea build a brighter future if it changes its course.

Today's world is a far cry from a world free of nuclear weapons. Indeed, now more than ever, we need practical measures to advance nuclear disarmament. To be viable, however, any nuclear disarmament approach should give due consideration to the underlying security concerns of each country or region. As a country under constant nuclear threat from North Korea, it is only logical for the Republic of Korea to prefer and support a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament.

We firmly believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should be the basis for our ongoing efforts to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world. We also believe that the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the early launch of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in Geneva should be our priority for promoting non-proliferation leading to disarmament, and vice versa. As a member of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group, the Republic of Korea will exert its utmost efforts to ensure that the recommendations of the group are both substantive and comprehensive to pave the way towards actual negotiations on this critical issue.

The discussions on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms are also of vital importance, as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to prolong conflicts and fuel terrorism and other illicit activities around the world. Earlier in April, the United Nations witnessed the adoption by consensus of recommendations on that issue — the first ever made in the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 17 years. We look forward to the equally inclusive and fruitful discussions, next June, during the third Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

Rapid scientific and technological developments do not allow us ease of life unless we take heed of its

double-edged nature. Proliferation challenges from tech-savvy and transnational non-State actors, violent extremists and global terrorist groups necessitate enhanced vigilance and strengthened coordination among different national authorities. In that regard, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its firm support for the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), and will continue to contribute to its outreach and capacity-building activities.

Areas such as outer space security and cybersecurity are where the international community can still be more proactive. In that regard, the Republic of Korea is of the view that the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures to avoid a possible arms race in space is timely for our deliberations. With regard to cybersecurity in particular, the Republic of Korea appreciates the work and progress made so far by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

Unfortunately, the 2016-2017 Group failed to adopt a consensus report, but its four rounds of in-depth meetings taught us where we are now in terms of our collective efforts to ensure an open and secure cyberspace, and to promote a global cooperative framework for addressing cyberthreats. Under your stewardship, Mr. Chair, we are confident that Member States will come together to address those areas of pressing concern. The Republic of Korea remains committed to actively contributing to the work of the Committee during this session.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this very important Committee and wish you every success in the conduct of our work.

I wish to align myself with the statements delivered by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

As the Committee may recall, in 1961 the General Assembly adopted resolution 1652 (XVI), calling upon the States Members of the United Nations to consider and respect the African continent as a denuclearized zone. In 1964, the Organization of African Unity issued a declaration on the denuclearization of Africa, which

was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly. To that end, the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, was signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996, by 47 out of 53 African States. The Republic of Angola signed the Treaty on the same day, and ratified it on 20 June 2014.

Other regions also have nuclear-weapon-free zones. We therefore call upon the Middle East, as a region, to quickly embark on that path, in the same spirit, taking into consideration the pioneer resolution 3263 (XXIX), of 9 December 1974, and resolution 67/28, of 3 December 2012, among others on the same matter.

With regard to conventional weapons, the Republic of Angola welcomed the holding of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Geneva from 11 to 15 September. The holding of that Conference served to help States parties and signatories to fully implement the Treaty and its universalization, through domestic procedures and activities. In that regard, Angolan authorities are fully committed to ratifying the Treaty next year.

As the Committee may be aware, after 30 years of fratricidal war our country was significantly affected by several types of landmines. Thanks to the commitment of the Government and partners, such as the non-aligned Governments and international community organizations, such as the Red Cross, it was possible to demine a significant part of our country. Explosive devices were also removed, which facilitated the free movement of people and goods and the rehabilitation of railways and road networks to boost our agriculture and livestock development.

The themes of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have gained new momentum on the international agenda, with greater emphasis on nuclear disarmament, which was reflected in the conclusion in 2010 of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on the reduction of strategic offensive arms, in order to seek the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. To that effect, we urge all annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty to allow its entry into force. Angola shares the view that all nuclear tests must be banned and perpetrators held to account, since they threaten international peace.

The successful conclusion of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which

took place in May 2010, succeeded in approving an Action Plan, with concrete measures to be undertaken by States parties in the three main thematic pillars of the Treaty: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Despite the renewed signs of commitment to nuclear disarmament, there is still much to be done. More than 40 years after the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the continued existence of numerous stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear proliferation keep alive the possibility of the use of such weapons — be it intentional, accidental or by miscalculation — with catastrophic consequences for all humankind. That possibility has only increased with the emergence of new countries with nuclear weapons, and access to explosive nuclear technology by non-State actors, such as terrorist groups that pose great danger.

At the sixth NPT Review Conference in 2000, the five nuclear Powers recognized by the Treaty made a clear commitment to the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. They also accepted a programme with 13 concrete steps to achieve that goal. We regret that very little of the programme has been implemented so far. In some cases, facilities for the eventual resumption of nuclear tests have been maintained, while numerous weapons remain on high alert. In other cases, substantial investments continue to be made to modernize nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. There is hope that such development can be reversed as soon as possible, in the light of the commitments made or reiterated at the 2010 Review Conference, in order to ensure to the credibility and future sustainability of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

The opening ceremony for the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on 20 September, was a clear illustration of the commitment of a number of nuclear-weapon States and others to contribute greatly to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and for international peace and security. The Republic of Angola will sign the Treaty next year, during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. Angola's position is rooted in the conviction that disarmament and non-proliferation are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Angola believes that the international community should prioritize the nuclear disarmament process, and that there is an urgent need for concrete measures to reflect a clear commitment to the complete elimination of such weapons, in accordance with the

obligations assumed by nuclear Powers under the NPT. We believe that international efforts in that area should culminate in the complete, non-discriminatory and multilateral and verifiable ban on nuclear weapons, similar to the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): I, too, would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to the First Committee, and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union on 2 October (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We live in the world fraught with security threats and challenges that are complex, dynamic, asymmetrical and transnational in nature, ranging all the way from nuclear to small arms, making our work in the First Committee ever-more relevant. Nuclear proliferation is no longer a theoretical threat but a reality that challenges our common security and peace. Nuclear arsenal build-up and the worsening of the security situation on the Korean peninsula are extremely worrisome. We call for a diplomatic solution to that crisis, in full and unconditional compliance with the existing international non-proliferation regimes and recent Security Council resolutions.

Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials and technologies are another major challenge to global security. We see terrorist groups, such as Da'esh, threatening not only the nations of the Middle East but also those of Europe, North America and other places across the globe. The chances of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists are alarming. Rapid advancements in science and technology make the exploitation of security vulnerabilities with criminal intent highly probable. We are deeply distressed by the violent developments and security situation in the Middle East, and we condemn in the strongest terms all despicable acts of the use of chemical weapons and violence against the civilian population.

Given the importance of the threats posed by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and materials, and due to the fact that Georgian law enforcement agencies, in cooperation with partners, have detected several attempts to smuggle nuclear and radioactive materials through Georgia's regions

currently under illegal foreign military occupation, Georgia actively cooperates with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, within the framework of the CBRN Centres of Excellence, to promote an integrated CBRN approach across the area of South-East Europe, the Caucasus, Moldova and Ukraine. We have also been discussing possible threats emanating from the use of new technologies and artificial intelligence from a CBRN and cybersecurity perspective within the United Nations Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance.

Let me take this opportunity to inform the Committee that a donor coordination meeting on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear safety and security will be held in Tbilisi on 3 November. The meeting will be conducted under the auspices of the Group of Seven Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and is actively supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and the European Commission.

Apart from legitimate concerns about weapons of mass destruction, one should not forget that conventional military conflicts have not disappeared in the twenty-first century. On the contrary, we face the reality of conventional military conflict in many parts of the world. That is particularly true, when we speak about threat perceptions through the prism of my country, for instance, where in spite of the direct call of 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement for the withdrawal of Russian military formations, military presence continues to build in Georgia's occupied territories.

Right now, there are fully operational Russian military bases illegally stationed in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali regions, each housing approximately 4,500 military personnel and 1,300 Federal Security Service personnel. The bases are equipped with sophisticated offensive weaponry, including battle tanks and various armoured assault vehicles, multiple-launch rocket systems, as well as surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missile systems, such as the SA-10 Grumble and SS-21 Scarab.

The force structure and posture of such deployments, including the type and quantity of their military hardware, go beyond defensive objectives and are nothing but power projection capabilities across the entire Black Sea region and the Mediterranean. They are therefore a security threat. There are also regular military drills carried out by Russia's Southern Military

District in occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali regions in unprecedented numbers, with approximately 60 in Abkhazia and 20 in Tskhinvali region this year alone. Such actions hinder efforts for the peaceful resolution of the conflict and are aimed at destabilizing the region.

The uncontrolled dissemination and excessive accumulation of conventional arms and ammunition represent a serious threat to international peace and security. Georgia, as one of the Vice-Presidents of the fourth Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), believes that apart from regulating trade, the ATT has a real potential to eradicate illicit arms trade and, in that way, to genuinely contribute to humanitarian objectives and fostering global peace and security. Therefore, the timely and transparent submission of national reports is at the heart of the Treaty. Georgia has already submitted its initial national report on the implementation of the Treaty for last year and made it public. We encourage all States parties to be on time and show transparency when submitting their annual reports.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 2325 (2016) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remain the most important instruments available to the international community. We should ensure that they are strengthened and fully adhered to.

Mr. Morales López (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-second session, and express my delegation's support for the successful completion of our work.

As has been stated on a number of occasions and in various forums, all efforts to implement international legal instruments on disarmament, non-proliferation and international security are vital, but if those efforts are to be reflected on the ground, they must be accompanied by political will and an intention to change and transform.

The control of conventional weapons is crucial to preventing the illicit trade in such weapons. It must be recalled that conventional weapons, rather than weapons of mass destruction, cause the greatest number of victims in our countries. In our country, the achievements reached in the Final Agreement

for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace have led to tangible results in support of our commitment to disarmament and arms control. The laying down of weapons by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), thanks to the support of the United Nations, means that the thousands of weapons and ammunition that were collected and subsequently destroyed will never pose a threat to anyone in my country or the rest of the world.

Finally in the area of conventional weapons, year after year, together with South Africa and Japan, we have submitted the draft resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". I take this opportunity to thank all the States represented here for the support that enabled the text to be adopted by consensus in previous years. We hope that that tradition will be upheld at this session.

With regard to antipersonnel mines in Colombia, I reaffirm that, in addition to our commitments to international legal instruments following more than five decades of domestic armed conflict in our country, comprehensive mine action is a proven, successful and replicable peacebuilding and peacekeeping tool. Amid the progress Colombia has made in that area, it is worth highlighting the implementation of two humanitarian demining pilot projects agreed between the Government and the FARC guerrillas.

With regard to improvised explosive devices, we have developed multiple initiatives to counteract their indiscriminate effects. Two specific approaches have been used to develop the various initiatives. The first seeks to gain a greater understanding of improvised explosive devices, including the various types of devices developed by illegal armed groups, and the second, of the development of devices that are similar to antipersonnel mines and also used by solely by illegal groups. We believe that that issue must be addressed with a comprehensive strategy that encompasses assistance to victims, development and education models on risk and on the use of various multidimensional, inclusive approaches.

We strongly condemn the frequent nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reiterate that such destabilizing acts pose a threat to international peace and security and constitute a flagrant violation of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We believe that

the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a milestone in the history of nuclear disarmament. Its implementation will make a substantive contribution to international peace and security.

Colombia underscores the urgent need to achieve the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the cornerstone of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, and reiterates its call on States that have not yet done so to sign the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

With regard to biological weapons, we support the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention, and call on States that are not yet parties to the Convention to sign it. We believe that it is wise to resume negotiations and dialogue with a view to strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention in multilateral forums. We acknowledge the validity of the mandate of the Convention's special conference to develop a verification protocol.

We reject the use of chemical weapons in any circumstances by State or non-State actors. We advocate the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Similarly, we welcome the progress made in destroying chemical weapons by the States possessing such weapons. We hope those weapons of mass destruction will be eliminated as soon as possible.

With regard to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), I would like to highlight the Paris peer review, in which Chile and Colombia volunteered to share information on their experiences with implementing the resolution. I am honoured to report that the first on-site visit is currently taking place in Bogotá, to be followed at the end of the month by a second visit in Santiago. I would like to underscore the support of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Organization of American States Inter-American Committee against Terrorism in conducting that exercise.

Finally, I would like to make a few remarks about the disarmament machinery as the most appropriate forum for achieving nuclear disarmament. We regret the deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament. That is why we believe that obstacles must be overcome in order to streamline the Conference's work and to prevent States resolve to safeguard international agreements on peace and security from being undermined. We acknowledge that procedural matters are only one of

the Conference's main challenges. We understand that those issues stymie the Conference's ability to reach consensus. Procedural matters, such as the approval of a programme of work, should be considered by the members of the Conference as a possible cause of the deadlock, and should therefore be a topic of discussion, with a view to finding long-term solutions.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session.

Today's world is witnessing major developments and profound transformation and change, in particular new challenges to international security, which are seen in four areas.

First, global strategic stability is being undermined. In pursuit of their own absolute security, some major Powers have continued to increase their military expenditure and taken negative steps that undermine global strategic stability.

Secondly, the international non-proliferation regime is faced with serious challenges. Some countries have continued to conduct nuclear tests, in defiance of the international community's common position on the issue. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was put to a vote, outside of the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. The existing international non-proliferation regime, with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone, suffered new setbacks, while already subjected to negative effects of unilateralism and double standards.

Thirdly, geopolitics has made a strong comeback, interacting and overlapping with non-traditional security problems, such as terrorism and the refugee crisis. Extremist ideologies and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have added to the intensity of conflicts.

Fourthly, the technological revolution on the Internet, artificial intelligence and hypersonics have had new repercussions on international security.

The new security challenges and situation call for a new approach to security governance. We must explore a feasible approach to enhance global security governance and to safeguard world peace and security. Chinese President Xi Jinping has proposed that all countries should pursue common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and set a goal of

building a community for humankind's shared future. Together, they should create a new type of international relations, underpinned by successful cooperation. That important vision paves the way for the strengthening of global security governance and provides a realistic and feasible pathway for maintaining international peace and security. It is an answer for greater international peace and security and an international security strategy that can be replicated and scaled up. In that regard, I should like to elaborate further on China's proposals in four areas — goal, vision, principles and mechanisms.

First, with regard to the goal, we should establish a committee for humankind's shared future and build a world of lasting peace, universal security and shared prosperity. We should create a just security architecture to which we all contribute and whose benefits we all share. We should uphold multilateralism, rather than unilateralism, pursue a new concept of win-win thinking and progress, and abandon the old notions of the zero-sum game and winner-takes-all. We should advocate overcoming differences through consultation and settling disputes through dialogue.

Secondly, with regard to vision, we should uphold the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Shared security calls for adhering to the basic principle of undiminished security for all and respecting and accommodating the legitimate security concerns of all nations. Comprehensive security requires a holistic approach to handling the relationship between traditional and emerging issues and coordinating the promotion of international security, disarmament and the non-proliferation process. Cooperative security means resolving differences by strengthening international cooperation. Mutual trust among countries would inevitably be undermined by practices such as long-arm jurisdiction, wilful sanctions and the threat of use. Sustainable security requires forging the broadest possible consensus, promoting international arms control and disarmament, in a proactive, regional, practical and gradual manner. It is the only way to ensure that the process of international arms control is steady and durable.

Thirdly, with the regard to principles, we should abide by rules and norms. We must be effective in implementing international law, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention but in particular the NPT, as

customary international law on disarmament and non-proliferation. We must safeguard the authority and effectiveness of existing international arms control and the non-proliferation regime, based on the NPT.

As the number of destabilizing factors and uncertainties in international security continue to rise, it is particularly important to bear in mind the principle that all countries are equal as it pertains to the rules. One cannot simply use the rules considered to be of benefit and discard those that are not. In order to respond effectively to the new trends and demands in new frontiers, such as cyberspace, outer space and artificial intelligence, and cope effectively with new challenges, we should develop new rules and norms to fit the current era.

Fourthly, with regard to mechanisms, we should adhere to multilateralism and improve the multitiered global security governance mechanism. We must keep the framework for cooperation among the major Powers on an even keel.

First, a new type of relations among the major Powers must be established, without conflict or confrontation and based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation. The major Powers should strengthen communication and coordination, proactively manage their differences and achieve common security.

Secondly, we must support the United Nations in playing a core role in the international multilateral disarmament architecture. We must improve regional cooperation and its mechanisms. Multilateralism is not dispensable, nor is the multilateral disarmament machinery.

China has been committed to maintaining international peace and security by vigorously promoting international arms control and non-proliferation. We have made important contributions to the enhancement of global security governance.

First, China has contributed its vision to rules-setting in global security governance. At the Nuclear Security Summit, for the first time President Xi Jinping put forward China's nuclear security concept, which is a milestone in the development of global and nuclear undertakings. China advocates building a community with a shared destiny and establishing a peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly cyberspace and a multilateral, democratic and transparent global Internet

governance system. That vision has enriched global security governance.

Secondly, China has contributed the Chinese solution to resolving hotspot issues, such as the Iranian nuclear issue and the Syrian chemical weapons issue. On the Korean peninsula nuclear issue in particular, China has made unremitting efforts in pushing for a negotiated settlement. The suspension-for-suspension initiative and dual-track approach proposed by China are practical and viable ways to address the Korean nuclear issue. China believes that Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be implemented comprehensively. As sanctions are tightened, efforts should be made to restart the peace process, turning the pressure of sanctions into a driving force for negotiations.

China has also provided Chinese wisdom for new security frontier governance. Together with Russia, China will submit a joint draft resolution on the establishment of a group of governmental experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

China has contributed to the maintenance of international security and governance. China will faithfully assume its responsibilities and work with the international community to build a more secure and prosperous world.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): The delegation of Sri Lanka wishes to join all other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

We commence the deliberations of the First Committee this year amid escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula and an increasing number of violent conflicts around the world, which have led to an inestimable loss of life, displacement, violence against civilians and a significant decrease in human living standards. The effects of those tensions and conflicts have spilled over beyond borders and pose significant challenges to our efforts to reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

Nuclear weapons pose one of the greatest threats to humankind. Their testing and use can result in catastrophic consequences to life on the planet. They

have the capacity to destroy not only all forms of life but also human memory and civilization. The risk of those consequences will remain as long as nuclear weapons exist. That is especially grave given the risk of accidental, mistaken or unauthorized use. Such weapons are also a threat given the vulnerability of command and control, technical failures, human errors and cyberattacks. The danger of those weapons falling into terrorist hands could lead to unthinkable consequences. Nuclear weapons by nature are inhumane and indiscriminate, and their use violates the cardinal principles of international humanitarian law. Any use of nuclear weapons would be abhorrent to the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience.

Sri Lanka has a long record of opposition to nuclear weapons. It was among the first States to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968 and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. We were unequivocal in our support for the resolution adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons this year and are committed to global efforts on the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka firmly believes that a strong international treaty framework remains the most effective and legally binding means to address the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We take this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The increase in violent conflicts around the world and the rising cost of human lives call for an even more concerted effort on our part to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Those arms continue to fuel conflicts and cause suffering to thousands. The danger they pose is augmented by the ease with which they may be used, especially in the hands of non-State actors.

Sri Lanka has experienced a decade-old conflict in the past and the accompanying senseless destruction that small arms and light weapons can cause. We are signatory to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Sri Lanka established a national commission against the proliferation of illicit small arms to address the proliferation of such weapons in the country. While we agree in principle with international measures to address the issue of the proliferation of small arms

and light weapons, it is important to ensure that any measures taken by the United Nations and its States Members to address that issue do not affect the rights of States to legally procure and hold weapons for their self-defence and the safety of their citizens.

Sri Lanka advocates that outer space is part of the common heritage of humankind and there should be equal opportunity to explore and utilize it for peaceful purposes, for the common benefit of humankind. However, all States have a responsibility to ensure that outer space is free from conflict. It is imperative that we prevent any militarization and potential weaponization of space, as it could undermine international security, disrupt existing arms control instruments, in particular those related to nuclear weapons, which have an adverse impact on global stability. In order to address that issue, we believe that the existing legal framework on outer space should be further strengthened to meet current challenges and threats.

We also welcome the recent UNESCO report on the ethics of robotics, covering a wide range of robotic-related issues, and look forward to continuing studies on that phenomenon. The First Committee debate also provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the multilateral disarmament machinery, which plays an important role complementing and promoting the global agenda for peace and disarmament. It is a cause for concern that certain mechanisms have failed to produce fruitful outcomes. The stagnation of the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for the international community, and the failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to produce any tangible outcome, put at risk global efforts towards reaching consensus on disarmament. The failure to find common ground for a way forward on disarmament deserves serious thought on the part of Member States.

Sri Lanka reiterates the need for urgent and collective global action for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the reduction of small arms and light weapons and the peaceful use of outer space. There is a dire need to enhance the coordination of global efforts to combat the threats posed to international security by such weapons and reach consensus on disarmament. To that end, my delegation looks forward to constructive deliberations at this session of the First Committee.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we too

would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

We commend Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum for his able leadership of the First Committee at its seventy-first session. We also commend the non-governmental organization International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its contribution in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Venezuela aligns 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.2).

The work of the First Committee at this session is taking place in an international environment marked by uncertainty and crisis situations in various regions of the world, which are deteriorating due to the hegemonic practices of Powers seeking to impose their own view of the global political situation. They also use dangerous, belligerent rhetoric and threaten to use force against, and destroy, sovereign States, in violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Amid the major threats posed to humankind by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, a firm commitment on the part of the States Members of the United Nations is required in order to honour commitments made under international legal instruments.

In spite of that inevitable goal, we are concerned about the fact that, over the past few decades, very little progress has been made in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Nonetheless, the international community has continued to promote the adoption of multilateral measures that will enable humankind to be free of the threat of nuclear weapons. In that spirit, Venezuela welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July. As a signatory to that instrument, we encourage the nuclear-weapon States to join this historic, collective effort.

Nuclear weapons are morally unacceptable and must be banned and eliminated. Their complete elimination is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Seventy-two years after the devastating attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nothing can justify the fact that humankind remains under the threat of nuclear weapons and the risk of their immediate use. To achieve a world without nuclear weapons, the

nuclear-weapon States, via unconditional and legally binding guarantees, must urgently undertake to refrain from the use or threat of use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Similarly, the nuclear-weapon States must amend their nuclear doctrines, in which nuclear weapons feature as key elements in their strategic security posture.

We look forward to the success of the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The complex security situation cannot be used as a pretext for disregarding a compromise that was previously reached on the implementation of measures to reduce, and subsequently eliminate, nuclear weapons, under article VI of the Treaty.

We hope that the stated goal to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as agreed at the 1995 NPT Review Conference, will be achieved. We call for the balanced and unconditional implementation of the three pillars of the NPT, in particular respect for the sovereign right of States to develop nuclear energy. We also underscore the importance and urgency of signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, without delay or conditions, so as to ensure its prompt entry into force. We categorically reject all nuclear tests, including subcritical tests for the purposes of developing and upgrading nuclear arsenals.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is a priority on the nuclear disarmament agenda. The international community must continue to strengthen the existing legal framework to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. The draft treaty put forward by Russia and China is a good foundation on which to start discussions and future negotiations on that issue.

Venezuela again condemns the use of chemical and biological weapons, regardless of who uses them or where they are used. Venezuela is fully in favour of the complete elimination of such weapons. We condemn the chemical attacks perpetrated by Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. We underscore the need for all States to sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We commend the Russian Federation on completing the verified destruction of its chemical weapons arsenals.

In conclusion, we reiterate that multilateralism is the most comprehensive and effective way to achieve nuclear disarmament. We welcome the holding of the

fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and support the Assembly's decision to convene a high-level United Nations conference on nuclear disarmament no later than 2018. We hope that the conference will lead to a positive outcome in the interest of international peace and security.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session.

Spain aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), and reiterates its firm commitment to multilateralism and in particular to collective initiatives in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Once again, Spain firmly condemns the nuclear test on 3 September and the myriad ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in flagrant violation of various Security Council resolutions. The North Korean nuclear and ballistic programme is a very serious threat to international peace and security and to the stability of the North Korean peninsula. My delegation calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to eliminate the challenge it poses to the international community, take concrete steps to reduce the tensions and declare an unconditional moratorium on its nuclear and ballistic tests. That could all pave the way for substantive negotiations leading to the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Spain reiterates the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and a foundation for driving forward the nuclear disarmament process and developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We commend the constructive atmosphere at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee. We hope that it will be maintained in future meetings with a view to strengthening the NPT at the 2020 Review Conference.

Spain welcomes the implementation of the nuclear agreement between the E3/EU+3 and Iran. International Atomic Energy Agency quarterly reports confirm the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

We regret that an agreement has not yet been reached on the convening of a conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and their

delivery systems. We reaffirm our support for the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the agreements adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. We encourage all parties to show genuine political will to engage in dialogue and seek consensus that allows for the holding, as soon as possible, of a conference at which all States of the region will be represented.

Spain is a non-nuclear-weapon State and a staunch supporter of nuclear disarmament. We call on the States with large nuclear-weapon arsenals to demonstrate their responsibility and move towards the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We express our firm support for the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva as the only body created for negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties. We regret the deadlock at the Conference, which has lasted for many years, and the lack of progress in disarmament negotiations, including those related to a future fissile material cut-off treaty.

Spain is fully aware of the discussions surrounding the humanitarian impact of the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. However, it does not share the views that led to the recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Spain believes that it is necessary to advance a nuclear-disarmament process that encompasses security issues within the framework of the NPT and with concrete and realistic initiatives supported by the nuclear-weapon States. A major step in the disarmament process should be the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We therefore call on the countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, in particular annex 2 States, to do so as soon as possible.

One of the main priorities on which our efforts should be focused is preventing non-State actors, including terrorist groups, from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Spain welcomes the adoption by the Security Council in December 2016 of resolution 2325 (2016), which seeks to strengthen implementation, assistance and coordination instruments, and promote greater civil society involvement in order to achieve the goals outlined in resolution 1540 (2004).

The twentieth anniversary of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 20 April has highlighted the importance of that organization. Spain condemns the use of any chemical substance as a weapon, by whomever and regardless

of the situation. The OPCW Fact-finding Mission's confirmation of the use of sarin, a chemical weapon agent, in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April deserves the utmost condemnation. The work of the experts of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) will be key to determining those responsible and to preventing that and similar crimes from going unpunished. The work of the JIM must continue and be the deterrent we would like it to be. The Security Council must therefore shoulder its responsibility and issue a firm response.

The challenge of the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is of particular interest to Spain. It is the common link between terrorism and transnational organized crime and the main weapon used in today's conflicts. The First Committee should not ignore this challenge, because it has a terrible political, economic and social impact on our societies. International efforts to control small arms and light weapons are focused on four initiatives with which the Committee is familiar. Spain calls on all members to become involved in the initiatives with a particular view to ensuring the success of the upcoming 2018 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in The Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Conference should lead to concrete initiatives and projects.

Lastly, I believe that adopting a gender approach to the disarmament agenda in the First Committee will provide opportunities. I must say that, regrettably, I see very few women in those arenas. These forums are dominated by men. I can point that out because Spain is one of those countries that spearheads the women's agenda, and in particular the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, over the next few weeks, I hope that the First Committee can have frank discussions that could bring members closer and build greater trust among us.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on being elected as Chair of the First Committee at this session. We are confident that your efficiency and wisdom will lead to optimal results. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

I align my country with the statements made by the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States; the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States; and the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Libya reaffirms its respect for all its commitments under international instruments that it has ratified on disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Together with the international community, Libya supports regional and international efforts to enforce the provisions of international conventions and protocols and create an environment conducive to eliminating all weapons of mass destruction everywhere. In that regard, Libya believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are fully committed to enforcing the NPT, with its three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

There is no way to guarantee the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons except by completely eliminating such weapons, but that does not seem imminent. However, we remain hopeful because, through certain initiatives, some States have abandoned their nuclear programmes and weapons. In that regard, my country's delegation calls on all nuclear-weapon States to develop a programme for the elimination of their nuclear arsenals and to cease all development of such weapons, in order to ensure the commitment of all States to the NPT.

My country's delegation welcomes the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted by 122 States on 7 July and opened for signature on 20 September. A number of States, including my own country, have signed the Treaty. We urge the States that have not yet signed the Treaty to do so in order to ensure the Treaty's entry into force.

It is regrettable that despite strenuous efforts to achieve the universality of the NPT, there is major disappointment surrounding the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. The Conference could not achieve consensus or an outcome document due to the disagreement on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. That calls into question the seriousness of some States about the establishment of such a zone,

despite the fact that the 1995 NPT Review Conference decision to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons is considered fundamental to the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Eliminating nuclear weapons is a prerequisite for stability in the region. It is also critical to confidence-building. Libya therefore calls for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in the region and demands that all nuclear facilities be subjected to international supervision and inspection, in accordance with the NPT, General Assembly resolutions dating back to 1974, Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, through which all parties are urged to take practical measures to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and called on to abide by the NPT, subject all nuclear activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards and take part in negotiations in good faith that lead to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict international supervision.

Efforts to spare humankind from weapons of mass destruction are the only way to establish a world free from lethal weapons, in particular nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. With a view to saving humankind from such threats, my country has honoured its commitments set out in Libya's programme to destroy all its chemical weapons, in accordance with the Convention on Chemical Weapons. That was verified by inspectors from the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

In conclusion, Libya underscores that multilateral international cooperation and serious political will are both critical to achieving disarmament objectives of laying the pillars of stability and tranquillity throughout the world, leading to development, prosperity and well-being for all people.

Mr. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session, and wishes you every success in your work. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation aligns 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.2).

Despite the fact that this is a crucial moment for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we still live in a world where more is being spent to develop, modernize and test weapons of all kinds, and less to promote life and sustainable development among our peoples. While millions suffer the effects of the many crises affecting us — economy, poverty, hunger, fatal illnesses — we heard the President of the General Assembly himself mention the ever-increasing astronomical global military spending. We must end that dangerous trend and channel our efforts to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and, by extension, peace.

Nicaragua has always stated that there is an urgent need to continue along the path to complete disarmament, which includes both nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, whose use is in violation of the fundamental principles of general international law and international humanitarian law. In that regard, we signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, taking into account the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which states that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity and a violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We firmly believe that the only way to prevent the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation into the hands of non-State actors is the complete and absolute elimination of nuclear weapons. Nicaragua firmly believes that the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security can be strengthened by establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, which would be an important step to achieving nuclear disarmament. We reiterate the importance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established our region as a zone of peace, as declared by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States on the Treaty's fiftieth anniversary.

In that regard, we regret the failure to hold in 2012 an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate that the conference is a key element of the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We urge the parties to hold the conference as soon as possible.

Nicaragua pays particular heed to compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as an international legally binding, consensus-based instrument in the global non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy system. The international community needs concrete action, in particular the immediate implementation of the Treaty by the nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the unequivocal commitment of those States to negotiate effective measures on general disarmament under complete, strict and effective control.

We also welcome the convening of a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, to be held in 2018, in order to re-examine progress made in the area of nuclear disarmament and to step up international efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. We support efforts to prioritize the humanitarian concerns about the use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we welcome the three conferences held in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico and Vienna.

We also support the negotiation of a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. Nicaragua and Russia have committed to the no-first-placement initiative on weapons in outer space. Similarly, as we do every year, we will co-sponsor a draft resolution with the same goal.

The situation on the Korean peninsula is of particular importance. We believe that nuclear tests in no way contribute to international peace. They must be condemned. With dialogue and negotiation, we believe that a political and peaceful solution can be found to this pernicious military situation. The solution would denuclearize the region and allow for the reunification of, and peace on, the Korean peninsula.

We condemn the use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We are firmly committed to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and to strict compliance with its provisions.

My country is committed and has taken the appropriate measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in weapons. We have integrated the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects into our national legislation through law 1510.

Citizen and human security is one of Nicaragua's main strengths. It has therefore developed a series of specific policies and programmes to combat the current scourges of terrorism, crime, drug trafficking, the arms trade and the trafficking in persons, among others. Those policies have garnered positive results. Working with the people has led to a successful partnership that makes Nicaragua one of the safest countries and impenetrable to our region's organized crime. It has also enabled us to strengthen our security and achieve positive results while combating organized crime, drug trafficking and the culture of violence. That is why many United Nations studies indicate that Nicaragua is one of six countries with the highest levels of citizen security in Latin America and the Caribbean and the safest country in Central America. We reiterate that international assistance and cooperation are required in order to successfully implement the Programme of Action,

Nicaragua welcomes the fact that Central America has been declared a zone free of mines and cluster munitions. Nicaragua holds the pro-tempore presidency of the current session of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and it will work towards its universality.

We also believe that the use of new information and communications technology must be fully compatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. That issue should also be discussed at the United Nations. It is important to make progress on the commitment to eliminate nuclear arsenals throughout the world and to channel their immense resources to eradicate poverty.

In conclusion, many of us have mentioned the deadlock in the disarmament machinery. However, we have been unable to resolve the real problem of the lack of political will on the part of some States to make genuine progress, in particular in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this important Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that your rich experience will ensure the success of the Committee's work.

Let me also congratulate the Permanent Representative of Algeria for his efforts in steering the work of the Committee at the seventy-first session.

I align myself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States; and the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). The delegation of the Sudan will engage positively and actively in the deliberations of this Committee.

The Sudan is an active partner in international disarmament efforts. We were one of the first countries to join the main relevant international conventions and instruments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also spearheaded efforts to develop the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba. Moreover, we joined the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 2004.

My country's capital, Khartoum, hosted the first meeting of African national authorities on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, leading to the adoption of important recommendations, including that of making Africa free from chemical weapons, and stressed the need for the exclusively peaceful use of chemicals in activities carried out by States, without prejudice to the full, legitimate and inalienable rights of States to use nuclear and chemical technologies for scientific, technical and development purposes. In line with those principles, my country participated in the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination, the result of which was the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty is a fundamental basis and starting point to end the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humankind. We hope that the Treaty will be signed soon.

My country believes in the need for nuclear disarmament and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We therefore call for speeding up the holding a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, to implement the decision of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. All countries of the Middle East should participate in the conference. In that regard, we stress the importance of placing all Middle East nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, making it inevitable for Israel to join the NPT. We also recall that regional and international

developments, in particular in the Middle East, serve to underscore that the only way to promote international security is through multilateral efforts, namely, by holding the Middle East conference.

Conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons are among the main priorities of the Sudanese Government. Like other countries, we are affected by that phenomenon. In fact, it is often linked to economic developments and further complicated by natural phenomena, such as climate change, drought and desertification, along with the growing competition for access to water and food resources. That has made the possession of arms essential for some tribes and population groups to show their strength and protect their gains. Disarmament and arms control have become extremely difficult. The Sudan is aware more than other countries of the risks posed by this phenomenon and the need to eliminate it. That is why we have always been present and active in all relevant regional and international forums. We have made national efforts, through our national office to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, because we believe that the proliferation of such weapons is related to transnational organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.

In that regard, the Sudan is leading multilateral efforts with the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Our most recent effort involved hosting the regional 2013 workshop on combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We have also been engaged in bilateral efforts with neighbouring countries for the demarcation of the borders and the strengthening of control points and customs. As we review those efforts, we stress that combating the proliferation of such weaponry must be an endeavour spearheaded by countries that manufacture such weapons in the first place, and not only by countries affected by them. We also stress the need for manufacturing countries not to export such weapons to non-State individuals and groups, so that they do not fall into the wrong hands.

My country's Government has also been involved in demining efforts, in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). Those efforts will lead the Sudan to declare all of its three eastern states mine-free by December this year. My country is also working to fulfil its commitments in line with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and

on Their Destruction by 2019, provided that it gets the necessary support from the international community. We also commend UNMAS for its efforts and recognize the efforts of other friendly and brotherly countries.

In conclusion, early this year the Sudanese Government launched a campaign to collect arms from citizens, among a set of measures to address the root causes of the conflict in Darfur, a region that has suffered greatly because of arms proliferation. All states of Darfur have joined the campaign, whose first phase began with voluntary arms collection and awareness-raising activities to encourage the people to deliver their arms to the competent authorities. After that phase has been completed, we will start the second, which will consist of imposing the rule of law pertaining to arms collection on anyone who violates it. The Sudanese Government hopes to garner the support of the international community in order to address that phenomenon, which greatly affects my country's security and stability.

Mr. Saint-Hilaire (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I join previous speakers in wishing you, Sir, every success in the First Committee's work.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I will now make a few observations in my national capacity.

We meet again to address the main disarmament and international security-related issues. Our meeting takes place at a time when the international environment is marked by rising tensions, indescribable suffering and emergency security situations arising from growing inequalities, ongoing conflicts, terrorism and the indiscriminate use of tools that sow death and destruction. International security requires constant disarmament and arms control efforts. It also requires political will and the commitment of all States to peacefully resolve disputes.

My country firmly supports the Organization's efforts to promote disarmament and international security, which are needed now more than ever before. In that regard, I would like to cite two paragraphs of the statement made by the President of Haiti, His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, at the general debate on 21 September:

“The Republic of Haiti fully supports any initiative that reduces international tensions,

defuses crises and achieves peaceful settlements to disputes ... The successful negotiated outcome of the conflict in Colombia shows that it is not armed confrontation and blind violence that resolve disputes.” (A/72/PV.11, p. 4)

The President hopes that the efforts made by Colombian society after more than 50 years of deadly conflict will serve as an example to parties to disputes.

We are all called on to strive for progress on the cause of human security by putting forward coherent recommendations. Disarmament encompasses weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons alike, which in many respects sow death and destruction. International security and stability cannot be built on the power of weapons. Furthermore, the manufacture, dissemination and use of increasingly sophisticated and destructive weapons heighten international tensions and jeopardize chances for peace and international security. My delegation will continue to support international efforts to ban and eliminate such frightful instruments. In addition, it will help to strengthen international efforts to prevent terrorists from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and manufacture-related technology.

My delegation underscores the threat posed by the proliferation, unbridled spread and use of conventional weapons. That situation greatly affects many countries, in particular developing countries and conflict-stricken countries. Those weapons are the main tools used to commit crimes and disrupt public order. My country is resolute in undertaking national efforts in full support of all regional and subregional initiatives to end the illicit spread of such weapons. To ensure public order and protect the country, the Government of Haiti has taken a series of measures to build the capacity of the Haitian National Police, with a view to establishing a military component, with development-focused missions and in line with the provisions of the country’s Constitution.

We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as all provisions made by the Caribbean Community to combat crime in the countries of the subregion. We welcome with interest the recommendations put forward by the United Nations Disarmament Commission on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Weapons of mass destruction pose the most serious threat to international security and are of growing concern. Many gaps remain in the efforts to ban and eliminate such weapons. Our objective at the Committee is to adopt the best recommendations, with a view to banning and gradually eliminating such weapons, in line with the provisions of the international disarmament and arms control instruments. In that regard, the President of Haiti stated,

“The Republic of Haiti has always spoken out against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and firmly condemns any tension generated by the desire to possess and produce nuclear weapons” (*ibid.*).

Nuclear tests, ballistic missile launches and the use of prohibited weapons are blatant and unacceptable violations of international norms and relevant Security Council resolutions. Such violations needlessly fuel tensions among States, worsen humanitarian emergencies and pose a serious threat to our world. We all wonder what the outcome will be. That is why we must all shoulder our responsibilities under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, whose swift entry into force my country eagerly awaits.

The Republic of Haiti is part of the first region in the world free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was ratified unanimously. That is why Haiti continues to support all initiatives aimed at protecting our world from the threat of nuclear weapons. The excessive proliferation and modernization of such weapons leads to a subtle balance of suffering, destruction and death. Notwithstanding the different approaches taken by many States in response to the demands of the international security environment, we underscore the fact that global stability can be achieved and consolidated only with the scrupulous respect of all States for international commitments on weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation hopes that our work will help to advance the cause of international security. To that end, we must bear in mind that international security is inextricably linked to sustainable development, disarmament, arms control and the fight against terrorism and its funding. There is everything to gain by working together and respecting everyone’s legitimate

concerns, and in a spirit of consensus to achieve a united, prosperous, safe and stable world.

Mr. Okaiteye (Ghana): My delegation joins previous speakers to warmly congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. We have confidence in your able leadership to steer the agenda of the First Committee to a successful conclusion. We wish to assure you of our support and cooperation in the discharge of your onerous duties.

Ghana associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Ghana maintains the view that employing multilateralism to address global disarmament issues is vital to achieving a safer and secure world. That is particularly critical in the light of the current challenges to peace and security, including the increased threat of terrorism and the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The elimination of nuclear weapons has been on the agenda of the United Nations since its establishment, and yet achieving total, irreversible and internationally verifiable nuclear disarmament, as envisaged in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has eluded us.

It is of concern that, despite the noble regime established by the NPT and the many creative measures introduced therein to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, the Treaty is continuously subjected to reinterpretations and further conditions. We are equally disappointed that this year's first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, held in Vienna, failed to produce a consensus outcome document. Arguably, that development is a testament to the lack of good faith of some States Members of the United Nations in their commitments towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The near inaction of nuclear-weapon States in resolving their differences must propel us collectively to seek new and innovative approaches to bridging differences and building confidence and transparency going forward. Ghana is optimistic that the further positive engagement and the implementation of all agreed measures and commitments by the nuclear-weapon

States, in the context of the NPT, would help to advance the objective of general and complete disarmament.

We are encouraged by the successful adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July and the subsequent opening of the Treaty for signature on 20 September. Ghana actively participated in the negotiating process and joined other Member States in endorsing that important legal instrument, aimed at accelerating our collective efforts towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Indeed, Ghana was among the first countries that signed the Treaty when it was opened for signature.

There is no doubt that the adoption of the Treaty represents momentous progress towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, and accelerates the slow progress of the nuclear disarmament machinery, which has remained in stalemate for decades. The Treaty has become an indispensable part of the general disarmament discourse and reinforces the objectives of the NPT for the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. We therefore urge States Members of the United Nations that are yet to subscribe to the Treaty, including the nuclear-weapon States, to do so without further delay.

It is worrisome that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which is the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, has remained in deadlock for some years now and failed to reach consensus on a programme of work, and thereby commence substantive deliberations. We once again urge the CD to show leadership and carry out its mandated functions, taking into account the overall security interests of all States.

We acknowledge the important contribution of the United Nations Disarmament Commission towards general and complete disarmament. In particular, we welcome the recent successful adoption by consensus this year of the reports, conclusions and recommendations of its Working Group II, on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. However, it is regrettable that there was a lack of consensus on the recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation during the 2017 session of the Disarmament Commission, further reflecting the stalemate in disarmament negotiations, and in particular the non-existent commitment and political will of some Member States to their obligations.

Ghana believes that a world free of nuclear weapons would be in our collective interests. We are therefore committed to maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, particularly under the Treaty of Pelindaba, which reaffirms the status of the African continent as such a zone. For that reason, highly-enriched uranium from Ghana's miniature neutron source reactor was recently transported out of the country to China, signalling the end of the process of removal of such material from our shores. We underscore the significant contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and renew our call on all stakeholders, particularly States in the Middle East to continue to constructively engage in efforts to ensure that that region is free of nuclear weapons.

Ghana shares the view that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) are sine qua non to a world free of nuclear weapons. We welcome the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (see A/70/81), which in our view serves as basis for future negotiations on a possible FMCT, ideally under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament. We also welcome the convening of the ninth Ministerial Meeting of the CTBT, held in New York on 20 September, and renew our call on annex 2 States that are yet to ratify the CTBT to fast track the process of ratification.

The illicit transfer, excessive accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world pose a considerable threat to international security. We are concerned about the impact of the illicit trade, transfer, accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in many parts of the globe, in particular in Africa. Ghana therefore remains committed to the United Nations Firearms Protocol and United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, and joins the call by other Member States for its full and effective implementation. We have demonstrated our commitment to reducing small arms proliferation and misuse, in particular through the destruction of more than 1,300 illegal weapons in 2016 and ongoing

crackdown on local gun manufacturing and trafficking through our borders.

We also align ourselves with other Member States in acknowledging the important contribution of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its entry into force and the successful convening of its third Conference of States Parties, held in Geneva in September. The ATT is indeed a significant achievement and an important step in advancing security and improving accountability, responsibility and transparency in international arms transfers. We reiterate the call of the African Group for all Member States to support the implementation of the ATT and to extend technical, financial and material assistance to developing countries to enable us to fulfil and implement the Treaty's obligations.

In conclusion, I wish to indicate that the continuous desire for, and reliance on, armaments in the security doctrines of some Member States not only threaten the future of humankind but deprive us of the resources needed for sustainable development. Situating that view within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, Ghana joins in the peaceful calls for a fundamental review and discourse to establish the linkages between disarmament and development, as well as the current excessive global military spending.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): At the outset, let me join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. My delegation assures you of our full support and cooperation as you discharge this very important function of guiding the deliberations of the Committee.

In the same vein, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sabri Boukadoum, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, for his sterling leadership of the Committee during the seventy-first session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Let me begin my brief statement by reaffirming the importance that Botswana attaches to the principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with respect to the maintenance of

international peace and security. It is our firm belief that the issue of disarmament and international peace and security should continue to feature prominently on the agenda of the United Nations for as long as peace and stability remain elusive. As we pursue the post-2015 development agenda, our overarching goal for the sustained development and prosperity of humankind must always remain that of peace, safety and security, as prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development.

As it is now customary, this is the time of the year when we meet to take stock of what has been happening around the world with regard to peace and security. We certainly remain challenged in our collective endeavour to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and make the world a safer place to live. More than ever before, we are witnessing an alarming rise in instability, insecurity and violent extremism that result in untold devastation and the dislocation of communities, gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of innocent people, in particular civilians. Botswana therefore remains gravely concerned about those serious threats to international peace and security in many parts of the world, which arguably present the greatest challenge to human development.

Botswana also remains deeply concerned about the unrelenting contravention of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions by North Korea through its continuous testing of ballistic missiles. Such acts on the part of North Korea pose a security threat not only to the Korean peninsula, but throughout the Pacific region and, indeed, the world at large. We therefore appeal to the international community to work in unison and to take prompt and decisive action that will ensure that North Korea adheres to the values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation reiterates its concern about the lack of progress in achieving a world free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. That status quo can partly be attributed to the reluctance and non-cooperation of some Member States that possess such weapons and regard them as an integral part of their strategic defence architecture.

We therefore join other delegations in underscoring the point that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. In that connection, we wish to acknowledge and to welcome the recently adopted

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its ultimate goal of leading towards the total elimination of such weapons. We further implore those States that did not take part in that process to listen to the concerns of the majority and to move forward with the rest of the States as we embark on that long and difficult journey.

Botswana is deeply concerned about the potential catastrophic humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons. For that reason, among others, my delegation is fully convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

We fully support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and believe that such a regional approach will oblige Member States to reject the nuclearization of their respective regions. Indeed, we are proud to be a signatory to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which, as many delegations have pointed out, declared Africa a nuclear-free zone. In the same way, we commend other regions of the world that enjoy a nuclear-free status, such as Latin America, South-East Asia, the South Pacific and Central Asia. In that regard, we urge those regions that are lagging behind, such as the Middle East, to expedite that process in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Another area of concern in the maintenance of international peace and security is that of conventional weapons, which, unfortunately, account for a large part of the global inventory of arms, some of which are easily obtainable. The illicit trade and trafficking in small arms and light weapons require our collective efforts. Their accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world are quite evident.

Against that background, we fully support efforts towards the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We appreciate that, due to resource limitations and the differing capacities of Member States, there are challenges to the full realization of the goals of the Programme of Action. However, it is not an insurmountable problem if there is unity of effort and meaningful technical cooperation and exchanges.

In that regard, we implore our cooperating partners to provide both technical and financial means and

capacity-building to those in need in order that we may derive maximum benefit from the Programme of Action and associated instruments. In that connection, we look forward to the next United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action in 2018, where issues such as the effective implementation of the Programme of Action will be considered.

Finally, Botswana reiterates its support for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the exploration of outer space for the benefit of humankind. However, we are concerned about the weaponization and overexploitation of that domain. In that regard, there is a need for the establishment of effective norms and measures to regulate activities in outer space.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): The New Zealand delegation extends its best wishes to you, Mr. Chair, as you guide this year's First Committee in its annual appraisal of multilateral developments in the context of disarmament and international security.

Sadly, over recent years in this Committee we have become accustomed to having few positive elements to review with regard to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed, it is some decades now since the Conference has been able to live up to its mandate and move forward with the negotiation of any international treaty. In contrast, in past decades its precursor — the Committee on Disarmament — was at the centre of the adoption of a broad range of international legislation that fell under the purview of the First Committee. Those treaties successfully framed the aspirations of the international community and set the rules of international humanitarian law.

I note that the United Nations is now the depositary of more than 560 multilateral treaties, which span the work not only of our Committee, of course, but also of all General Assembly Committees. I learned that fact from the recent invitation sent to Member States to attend what the United Nations calls its Treaty Event, which is held annually here at Headquarters and which this year took place over several days late last month. In his invitation to us all to attend this year's event, Secretary-General Guterres said:

“I strongly urged all States to join multilateral treaties concluded under the auspices of the United Nations as part of a global campaign to affirm the norms that safeguard humanity.”

One of the treaties that was understandably highlighted — indeed, opened for signature — at this year's event was the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Secretary-General Guterres precisely identified the impetus that led to the adoption of the new treaty. The desire to make some contribution to safeguarding humanity in recognition of the dire humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and to affirm the value and standards of international humanitarian law was exactly the motivating force for the large grouping of United Nations Members that came together earlier this year to negotiate the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It was also the impetus behind New Zealand's signature of the Treaty at the ceremony here on 20 September.

New Zealand and New Zealanders are under no false illusion about what the Treaty can achieve. In establishing the legal framework for a world free of nuclear weapons, we do not expect the Treaty to result in significant change to the normative situation regarding nuclear weapons in the short term, any more, for instance, than the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, achieved at its outset with regard to the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons.

Clearly, there are further and very important steps that must still be taken on the pathway to the elimination of nuclear weapons and in order to give full expression to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, the signatories to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons have taken a first step that, we believe, advances our security and is in the interests of humankind.

Significant standards have been set in other recent treaties of which the United Nations is the guardian. New Zealand remains an active supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and took part in the third Conference of States Parties to the ATT last month. With the governance arrangements and institutional processes for the Treaty now largely finalized, it will be important that States parties direct increased attention to implementation and to ensuring that arms transfers comply with the prohibitions and guidelines established under the Treaty so that all communities can share the benefit of its humanitarian and security dividend.

Last month was also the occasion of the annual gathering of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Recent instances of the use of that deplorably indiscriminate weapon, notably in Syria, have not impeded the growing normative influence of the Convention's ban on cluster munitions or undermined its contribution to the body of international humanitarian law.

We look forward to the forthcoming Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction later this year. There can be few treaties that provide a clearer illustration of the compelling power, over time, of a norm laid down, initially in the face of formidable opposition, in order to protect civilian populations.

A treaty that has been even more widely ratified than the Ottawa Convention is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Few members of the global community would dispute its success in shaping a powerful norm against the testing of nuclear weapons, notwithstanding its non-entry into force. The only country that flouts that norm is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. New Zealand condemns that country's testing of nuclear weapons in the strongest possible terms.

New Zealand remains grateful for the role of the United Nations in safeguarding all those agreements, as well as the rest of the 560 treaties of which it is the guardian. As a strong advocate of multilateralism and the rule of law, we will continue to support the efforts of the international community to adopt and to implement new norms to safeguard humankind.

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Trinidad and Tobago shares the majority view that the only world that is safe from the use of nuclear weapons is a world that is completely free of such weapons. That conviction has long underscored the policies of Trinidad and Tobago, as we are a signatory to the 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which established the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone. In addition, my country stands firm in its commitment to upholding the important and necessary obligations conferred

upon us under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Nuclear weapons pose a grave and unique threat to every State Member of the Organization. We need look only to the current escalation of nuclear tensions on the Korean peninsula to see that threat played out in alarming detail. However, there is a growing majority of non-nuclear-weapon States at the United Nations that, together with civil society, is steadfastly working to rid the Earth of the scourge of those weapons. In fact, that movement has been recognized so widely that today the International Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its advocacy in bringing an end to the most destructive weapon ever created. Trinidad and Tobago is therefore proud to lend its voice and support to that group of champions, and we look forward to becoming a signatory to the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as soon as possible.

While ostensibly less harmful than their nuclear counterparts, small arms and light weapons present a tremendous threat to Trinidad and Tobago. Gun violence continues to be a persistent malignancy in our society. Indeed, small arms and light weapons have been referred to as the Caribbean's weapons of mass destruction. The control, prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in those armaments is a top priority for my country and for our regional partners. As such, we remain steadfast in our commitments to United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Trinidad and Tobago believes that ammunition should be a natural inclusion in any discussion on the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. We regret that the United Nations has not yet been able to reach consensus on how to include ammunitions in our disarmament agreements. My country is committed to rectifying that omission, and we look forward to the upcoming third Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action as an opportunity to make further progress in our efforts in that regard.

Human security — our ability to protect, feed, house and support our citizens — depends upon effective disarmament. Disarmament therefore cannot exist in a vacuum. It must be part of a broader conversation about vulnerability, insecurity and weaponization.

In that regard, my delegation is proud to be among those at the forefront of integrating women, peace and security into disarmament discourses. When Trinidad and Tobago first introduced the resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in 2010, it was suggested that the issue would find no traction in the First Committee — a sentiment that was subsequently disproved. Gender is an undeniable factor in peace and security. Women play a crucial leadership role in the ability of communities to counter violence and insecurity. Women must play a similarly crucial role in disarmament. The resolution piloted by Trinidad and Tobago will again be addressed in the First Committee during the seventy-third session.

Currently in the Caribbean, communities are struggling to recover their homes and livelihoods after the devastation of Hurricanes Irma, José and Maria. The vulnerability of those post-hurricane environments may become a breeding ground for weapons and further insecurity. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago is committed to ensuring a holistic approach to disarmament that carefully considers the triggers of conflict and the positive impact that disarmament can play in abating such climates of conflict. Meeting our commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an important part of that holistic approach.

The advent of the modern information State, where everything from power plants to banking institutions are networked, has created a new battleground on which States and non-State actors can wage war. If the United Nations is serious about disarmament, we must also be serious about addressing cybersecurity. Increased cybersecurity has the potential to stymie the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of illegal weapons, their parts, components and ammunitions that may otherwise find passage across the Caribbean Sea onto the shores of CARICOM member States. My country therefore supports the strategies of the international community to tackle cybercrime, as well as the 2016 Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security.

Finally, in terms of capacity-building and international cooperation, allow me to thank the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for the valuable practical work that that organization continues

to undertake in CARICOM member States, including my own country, in many spheres of disarmament.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. I wish also to thank your predecessor, Mr. Sabri Boukadoum, Permanent Representative of Algeria, for steering the work of the Committee during the previous session.

The United Arab Emirates associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The work of this Committee seeks to achieve international and regional peace and security in the context of the grave security challenges facing the world. Despite the serious international and regional efforts, we still suffer from crises due to the smuggling and use of weapons by non-State actors, as well as the use of chemical weapons against innocent civilians and nuclear testing. The United Arab Emirates believes in the importance of using the multilateral forums on disarmament and international security to address such issues. Last year saw progress in the nuclear disarmament process with the convening of a conference to negotiate the drafting of Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That is the most recent example of the readiness of the international community to move towards establishing a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates affirms its commitment to supporting all efforts leading to that goal. We hope that positive and serious steps will be taken to implement the mechanisms and outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also hope that the postponed conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East will take place with the participation of all countries in the region. In that regard, my country reiterates its call on Israel to join the NPT, since it is the only State in the region that has not acceded to the Treaty. The United Arab Emirates attaches special importance to the NPT,

in line with its readiness and commitment to ensuring global security.

My country holds a clear-cut and firm policy regarding the issues of non-proliferation and disarmament. It attaches great importance to joining and fully implementing international conventions concluded to that end. My country also underscores the importance of adopting a transparent approach to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is committed to working in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to complying with its standards.

The United Arab Emirates expresses deep concern over Iran's ongoing nuclear activities and the development of its missile programme. It underscores the need to ensure transparency and the importance of full cooperation with the IAEA in order to enhance confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. To date, there has been no sign of any change in Iran's hostile behaviour in the region or of its desire to abandon its nuclear ambitions. We therefore support strengthening control over Iran's nuclear programme and the continued assessment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its provisions. We call on Iran to ensure full compliance with its international obligations and responsibilities under the NPT, to stop undermining regional security through its support for militias and by smuggling illegal arms to them, in flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The United Arab Emirates views the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as the primary platform for strengthening international efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, since the Treaty serves as a deterrent to nuclear testing. However, we are disappointed that the Treaty has still not entered into force. In that regard, we call on those States, in particular annex 2 States, that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible. We also urge all States to maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing.

My country has condemned the nuclear tests recently conducted by North Korea and stressed that such actions are inconsistent with the goals of the CTBT. We also stress that North Korea must respect its international obligations, act responsibly and cooperate in maintaining peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates emphasizes the need for gender mainstreaming in disarmament and international security issues, with an increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in the relevant national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms.

Ms. Zahir (Maldives): My delegation wishes to extend to you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau our warmest congratulations on your election. I assure you that you will have my delegation's full support and confidence as you steer the First Committee. We also express our appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Chair and his Bureau.

The Maldives has never produced any armaments or weaponry of any type, nor do we have the desire to do so in future. The Maldives believes that it is our moral obligation to pave the path towards strengthening the enforcement of a global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We will continue to express our opinions and concerns in that area. We will always be ready to extend our support for those that stand up for non-proliferation and disarmament. The Maldives is a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We have consistently maintained that our goal is for complete disarmament to be achieved through the engagement of major stakeholders. We are convinced that we must work towards a world free from nuclear weapons. Those goals can be achieved only through practical and concrete measures.

The Maldives applauds the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July. The Treaty is the most important pledge by the international community since the inception of the United Nations. It is proof that the global community is ready for a world free from nuclear weapons. It may be far-fetched to achieve a nuclear-free world. However, it is possible but only through our moral and development commitments.

The Maldives reiterates its call to all relevant countries to question the large amount of money spent on developing nuclear weapons. Instead, we call upon those countries to spend it on social and economic development. That is the wise decision that we should make in order to fulfil our pledge to pursue the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The time is ripe for countries to come together to work towards full and complete disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. While some meaningful progress has been made towards that goal during the past decades, we regret the fact that the most recent developments on the Korean peninsula have threatened to compromise the progress. The Maldives strongly condemns the recent nuclear and ballistic missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in clear violation of international law and Security Council resolutions. Such actions pose not only a grave challenge to the international non-proliferation regime but also a serious threat to the region and to international peace and security. We must therefore redouble our efforts to prevent any further tests and to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, we must do that by finding a peaceful solution through the multilateral framework. In that spirit, the Maldives welcomes the firm action and unity of the Security Council on the matter, as well as its efforts to find a diplomatic solution.

As the Secretary-General said in his remarks on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons last week, a world free of nuclear weapons is a global vision that needs a global response. In that spirit, we need renewed international cooperation and commitment not only to the non-proliferation regime but also to the 2030 Agenda, for the link between peace and security and sustainable development is clear and well established. The Maldives believes that if we are genuinely committed, the world can move firmly towards a nuclear-free, peaceful future for ourselves and the generations to come.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): The defining purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations and to achieve international cooperation in solving problems. Those values and the rules they imbue are essential to the United Kingdom's national interests, to its security and its prosperity. The United Nations framework of laws, norms and institutions is as vital to the conduct of the issues dealt with by the First Committee as to any other committee. And it is this rules-based system that enables global cooperation through which we can protect those values.

Yet we are confronted by States deliberately flouting, for their own gain, rules and standards that will secure collective prosperity and security, such as the unforgivable use of chemical weapons by the Syrian

regime against its own people and the outrageous proliferation of nuclear weapons by North Korea and a threat to use them. Following United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons investigations confirming that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons against its own people, we have a responsibility to stand up and to hold the Syrian regime to account. This is a responsibility for us all, but particularly for the permanent members of the Security Council. We need to ensure that the investigations mandated by the Council continue their vital work to identify the perpetrators of the continuing chemical weapons attacks, and then take action to hold those to account. We need to increase pressure on the Syrian regime, including through its backers, to turn away from the military campaign and pursue the political track in a meaningful way.

Now we face an even more immediate global danger in the activities of Kim Jong-un and his regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Time after time, he has shown contempt for the international community of law-abiding States, contempt for his neighbours and contempt for the institutions and rules that have preserved peace and security. On this challenge, the United Nations, in recent weeks, has shown that it can step up to the task with the adoption of Council resolution 2375 (2017), creating the biggest sanctions package of the twenty-first century. We have seen regional and global Powers coming together and, as in the founding Charter of the United Nations, putting aside limiting self-interests to show leadership on behalf of the wider world.

But despite those efforts, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to defy and provoke the international community and threaten its neighbours. Therefore, all Council members must continue to live up to the special responsibilities that are placed upon them, and in seeking to resolve this crisis must be prepared to take on necessary measures to tackle that threat in order to bring stability to the Korean peninsula. Those measures will work only if fully implemented, and therefore all States must ensure that they comply with all the measures in order to persuade the North Korean regime to choose a different path.

There is no doubt that today's global security environment poses challenges that test our values, our vision and our resolve to defend the rules and standards that underpin our collective security and prosperity. The United Kingdom has a strong record

on nuclear disarmament. We have reduced our own nuclear weapons capabilities, and continue to do so. Of the recognized nuclear-weapon States, we possess only approximately 1 per cent of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom initiated the permanent five process to bring together nuclear-weapon States to build trust and confidence to help develop the conditions that, we believe, will ultimately lead us to our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

As has been made clear, the United Kingdom, as a responsible nuclear-weapon State, has been pursuing a step-by-step approach in nuclear disarmament, consistent with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its other treaty commitments. But the United Kingdom did not take part in the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and does not intend to sign, ratify or become party to it. The Treaty will therefore not be binding on the United Kingdom. Furthermore, the United Kingdom will not accept any argument that the Treaty can constitute development of customary international law binding on the United Kingdom or on other non-parties. Importantly, States possessing nuclear weapons did not take part in the negotiations.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons fails to address the key issues that must first be overcome to achieve lasting global nuclear disarmament. It will not improve the international security environment or increase trust and transparency, nor will it address the considerable technical and procedural challenges that are involved in nuclear disarmament verification. We are working to address all of those issues, but the unpredictable international security environment that we face today demands the maintenance of the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. Other States might use their nuclear capability to threaten us or try to constrain our decision-making in a crisis, and there is a risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Treaty is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. That risks undermining the NPT, which has been at the heart of global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts for almost 50 years, and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime, which supports it.

The United Kingdom remains committed to strengthening each of the NPT's mutually reinforcing pillars. The 2020 review cycle provides an opportunity for us to collectively reaffirm our commitment to the primacy of the NPT as the cornerstone of the

international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The United Kingdom has consistently been at the forefront of international efforts to tackle proliferation. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran represents a major step forward in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom is committed to the full and long-term implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by all parties.

Looking beyond nuclear weapons, the United Kingdom remains committed to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and its aim of establishing the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of international trade in conventional arms. We support the priorities of universalization and implementation of the Treaty, since the more widespread the Treaty's influence, the greater its ability to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion, while creating a stable, reliable and transparent environment in which Governments and legitimate companies can operate. It is important that States, civil society and industry work together to achieve that shared goal.

The United Kingdom fully supports the fight against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, and stands ready to work with partners to stop those weapons from falling into the hands of criminals and terrorists. We commend the efforts of United Nations agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors and civil society organizations in strengthening international cooperation and assistance.

Landmines are a global scourge that destroy opportunity and hope. The United Kingdom is also committed to the goal of freeing the world of anti-personnel mines. To that end, it has announced a £100-million United Kingdom aid package over the next three years. It will clear or make safe 150 square kilometres of land, help 800,000 people live their lives free from the threat of mines and ensure that every year, more than 100,000 people — especially children — fully understand the dangers posed by landmines and how to avoid them.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Space capabilities now deliver immense benefits to billions of people across the world, but we need to ensure that the benefits

are broadly felt around the world. The United Kingdom believes that the future of international governance for space needs to reflect the complex mixture of actors and activity and the established voluntary principles of behaviour across all fields of activity.

As our Prime Minister observed last month here in New York (see A/72/PV.8), throughout the history of the United Nations, countries have shown time and time again that by being true to our values, rules and standards, it is possible to come together and to deliver in ways that have extraordinary impact. We share a responsibility to do so again. That means reforming the United Nations and the wider international system so that it can prove its worth in helping us to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. And it means ensuring that those who flout the rules and spirit of our international system are held to account, that nations honour their responsibilities and play their part in upholding and renewing a rules-based international order that can deliver prosperity and security for us all.

Mr. Song Nam Ja (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to head the First Committee. I am confident that the Committee will achieve great success under your leadership. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Humankind has long aspired to live in a peaceful and secure world, without war or the threat of nuclear weapons. Despite international demands to achieve nuclear disarmament, efforts to the contrary are being undertaken. The quantitative reduction of nuclear weapons is occurring at a slow pace, while qualitative improvement is in full swing. All nuclear-weapon States are accelerating the modernization of their weapons, which has resulted in a nuclear arms race reminiscent of the Cold War era.

To achieve successful nuclear disarmament, countries that possess the largest nuclear-weapon arsenals should be proactive and take the lead in dismantling nuclear weapons, rolling back aggressive nuclear doctrines, such as pre-emptive strikes, and removing weapons deployed outside of their own territories. With regard to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted at the United Nations in July under the initiative of non-nuclear-weapon States, the disappointment and rejection on the part of nuclear-weapon States, including the United States and its military allies, cast a shadow on prospects for

the Treaty. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea agrees with the primary purpose of the Treaty, which is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. However, since the United States possesses nuclear weapons and poses a threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, my country is not in a position to accede to the Treaty.

The nuclear-weapon State employing such weapons for the purposes of political and military domination, interference and pressure deploys strategic assets in various regions. A prime example is the threat the United States poses to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In 1957, the United States placed nuclear weapons in South Korea, and since the 1970s has conducted large-scale joint military exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In recent years, plans have been under way to launch a nuclear attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, while military exercises are conducted annually, during each season of the year. This year alone, the United States staged a large-scale joint military exercise on several occasions, with a view to mounting a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with more than 300,000 troops and all kinds of strategic assets, including aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea possesses nuclear weapons in order to eliminate the hostile policy of, and nuclear threat from, the United States, which has been ongoing for several decades. It holds fast to its strategic position of developing both its nuclear strength and its national economy. Its position on the hydrogen bomb and intercontinental ballistic missiles is part of a series of self-defence measures aimed at putting a definitive end to the nuclear threat from, and hostile policy of, the United States, and to safeguard its sovereign right to existence and development.

Nonetheless, the United States takes issue with the self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as it develops its defence capability, viewing them as a threat and a provocation. It has even submitted several sanctions resolutions against my country at the Security Council, thereby disguising the issue as one between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United Nations. The States Members of the United Nations should be very clear on the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic

missiles, which, according to the United States, pose a global threat or one posed to the United States alone. The United States is the only country that has killed hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians with a nuclear weapon. Except the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, no other country in the world has been exposed to a nuclear threat from the United States for such a long time and with such intensity.

The United States continues its attempts to suffocate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by implementing all kinds of discriminatory measures and sanctions against it. The world is not aware of that truth, owing to the predominant propaganda of the United States, which gives the erroneous perception that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea commits acts of provocation that violate peace. The United States is responsible for the nuclear-weapon issue on the Korean peninsula. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no intention of using nuclear weapons or of posing a nuclear threat to any other country except the United States, unless it joins the United States in conducting military action against the Republic.

Under no circumstances will the Democratic People's Republic of Korea put nuclear weapons and ballistic locators on the negotiating table. Neither will it flinch even an inch from bolstering its nuclear strength until the hostile policy of, and nuclear threat from, the United States against the Republic are eliminated. Our people experienced the disastrous effects of war on Korean peninsula by the United States. Deterrence is an inevitable strategic option — a valuable strategic asset that cannot be removed under any circumstances. Should the United States ignore repeated warnings and attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with military force, my country will then inflict punishment borne out of its power of self-reliance and self-development.

The peaceful use of outer space is an exercise of the independent and legitimate right of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and is important for national development. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will remain open to the use of outer space by launching increasingly sophisticated observation satellites, as well as geostationary satellites, in the coming years.

The Chair: I shall now call on those delegations that have requested to exercise the right of reply. In that connection, I should like to remind all delegations that

the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise my right of reply in connection with the countries that made provocative allegations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in particular the United Kingdom and South Korea.

First, the representative of the United Kingdom declared that the nuclear defence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a threat to global peace and security. He even dared to impugn the dignity of our supreme leadership, which is an act that can never be tolerated. I would like to make it clear to the United Kingdom once again that the measures taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to improve its nuclear strength are, for all intents and purposes, an exercise of its right to self-defence and a means to safeguard peace and security in the Korean peninsula and to deflect the hostile policy of and nuclear threat from the United States, which are aimed at obliterating its sovereignty and right to existence and development, and at obliterating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself.

The United Kingdom is becoming recklessly involved in the confrontation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which possesses powerful and practical nuclear deterrence, and the United States. It is an antagonistic act tantamount to jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire. The representative of the regime of the United Kingdom should contemplate his words and behaviour, rather than heeding the call to do evil and dancing to the tune of the United States.

Secondly, with regard to the statement made by the representative of South Korea, our delegation totally rejects his reckless remarks. We have already made our position clear in previous statements, so I do not think that it is necessary to repeat it. However, I must make it clear that the situation on the Korea peninsula demonstrates the hostile policy, nuclear blackmail and military threats of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It also underscores the unprecedented moves to isolate it and stifle its efforts to become a full-fledged nuclear-weapon State with powerful nuclear-attack capability.

South Korea should not continue to distort the situation or mislead the world. The issue on the Korean peninsula does not involve South Korea; it is an issue

between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. I would like to give some advice to countries that have made remarks against our country. Those countries should seek to better understand the situation on the Korean peninsula and not ignore it in pursuit of their own interests.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Britain is the European country that most exports terrorism and terrorists, in particular to my country. Its mass media refers to them as jihadists. This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the ominous Balfour Declaration. We recall that the Declaration has brought disaster to our region. The abominable British colonialism has wrought disaster, destruction, subversion and terrorism in our region, and plundered our wealth. The blind support of Britain for the Israeli entity continues to deepen the crises in our region.

The British policy in our region is poisonous and there is no panacea for it. Britain has sponsored terrorism and terrorists in my country since the beginning of the crisis. It has provided them with all kinds of support: weapons, ammunition, equipment, intelligence and media coverage. It therefore violates Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism. Britain spearheads disinformation campaigns against my country's Government, both inside and outside the United Nations. In foreign policy, Britain is no longer a super-Power but it follows the lead of another State.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Unfortunately, I must take the floor again today to respond to the comments made by the representative of the Pyongyang regime.

As I have mentioned previously, we continue to hear their tired and worn rhetoric. I would like to say to the representatives of North Korea who spoke today that they fool no one with it. They must end the provocative rhetoric. As I have also stated, the United States poses no threat to North Korea. The regime must end its provocative threats and actions, and comply with its Security Council obligations. North Korea has a choice. It can either choose a new path towards peace, prosperity and international acceptance, or it can continue further down a path of belligerence, poverty and isolation. The choice is for North Korea to make.

Ms. Seong-Mee Yoon (Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise my right of reply in response to the delegation of North Korea.

North Korea attempts to portray itself as a victim of outside threats. The opposite is true. The international community has made it abundantly clear that North Korea is the threat. There are multiple Security Council sanctions resolutions on North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. All of them were adopted unanimously, including by all five permanent members. Countless countries have condemned North Korea's acts of provocation in the First Committee, the General Assembly Hall and even outside of the United Nations, year after year. It makes no sense to argue that all of the clear and united voices are the outcome of a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge on the issue.

The Republic of Korea is under a direct and serious threat from North Korea — more so than any other country. Our capital, Seoul, where more than 10 million people live, is only 40 kilometres away from the border with North Korea. Our entire territory falls within easy range of its missiles. Moreover, North Korea repeatedly reminds us of its willingness to transform our country into a sea of fire at will. Under those circumstances, the Republic of Korea has more than enough reasons to make North Korea stop its heinous weapons development programme.

The Republic of Korea has been conducting joint military exercises annually with the United States to respond to the clear and present military threat from North Korea. Those exercises are defensive and transparent in nature. We notify North Korea in advance and conduct them under the observation of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. If North Korea continues to threaten peace on the Korean peninsula by conducting nuclear and missile tests, the Government of the Republic of Korea has no choice but to reinforce its preparedness in every sense to protect its people and safeguard its national security.

I would now like to address the issue of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system deployment in the Republic of Korea, mentioned by the Russian delegation. The deployment of THAAD in the Republic of Korea is a necessary defensive measure aimed at countering only the threat from North Korea, thereby reflecting the heightened level of urgency and gravity of the situation.

The Government of the Republic of Korea cannot accept the view of a few countries that treat North Korea's provocative actions — such as nuclear and missile tests, which are a flagrant violation of

international norms — as though they are on the same footing as our defensive measures. Since the root cause of the problem lies in the North Korean nuclear and missile threats, we call upon relevant countries to put greater focus on playing a constructive role in solving the problem.

With regard to the North Korean delegation's claim about the peaceful use of outer space, I would like to recall that North Korea publicly announced its plan to develop ballistic rockets capable of carrying nuclear warheads. In July and September, North Korea declared that it had successfully conducted two intercontinental ballistic missile tests and a test with a hydrogen bomb capable of being mounted on an intercontinental ballistic missile. It is clear that the true intention of the so-called satellite launches by North Korea is not for the peaceful use of outer space but for the development of long-range ballistic missiles.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): In response to the comments made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would say that our message is very clear. The threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a threat to international peace and security and to the rules-based system by which the majority of us in this room live our lives. The Security Council has been united in its condemnation of the activities conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Such condemnation has been repeated time and again in the Chamber, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must heed it.

I have no words for the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. He represents a regime that has used chemical weapons on its own people.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise my right of reply in response to the reckless remarks made by the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and South Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, the United States is misleading public opinion by fraudulently claiming that imposing sanctions and exerting pressure are so-called peaceful solutions. When did strangling and suffocating countries become a peaceful solution? How could crushing another's will be a diplomatic solution? The United States has stated that it will not rule out military options, while asserting that sanctions are a peaceful solution. The United

States attempts to internationalize the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula by claiming that the position the Democratic People's Republic of Korea holds on nuclear weapons poses a global threat. The United States often attempts to conceal its responsibility for the problem, which must be solved by Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and satisfy its own interests at the expense of others'. The United States has increasingly sought to impose sanctions and exert pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which will only boost my country's determination to strengthen its nuclear capability.

With regard to the statement made by the representative of South Korea, once again I would like to make it clear that South Korea has no right to speak about the nuclear deterrence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or about peace and security on the Korean peninsula. Among the representatives of the Member States gathered here, apart from South Korea, no other country has handed over control of a symbol of its sovereignty — its military — to outside forces. No other country has cooperated with the United States to conduct military exercises against its fellow countrymen. South Korea has now deployed the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system. South Korea should not meddle in the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. It is an issue to be resolved by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. I advise South Korea to remain quiet and observe the manner in which we deal with the United States.

With regard to the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom, it would be better for the United Kingdom to stop cooperating with the United States to threaten the nuclear deterrence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which now possesses a hydrogen bomb and intercontinental ballistic missiles, and adopt a strategic approach to the issue.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor again but I feel I must respond to the comments made by the representative of the North Korean regime. I shall be very brief.

He claims that the issue is between the regime and my Government. It is so ridiculous to listen to the diatribe. If the regime's representatives have any doubts about whether or not this is an issue for the international community, it should look at the repeated condemnations in the Conference on Disarmament in

Geneva by a large number of States on the regime's provocative behaviour. If there are further doubts, it should simply look at the multiple Security Council resolutions adopted, not only by the United States but by other members of the international community. It must

stop the ridiculous diatribe that points to the issue as one between the United States and the regime. It is not; it is between the regime and the international community.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.