



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

First Committee

3rd meeting

Tuesday, 9 October 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga (Romania)

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

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair (*spoke in French*): Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations once more that the rolling list of speakers for this segment of our work will close at 6 p.m. today. All delegations intending to take the floor should inscribe their names on the list before that deadline.

I also want to remind delegations that I count on their cooperation in limiting statements to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 13 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. To assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, we will continue to use a timing mechanism for which the red light on the speaker's microphone will begin to blink when the time limit has been reached. As necessary, I will remind speakers to conclude their statements in our collective interest.

I encourage representatives who have longer statements to deliver a summarized version and provide their full statement to be posted on the PaperSmart web portal. I also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed to allow for adequate interpretation.

Mr. Bohn (Germany): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee, and to assure you of Germany's wholehearted support for your work.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

A safer, wealthier and freer world than any generation has witnessed before us — some say that is where we stand. We have better access to education, poverty has been significantly reduced and the number of electoral democracies is at an all-time high. Should we not have good reason to be satisfied and compliment each other?

Yet in spite of the many positive developments over the past several decades, we need to take stock. Too many places do not enjoy peace, too many people are mourning the deaths of their loved ones and there is too much tension across the globe. In other words, we still have a long way to go to really make this world a place worth living in for each and every one of us.

What is more, those overall positive developments could go into reverse, as international security currently seems to be at a turning point. Tensions are rising in virtually every corner of the world, long-running and deadly conflicts remain deadlocked and international agreements such as the Chemical Weapons Convention are coming under increasing pressure as fundamental norms against the use of such weapons are being violated in both conflict zones and peaceful communities.

We should constantly remind ourselves what is at stake if we fail to preserve and strengthen the existing arms-control architecture, including its norms against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. One of those key instruments, signed 50 years ago, that to

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



this very day day has been the crucial cornerstone of our global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There is no doubt that without it there would be more nuclear-weapon States today. But while the success of the NPT remains undisputed, we cannot just take that for granted. We should constantly reaffirm our resolve to protect, uphold and strengthen it. It is our joint responsibility to make every possible effort to ensure that the NPT remains a success story. We must therefore pave the way for a productive outcome of the 2020 Review Conference.

Like the overwhelming majority of States, Germany shares the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. While nuclear deterrence remains a component of the international security environment today, Germany continues to advocate for concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament. We remind the nuclear-weapon States of their responsibility to initiate further reductions in their respective nuclear arsenals. Moreover, we have to strengthen the effectiveness of all three pillars of the NPT regime.

The adoption 21 years ago of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was a major step forward. Although the CTBT is unfortunately not yet in force, the ban on nuclear-weapon test explosions enshrined in the Treaty is already a *de facto* norm of international behaviour. The Treaty's monitoring system spans the entire globe and ensures that no nuclear test can go unnoticed. It has already proved its effectiveness by quickly and accurately detecting North Korea's illegal and despicable nuclear tests.

We encourage the remaining annex 2 States—China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States — to sign or ratify the Treaty. There can be no doubt that putting a legal and verifiable end to all nuclear-weapon test explosions through the entry into force of the CTBT would significantly contribute to international peace and security and a world free of nuclear weapons.

North Korea is the only State to have tested nuclear weapons in the past 20 years, contrary to international law and in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions. Germany welcomes the promising diplomatic rapprochements between North Korea, the United States and South Korea. We should point out that the Security Council has repeatedly called for the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of

North Korea's nuclear programme. Until credible steps are undertaken to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, Germany calls on the international community to maintain pressure on North Korea.

The nuclear agreement with Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), constitutes an important contribution to the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, based on the NPT. Through a combination of tight nuclear restrictions and the world's most robust verification regime, implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the JCPOA ensures that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. As a result, the JCPOA also significantly contributes to security in the Middle East and beyond.

Germany remains firmly committed to the sustained and full implementation of the JCPOA. Together with our EU partners, we have made it clear that we will uphold the agreement as long as Iran fully complies with its JCPOA commitments. We call on Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA, including with regard to access and information-sharing. Furthermore, and outside the scope of the JCPOA, we urge Iran to implement Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) in full, including the provisions related to ballistic-missile activity and arms transfers.

The use of chemical weapons by a State or non-State actor is unacceptable, must not go unpunished and calls for a strong and united response from the international community. In that spirit, Germany fully supports the recent decision of the special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which sends the clear message that whoever commits a crime against humanity by resorting to chemical weapons must be held accountable because we will never tolerate an erosion of the norm against their use. Germany is ready to support the full implementation of that decision and to help fight impunity.

Small arms and light weapons and their ammunition cause enormous human suffering all over the world. Our United Nations initiative within the framework of resolution 72/55 places special emphasis on improved control over ammunition, in preparation for the expected convening of a group of governmental experts in 2019.

Going beyond small arms and light weapons, I want to emphasize that we should also identify red lines and improved practices for the use of explosive weapons

in populated areas, as discussed in Geneva. We fully support the decision of Secretary-General Guterres to place the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas at the heart of his agenda for a disarmament that saves lives.

Lethal autonomous weapons systems are another cause for concern. Progress was achieved this year thanks to the substantive discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. But we must go further and provide solutions to the challenges arising from autonomous functions in weapons systems. Germany and France suggest adopting a political declaration as a first step, in order to commit States to the principle of human control over lethal weapons systems and to ensure full compliance with international law.

In the end it depends on us, each and every State that has sent representatives to the First Committee, to decide what our future will look like. Will it be as bleak as many predict, or can we continue to strengthen the multilateral world order to ensure lasting peace? Disarmament is a prime example of the multilateral responsibility we all have to live up to. In that respect, we appreciate the impetus provided by the disarmament initiative of the Secretary-General.

Let us not forget that what we do or fail to do will have repercussions for generations to come. Non-proliferation and disarmament are not just nice to have, they are fundamental to our future. Let us work together to ensure that our time continues to be the safest, wealthiest and freest in history.

Mr. Ghani (Brunei Darussalam): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau.

Brunei Darussalam aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Today's security environment is unpredictable and full of uncertainties. As a result, the combination of terrorism and attacks using weapons of mass destruction can have devastating consequences. That is a challenge that no one country can face on its own.

In that context, Brunei Darussalam believes that multilateralism is key to addressing all issues related to global disarmament and non-proliferation. It is for

that reason that we continue to attach great value to strengthening cooperation and establishing partnerships with other countries and organizations that will contribute meaningfully to the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation and ultimately benefit all people.

My country believes that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction remains essential to securing a future that is safe and sustainable. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's announcement earlier this year of his agenda for disarmament, which gives greater impetus and direction to the global disarmament process and reminds us of the importance of disarmament efforts for the realization of our common goals.

In Brunei Darussalam those efforts will be underpinned by our continued commitment to the various international treaties and conventions to which we are party, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention.

While Brunei Darussalam recognizes the right of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, we remain concerned about the dangers of nuclear weapons, given the serious humanitarian and environmental risks they present, and which are amplified by threats of terrorism and illicit activities by non-State actors. It is therefore incumbent on us to continue working together and bridging the gaps in our efforts to realize the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

As part of Brunei Darussalam's commitment to realizing that vision, we signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last month. The Treaty represents a clear recognition of the dangers of nuclear weapons and reflects the will of the majority. Overall, it is a timely response to the lack of progress that we have been witnessing on the disarmament agenda over the years. In addition, Brunei Darussalam recognizes the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones in strengthening the foundations of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the promotion of international peace and security.

As a member of ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam is committed to playing its part in ensuring our common security by preserving its region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. To that end, Brunei

Darussalam wishes to join other ASEAN member States in stressing the importance of the Treaty's full and effective implementation.

While progress must be made in addressing the concerns surrounding nuclear weapons, the international community must not lose sight of the dangers of other weapons of mass destruction, notably chemical weapons. Brunei Darussalam shares the concern of the international community about the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons and affirms its strong position against the use of such weapons in any circumstances.

To address the threat of chemical weapons at the national level, Brunei Darussalam has adopted a whole-of-Government approach and is currently in the process of revamping its national authority and establishing comprehensive legislation to ensure its proper and effective implementation. In that regard, we look forward to engaging with other countries, especially in the area of capacity-building, to ensure the full and effective implementation of the CWC.

In conclusion, Brunei Darussalam would like to reiterate the importance of the First Committee's work in promoting sustainable development and building a better future for all. To that end, Brunei Darussalam will continue to work constructively with all countries and relevant bodies to help attain positive and tangible outcomes in the Committee.

Ms. Bila (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election, as well the other members of the Bureau. I look forward to a constructive and results-oriented dialogue during this session of the First Committee, and I assure you of Ukraine's full support.

Ukraine strongly believes that effective multilateralism should remain the basic principle of negotiations addressing issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Ukraine is ready to continue making practical contributions to achieving that goal. Despite the impact on Ukraine of Russia's military aggression and occupation of its territories, in violation of the key principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Ukraine continues to fully implement international arms-control regimes.

We affirm our adherence to the NPT, a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and an

essential basis for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament. We offer comprehensive support for its effective implementation, further strengthening and universalization. That legal instrument provides treaty-level commitments to the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons.

At the same time, we consider that the ongoing preparation of treaties that ban nuclear weapons, or of additional instruments that do not involve the participation of nuclear States and many other world Powers, could not only harm international efforts aimed at enhancing existing international legal bases but weaken the NPT regime itself.

Ukraine's decision to renounce its nuclear weapons so as to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State was primarily based on the clear international assurances of security, territorial integrity, sovereignty and the inviolability of borders that were provided in the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, signed by Ukraine, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Russia. There can be no question that the Memorandum is valid and should be adhered to by all its State signatories. I would also like to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that Ukraine's law regarding the ratification of the NPT as a non-nuclear State includes a provision stating that it will enter into force after Ukraine obtains security guarantees, and also to remind the Committee that the Budapest Memorandum is officially registered as a United Nations document.

The validity of the Budapest Memorandum is becoming even more vital, given the increasing threat of nuclear proliferation and ongoing efforts to disregard the security concerns of States that seek a nuclear deterrent. Neglecting the established security assurances related to relinquishing nuclear-weapon ambitions undermines global endeavours to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieve progress in nuclear disarmament, especially under the NPT.

We believe that the Russian Federation has been violating not only the Budapest Memorandum but also the NPT, whose preamble clearly states that States must refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State in their international relations. In that regard, we appeal to the NPT States to acknowledge Russia's violations of key provisions of the Treaty.

We also continue to believe that negotiating and concluding a fissile-material cut-off treaty within the Conference on Disarmament framework will be essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. Ukraine strongly appeals to States to find common ground on the issue of existing fissile-material stocks and calls for an immediate start to negotiations on a fissile-material cut-off treaty.

We acknowledge the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which should be established on the basis of arrangements among the States of the region concerned. In that respect, we fully support the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

The universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a key objective of multilateral efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We support its signing and ratification by all new States in order to make progress towards its entry into force. The nuclear-test moratoriums voluntarily declared by various States play a necessary but insufficient role and will never replace the legally binding nature of the CTBT. Ukraine therefore calls on States that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay.

Ukraine recognizes the important role of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in addressing post-conflict remedial measures designed to minimize the presence, risk and effects of explosive remnants of war. As a State party to the Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines for more than 10 years, Ukraine recognizes the Convention's fundamental contribution to minimizing the occurrence, risk and effects of landmines.

Illicit trafficking in conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition, continues to contribute to instability and violence at the subregional, regional and global levels. Ukraine considers the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects an important and universal tool in global efforts to combat that challenge. We welcome the unanimously adopted outcome (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June in New York. Illicit weapons are fuelling global terrorism and conflicts and constitute

serious impediments to peace, security, stability and development. That is why we must tackle the issue of the illegal transfer, accumulation and misuse of conventional arms at the highest level of responsibility.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, using regular military forces armed with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition, has significantly damaged the existing system of conventional arms control. The Russian Federation has continued its illegal transfer of arms and ammunition while sending military personnel to our territory, both in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, through Kremlin-controlled channels, thereby deliberately destabilizing the security of Europe generally as well as the subregion.

Along with constant and intensive combat action in the Donbas region conducted by Russian terrorist forces, Russia continues to fuel our concerns about the progressive militarization of Crimea. Such harmful and violent activities have enabled it to intensify its use of warships and military aircraft and expand the area where they are used not only in the Black Sea region and the entire Mediterranean basin but far beyond.

Russian military bases in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian Autonomous Republic of Crimea are widely used as headquarters for Russian troops fighting in Syria. We continue to receive worrisome reports that Russia is placing nuclear weapons in temporarily occupied Crimea and restoring the relevant infrastructure. Those actions, together with the conventional military build-up on the peninsula, seriously undermine international law, peace and security.

This year Russia went even further. The expansion of its military presence in the Sea of Azov is a new challenge that we must face. That maritime territory between Ukraine and Russia is now being increasingly militarized by the Russian Federation, with implications for both maritime trade and supplies being transported to Ukraine. It poses an additional military threat to Ukraine and further undermines the stability of the broader region. The illegal construction and partial opening of the Kerch Strait bridge between Russia and temporarily occupied Crimea substantially reinforces that threat.

We firmly believe that such actions by the Russian Federation should not go unanswered by the international community. For that reason, Ukraine will submit a draft resolution on the issue aimed at preventing Russia from engaging in further militarization of those areas. If we

fail to address this challenge now, the militarization of Crimea could have far-reaching consequences for security not only in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and the whole of Southern Europe, but also in North Africa and the Middle East.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite Committee members to a lunchtime side event to be convened today by the delegation of Ukraine in Conference Room 7 on the issue of the militarization of occupied Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

On behalf of our delegation, I wish the Committee fruitful work so that it can contribute to the honourable goal of making our world safer and more secure.

Mr. Srivihok (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2)

A recurring theme we hear at the United Nations is that multilateralism must place people at the centre of its efforts. Moreover, the three mutually reinforcing guideposts of our vital Organization — peace and security, development and human rights — were conceived with the benefit of humankind in mind. There is no doubt in our minds that for disarmament to be truly effective, it must be accomplished by the people and for the people.

Our efforts on conventional weapons demonstrate that well. For Thailand, landmines pose a great danger to soldiers and civilians alike and continue to hinder social and economic development. Since becoming a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in 1998, Thailand has worked diligently to return safe land to its people through collaboration between the Government, local communities and civil society.

Thailand is fully committed to working towards the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. While pursuing that goal, we are taking every necessary step to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that spirit, we support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

With regard to chemical weapons, Thailand reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to upholding the norms against them. We strongly support the central role in this effort of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and encourage constructive dialogue among States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thailand is also committed to upholding the norms against the use of biological weapons. The international community could benefit from strengthening those norms with an effective and a legally binding verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention.

Turning to nuclear weapons, I am delighted to inform the Committee that Thailand deposited with the Secretary-General its instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty less than two weeks ago, cementing our long-standing commitment to ending nuclear-weapon test explosions. Beyond our commitment against nuclear test explosions, we are firmly convinced that there is no place for nuclear weapons. For Thailand, establishing norms stigmatizing the existence of nuclear weapons is a first critical step towards their total elimination.

In addition to the humanitarian case for eliminating nuclear weapons, we should also make the economic case. Relinquishing national budgets that maintain the operational status of nuclear weapons is smart, valuable and beneficial, because such funds can then be diverted to poverty reduction, universal health care and other important social goals. Thailand also continues to encourage engagement and dialogue among all the parties concerned on the issue of the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Thailand welcomes the positive developments on the Korean peninsula, particularly the commitments of the parties concerned to ensuring an era without wars. In a similar vein, we maintain our support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and call on all the parties to continue to fulfil their obligations.

As we look to the future, our disarmament efforts must be based on a keen and common understanding of emerging technologies in order to ensure that any such advances are used solely for peaceful purposes, including with regard to the use of outer space, which we believe is the common heritage of humankind. We must also engage the next generation and women and girls.

In that connection, Thailand welcomes the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future*, which reaffirms the will and the way forward needed to achieve effective disarmament and non-proliferation. We also welcome the recently released implementation plan for it. I look forward to working with all the relevant United Nations agencies, particularly the Office for Disarmament Affairs, on concrete actions and activities in support of the agenda.

In conclusion, I want to return to the principle underpinning Thailand's disarmament efforts. The goal of disarmament and non-proliferation can be reached only when the people are part of the process.

Mr. Muhammad Bande (Nigeria): The delegation of Nigeria congratulates you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee at this session. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections. Our work will indeed benefit from their tremendous experience, expertise and commitment. We therefore assure you of our full support and cooperation. I also want to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom, for his leadership and laudable efforts.

My delegation welcomes the remarks made by the President of the General Assembly and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.2). I would like to add the following remarks.

At the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, my delegation joined other Member States in highlighting the daunting challenges confronting our world (see A/72/PV.3). Sadly, little has happened since then to foster confidence or reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security. That reality makes it all the more urgent that we redouble our efforts and work hard to achieve global peace and security.

In the context of threats to international peace and security, my delegation continues to highlight the astronomical dimensions of global defence budgets, in particular the enormous resources that the nuclear-weapon States devote to maintaining and upgrading their nuclear arsenals and unauthorized

non-State actors' unfettered access to a wide range of conventional weapons.

The dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are being witnessed everywhere today. From Africa to the Middle East and across Europe to the Americas and Asia, the carnage is phenomenal and unprecedented, particularly the immense bloodshed inflicted on innocent populations by terrorists and other criminal elements. We have seen cities and communities destroyed, resulting in great and tragic loss of life and property, a heavy toll on livelihoods, and forced migration. In many cases, those atrocities are largely enabled by non-State entities' illicit procurement or transfer of arms.

The overwhelming support for the adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty through resolution 67/234 B, of 2 April 2013, arose from the need to present a common front for a robust response to the threat to international peace and security posed by unregulated conventional weapons. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the outcome of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Tokyo in August. We must do what is required of us by standing with States parties and other signatories to the Treaty.

Nuclear weapons remain the ultimate agents of mass destruction, and their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations. In that regard, my delegation would like to point to the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which opened for signature on 20 September last year. The delegation of Nigeria is proud to have participated in the process leading to its adoption and to have been one of the first States to sign the Treaty.

We are also mindful of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons. To that end, my delegation calls on all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to take into consideration the humanitarian consequences of the use of those weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among other things, and to take the necessary measures to dismantle and renounce them.

Nuclear-weapon test explosions not only send a tense signal to the global political environment but have devastating effects on our environment, releasing

radioactive materials into the atmosphere. We all have a duty to protect the environment by respecting the moratorium against nuclear testing as we work assiduously to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In that regard, my delegation welcomes the tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held on 20 September, and calls on those countries that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, particularly annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

As a State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world. The Pelindaba Treaty serves as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear-explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons. As a way to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate that measure in other parts of the world, including in the Middle East.

Member States of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) are once again being reminded of the need to reflect on whether the current impasse is serving the purposes of the CD's establishment. Despite its past considerations and actions, there is no doubt that the CD's long-standing inability to agree to act on concrete issues has adversely affected its reputation and credibility. It is our hope that its members will hasten to do what is required of them and fulfil its objectives.

In spite of the difficulties we have seen in the multilateral disarmament machinery, Nigeria remains committed to its operation as the only practical means available to advance the objectives of disarmament and international security. We remain hopeful that good judgment will prevail in order to ensure our understanding of the need to act together and decisively to address those issues, which are of grave concern to humankind.

At the appropriate time during plenary meetings, the delegation of Nigeria will submit two draft resolutions on behalf of the African Group and one draft resolution in its national capacity — for which we seek the full support of all delegations — entitled “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty”, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in

Africa” and “United Nations Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services”.

Mr. Midttun (Norway): The fundamental norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction are under pressure. Chemical weapons have been used in Syria and Iraq and in the cities of Salisbury and Kuala Lumpur. Those responsible must be held to account. That is why the decision taken in June on attribution at the Special Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction is so important. We will offer our full support to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as it seeks to implement that decision.

Norway is fully committed to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To achieve that, however, we need a comprehensive agenda with mutually supportive building blocks. Our common goal can be achieved only through the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Norwegian Government reported to our Parliament yesterday on the consequences for Norway if it were to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Our conclusion remains unchanged, which is that Norway will not sign or ratify the Treaty. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the cornerstone of our common efforts on disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses, and Norway is working for its full implementation.

Nuclear disarmament verification is a central building block for progress. Ambassador Langeland, who is Chair of the Group of Government Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, will brief the First Committee on the Group's work on 18 October.

Norway strongly advocates for the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile-material cut-off treaty. Non-proliferation efforts are a crucial part of that work. The comprehensive safeguards and the additional protocol constitute the global standard for verification, enabling the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure compliance with the regime.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programmes remain

unacceptable. We welcome the recent diplomatic developments, while at the same time we stand firmly behind the relevant Security Council resolutions on the matter.

Norway contributed substantively to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and remains committed to Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The decision of the United States to withdraw has made the agreement vulnerable. We call on Iran to continue its full cooperation with the IAEA. We also call on the United States and Russia to continue and expand the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, and on Russia to comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

The Biological Weapons Convention is another vital pillar of the global disarmament architecture. We must improve response and preparedness, address relevant developments in the life sciences, tackle emerging challenges and improve cooperation and assistance under the Convention. We are also concerned about the increase in serious cyberattacks on civilian infrastructure. Our aim is to preserve an open, secure, robust and free cyberspace. Respect for international law and established norms must be upheld in the digital domain.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is an important tool for ensuring the protection of civilians from landmines, and the norm established by the Convention is strong. Norway is seeking the presidency of the Mine Ban Convention for 2019 and plans to use the fourth Review Conference to draw renewed political attention to the importance of further strengthening the Convention. A mine-free world by 2025 is still our ambition.

This year we are commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which has become a norm that is making a substantial difference to human security. Sadly, however, cluster munitions are still being used in a number of conflicts. Small arms and light weapons kill more than half a million people every year. We must intensify our efforts to combat all irresponsible and illegal trade in and use of such weapons, including their ammunition.

The Arms Trade Treaty is gaining ground. It establishes fundamental norms for responsible trade, including assessing the potential for gender-based violence before exports are authorized. We underline

the importance of including a gender perspective in all arms-control efforts.

Finally, the First Committee's meetings give us an important chance to strengthen cooperation on arms control and security. Let us seize this opportunity.

Mr. Amolo (Kenya): We warmly congratulate you and your Bureau, Mr. Chair, and you can count on Kenya's unshakeable support during this session. We welcome the briefing by Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, during the opening meeting (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Kenya aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

Kenya reaffirms its long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and a world free of nuclear weapons. In 1996 we signed the Treaty of Pelindaba, declaring Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and we ratified it in 2001. Our resolve in seeking the banning of nuclear weapons remains unwavering. We voted for the adoption in July last year here in New York of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty is a critical milestone in our efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. That is why its full implementation, and that of other international conventions and treaties banning nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, must remain a priority for Member States.

Kenya supports research and development on nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which Kenya has been party since 1970. We believe that pursuing the development of nuclear energy should remain within the framework and protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As provided for in article VI of the NPT, all countries should promote and cooperate in the peaceful exploitation of nuclear energy while at the same time working towards complete nuclear disarmament.

Kenya is party to the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which calls for the banning of nuclear-weapon test explosions. We call on all the countries that have not yet done so to make the CTBT a reality by ensuring its entry into force. In order to achieve that, we Member States must spare no effort to

find the political will to build trust at the regional and international levels.

Kenya was honoured to participate in the high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the ninth observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, held here in New York on 6 September — an important annual meeting to honour and pay tribute to the victims of nuclear tests and to stand in solidarity to remind ourselves of the long-term suffering and continued threat that nuclear tests pose to humankind, international stability and security. My delegation thanks Kazakhstan for that initiative.

My delegation greatly values the immense contribution and important work of the Conference on Disarmament and that of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Kenya strongly believes that disarmament can have a significant positive impact on development. The resources saved during the disarmament process should be strategically and effectively integrated into nationally owned and driven programmes that enhance socioeconomic development and foster governance structures, including those set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The illicit transfer and trading of small arms and light weapons is a serious threat to international peace and security. Kenya has taken significant measures to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including strengthening policy and legislative frameworks to address loopholes in law and ensure proper national stockpile management of small arms and light weapons.

The effects of the widespread availability of small arms and their misuse have historically contributed to many conflicts, especially in our part of the world, which have in turn resulted in the displacement of millions of people from their homes as refugees or internally displaced persons. Terrorism, wildlife poaching, piracy, cattle rustling and other serious criminal activities that threaten international peace and security are also consequences of the proliferation of small arms, particularly their easy availability.

We note with concern that for the first time we were unable to reach consensus during the deliberations of 18 to 29 June at the 2018 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. It is critical to have a follow-up mechanism or broader informal discussion forums on contentious issues in order to avoid the need for a vote. We should prioritize areas of convergence so that we can fulfil our agreed objective of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

We also note that the last round of deliberations by the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security failed to arrive at a consensus outcome report. Again, in addressing the existing and potential threats posed by the use and misuse of information, communication and technology, our viewpoints should be converging rather than diverging. That would ensure progress on crucial issues through joint conclusions and implementation. Where necessary, research and data can be utilized to guide policies and laws and inform training and other capacity-strengthening initiatives at the national level.

In conclusion, Kenya looks forward to engaging further and more comprehensively on important issues during the thematic debates.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would once again like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-third session. I have confidence in your and the Bureau's ability to ensure the success of the work of the Committee, which is tackling a number of issues that Egypt considers a high priority.

Egypt fully aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), respectively.

The Committee is holding its meetings this year against a backdrop of increased challenges to the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. We therefore have a greater responsibility to review the implementation of our disarmament obligations and address those developments in a comprehensive and objective manner that reflects the responsibilities of the United Nations in this vital domain, which has a direct impact on the maintenance of international peace and security and the rest of the work of the United Nations.

Perhaps the most dangerous challenge today is the marked deterioration of the security environment at the international and regional levels, especially since certain Powers have renounced their commitment to the international multilateral regime. Such action is ushering in a new arms race, as exemplified in the development of nuclear arsenals and means of delivering nuclear weapons, the race to develop and possess modern devices for cyberhacking, the weaponization of outer space and increased reliance on autonomous weapon systems.

Egypt is very concerned about the failure to make progress in our efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as to implement our consensus obligations reached in various Review Conferences, such as that of declaring the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the 1995 Review Conference as part of the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

There is no question that preventing the adoption of a final document of the 2015 Review Conference, turning a blind eye to implementing Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991) and adopting double standards are some of main reasons behind the further deterioration in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, in addition to the deteriorating regional and international security environment.

Egypt looks forward to adopting draft resolutions during this session that will ensure that we take practical steps towards declaring the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We call on Member States to support the various draft resolutions in that regard, including the Arab Group initiative calling for the convening of a negotiating conference in 2019 to reach a legally binding treaty by consensus that will reflect the free will of the countries of the region, which would demonstrate those countries' respect for their commitments and for credibility in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Egypt once again welcomes the historic decision to adopt a legally binding treaty to ban nuclear weapons, which is an important complement to the nuclear disarmament regime and a further step in the implementation of article VI of the NPT. In that regard, my delegation would like to express its appreciation for the important initiative launched by the Secretary-

General on his disarmament agenda, especially as it reflects his recognition of the importance of prioritizing disarmament issues. Indeed, that should be one of the top priorities of the United Nations.

Egypt supports all efforts to combat illegal arms trafficking, while fully respecting the sovereign right of States to defend themselves. We stress our support to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We must also seriously address the issue arising from the fact that some States are supplying terrorist and illegal armed groups with weapons, in flagrant violation of the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of countries and respect for sovereignty in particular.

With regard to emerging security threats, we reaffirm Egypt's interest in preserving the security and stability of outer space and preventing an arms race there. We look forward to negotiations on a binding legal instrument that bridges the existing gaps by banning any offensive or defensive weapons in outer space. We must also prohibit any armed attacks on satellites and the development of weapons designed to target objects in outer space. We welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established by resolution 72/250 and look forward to reaching its desired goals.

In the light of the increasing importance of security pertaining to information and communications technologies, which has become an issue that affects the safety and stability of strategic facilities of all States without exception, Egypt supports the need to develop consensus international standards within the framework of the United Nations that can bring equal security for all.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Egypt's full cooperation in ensuring that this session has positive results. We have always worked to achieve the progress we seek in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, in order to preserve the vitality of the efforts of the United Nations and the First Committee in this important area, which promotes our common security.

Mr. Locsin (Philippines): The Philippines aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2). I would like to emphasize the following points on behalf of the Philippines.

The United Nations has made great strides in pushing for global economic development and environmental protection. Member States have aligned their national agendas with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, hopefully putting an end to the idiosyncratic economic theories that are doomed to fail and named after whoever happens to be in power, until they cease to be. The development plan of the Philippines for the period from 2017 to 2022 is a version of the 2030 Agenda that is tailored to fit our nation and applies its principles to our national circumstances, which are in part unique but in greater part shared with the rest of the world.

The point I would like to make is that all the progress achieved so far could come to nothing if we fall short on the one existential imperative in the United Nations mission of a safe and peaceful world, which is disarmament and international security. The First Committee is in the vanguard in that critical endeavour. Every Member State has the responsibility to preserve the gains that have been made so far and protect our growing prospects of success in staving off nuclear disaster.

Under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Philippines recognizes the merit of parallel efforts in nuclear non-proliferation. But the ultimate goal of the NPT is to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Those weapons are losing their deterrent effect. To be sure, deterrence once kept wars cold despite the most heated provocations and the shocking degrees of violence that conventional wars had attained. However, one can always recover from those kinds of war. From a nuclear war, there will be no one left to look at the situation one way or the other.

The path to nuclear disarmament was agreed on in the NPT's 13 practical steps and 64-point action plan. We have been urging the nuclear-weapon States to honour their end of the bargain and deliver without further delay or preconditions. The Philippines shares the concern that the nuclear-weapon States continue to modernize and refine their nuclear-weapon capabilities for greater accuracy and lethality. The problem with that is that the more discriminating the use of nuclear weapons is made, the stronger becomes the temptation to use them, in the delusion that their destructiveness and catastrophic consequences can be managed, controlled and recovered from. That is not possible.

Last year we all signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, with the exception of the nuclear-weapon States. However, the Treaty does not displace or replace the NPT but rather serves as the capstone of the nuclear disarmament architecture. From the cornerstone up, the NPT builds on both sides of the arc of safety, all the way up to that capstone, which will hold the elements of a nuclear-weapon-free world tightly in place.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty fulfils the goal of the NPT. It delegitimizes the use of nuclear weapons in any situation once and for all. The ultimate nightmare is a nuclear weapon in terrorist hands, and it is a wonder that has not happened. No society would survive it, and one doubts that the world as a whole would. No one can fail to see the importance of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons to non-State parties, particularly through unstable States, and, we must agree, even through very stable States.

The Philippines echoes ASEAN's welcome of the agenda for disarmament launched by Secretary-General António Guterres. We also express our wholehearted support for Malaysia as Chair of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. It is vital that we work together for the success of those two events to ensure that the tremendous and unmatched progress made in 2010, when Ambassador Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines was President of the Review Conference, is not undone. That is what the First Committee must prevent while moving the process forward. Those are our own marching orders that we give to ourselves in the spirit of the United Nations, leading in step as we march alongside each other. That is the only way.

Mr. Wroblewski (Poland): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We wish you success in fulfilling your stress on important function, and you can be assured of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Poland.

Poland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2). Building upon it, I would like to stress several issues in my national capacity.

The current security situation is not encouraging. Tensions at the global and regional levels are putting stress on the existing international order, including the

non-proliferation and arms-control regimes. In fact, we have been witnessing the progressive derailment of those regimes. Non-proliferation is a collective effort, while upholding the security architecture requires the full and unwavering commitment of us all. It is essential that we abide by all the norms and obligations in this area.

Since its entry into force in 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and as such an essential part of the modern collective security system. Our current international geopolitical challenges underline the Treaty's major role and the importance of upholding and strengthening it. The NPT helps to ease tensions and build confidence among States.

Poland has always been committed to the objectives of the NPT, an approach that among other things has been highlighted by our chairmanship of the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. In recent months we have spared no effort in upholding the integrity and credibility of the Treaty, creating an environment for an all-inclusive, mutually respectful and transparent dialogue and delivering practical solutions for the 2020 Review Conference, which will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force. We stand ready to support the Malaysian Chair of the third Preparatory Committee session and wish our successor all the best.

Achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet another challenge. We commend international efforts to that end, such as the recent Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, held in New York. Poland welcomes Thailand's and Tuvalu's ratifications of the Treaty this year.

We firmly believe that lasting peace on the Korean peninsula can be achieved only through peaceful means. We therefore welcome the diplomatic process related to its nuclear disarmament, as well as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's commitment to denuclearization and the suspension of its nuclear and intercontinental-ballistic-missile tests, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. However, Pyongyang must take further steps towards its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and the abandonment of all other programmes involving weapons of mass destruction.

In that context, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify the CTBT and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and to return without further delay to full compliance with the NPT and to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

Poland supports a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament that is centred on the NPT and the system of relevant international institutions and agreements. We believe that another important building block in that direction would be an early commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on a fissile-material cut-off treaty. In that context, we welcome the report (see A/73/159) of the high-level fissile-material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, to which a Polish expert contributed. We consider it as a good basis for future negotiations in the CD and hope that it will facilitate the process of initiating negotiations on the treaty.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles, especially those capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, remains a serious challenge to international peace and security. Over the past two years Poland chaired the work of The Hague Code of Conduct which is the major instrument on transparency and confidence-building measures in that area.

As in previous years, Poland will introduce a draft resolution in the General Assembly on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Our efforts are now more important than ever. Unfortunately, despite many successes in recent years, the world of today is still witnessing real threats and challenges related to chemical weapons, including with regard to the key focus of the Convention, the actual use of this inhumane type of weapon. The current situation raises the fundamental question of the integrity of the CWC and the credibility of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Poland is deeply concerned about the fact that in recent years chemical weapons have been used in Iraq, Malaysia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom. We strongly condemn those acts and demand that the perpetrators be held accountable.

In that context, the General Assembly must convey a strong, united and unambiguous message of support on behalf of the international community for the CWC's integrity and the OPCW's role. We must demonstrate unity of purpose for a world free of chemical weapons that should enhance, not weaken the CWC and the

Organization. That is the only way to defend ourselves against chemical-weapon challenges and threats and to deter any future State or non-State perpetrators. Failure is not an option.

We express our continued support for the important work conducted within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Poland firmly believes that the Convention remains the most appropriate forum within which to examine new developments in weapons technologies. We appreciate the work carried forward this year by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, which should lead to identifying constitutive elements of lethal autonomous weapons systems. The CCW is also the right place for discussion of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in order to minimize humanitarian harm by the possible strengthening of the application of existing principles and norms of international humanitarian law.

As the holders of a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period from 2018 to 2019, we have continued to promote responsible export policies for small arms and light weapons, as well as the physical security and stockpile management of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the outcome document of the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, which could help to protect the most vulnerable members of society from illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, thereby helping to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

Poland also remains committed to the objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and its universalization, as well as to the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019, with the aim of achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines by 2025. The fourth Review Conference, to be held in 2019, will be a milestone event in our collective efforts to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

Poland takes a positive view of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. It is important that this initiative has come from the top of the United Nations system. At the same time, it is natural that that kind of initiative should not be universal and should be adapted to the needs and expectations of

individual States. In that context, we look forward to the implementation plan to be presented by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Poland appreciates the substantive work of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The establishment of five subsidiary bodies and the adoption of their four reports (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141) is significant, the first such achievement in 22 years. We commend the coordinators of those bodies from Belarus, Brazil, Germany, Indonesia and the Netherlands. We hope that that contribution will lead us to even more successful work in the CD next year. I will end on that positive note.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): I congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on assuming your duties and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation. We also thank the Secretariat for its substantive and logistic support.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

The international security situation is in decline and is negatively affecting strategic stability at the global and regional levels. Mistrust among States is growing. While many old disputes continue to fester, new conflicts are constantly emerging. The quality and quantity of armaments is steadily on the rise. The development of ever more deadly and sophisticated weapons continues unabated. Discrimination and double standards are putting the non-proliferation regime under a great deal of stress.

Those trends are most pronounced in the South Asian region, which is marked by one country's quest to establish its hegemony. Its relentless accumulation of arms, coupled with myopically aggressive policies, is fuelling insecurity among its neighbours. The security dynamics are further complicated by the discriminatory exemptions made by outside Powers for the supply of advanced military hardware and sensitive technologies in our neighbourhood. Those actions sidestep non-proliferation considerations for narrow self-interests.

Following Pakistan's long-standing tradition of bilateral engagement on strategic issues, and undeterred by the lack of a favourable response, Pakistan has proposed a bilateral arrangement between Pakistan and India on a nuclear-test ban. We renew our commitment

to that proposal, which would go a long way towards strengthening the global norm against nuclear testing and promoting regional stability. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without resolving the underlying disputes, agreeing on reciprocal measures for nuclear and missile restraint and instituting a balance among conventional forces. Our proposal for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, based on those three interlocking elements, remains on the table.

The growing dissatisfaction with the inactivity of the United Nations disarmament machinery, due to the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament, is reaching a tipping point. The attempts by some States to divert attention from their non-fulfilment of their disarmament obligations by proposing additional non-proliferation measures that are completely cost-free for them but carry huge implications for the security of other States are no longer working. We need approaches that unite us in our common endeavour to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. Nuclear disarmament can be achieved only as a cooperative and universally agreed undertaking, through a consensus-based process that involves all the relevant stakeholders and results in equal and undiminished security for all States, as enshrined in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2). I reiterate Pakistan's commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world that is achieved in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner.

Pakistan also supports the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, as well as on contemporary issues such as chemical and biological terrorism, lethal autonomous weapon systems and cyberweapons.

Pakistan shares the widespread concern about the erosion of multilateralism, particularly in the field of international security and disarmament. We see multilateralism as a core principle of negotiations in those areas that represents the only sustainable approach to addressing those issues effectively.

After failing to develop consensus on an equitable and non-discriminatory fissile material cut-off treaty, attempts are being made to force progress on the issue outside the CD. The major differences on the objective and scope of the treaty, based on serious security concerns, cannot be wished away by creative drafting and must be tackled up front. Pakistan did

not accept the recommendations produced by the ill-advised Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile-material cut-off treaty in 2015, and we do not accept the recommendations of the so-called high-level fissile-material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

The substantive work on a fissile material treaty must be undertaken in the CD on the basis of a universally accepted mandate that explicitly addresses the asymmetries in existing fissile material stocks and genuinely contributes to nuclear disarmament. We should consider the negative effects of the treaty's prospects produced by discriminatory attitudes and double standards and manifested in the form of bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements, inequitable waivers and the continued pursuit of additional country-specific exceptions in multilateral export control regimes.

The challenges to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament should be tackled on the basis of certain fundamental requirements, which are as follows. First, the right to equal security for all States should be recognized. Second, the motives driving States to acquire weapons must be addressed.

Third, we need a renewed commitment to universal nuclear disarmament, in the context of a re-energized collective security system.

Fourth, we must develop a criteria-based and non-discriminatory approach for promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate safeguards, in accordance with States' respective international obligations.

Fifth, effective guarantees need to be provided to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons through the conclusion of a universal and legally binding treaty in the CD.

Sixth, concerns arising from the deployment of ballistic-missile systems that are inherently destabilizing should be addressed.

Seventh, the legal regime must be strengthened to prevent the weaponization of outer space by undertaking negotiations to that effect in the CD.

Eighth, as a step towards nuclear disarmament, both the past and future production of fissile materials should be addressed through the conclusion of a non-discriminatory fissile-material treaty in the CD.

Ninth, cyberweapons and autonomous weapons should be brought under appropriate international regulations and prohibitions.

And tenth, regional security issues must be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy, including by the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and a denuclearized Korean peninsula, and by the pursuit of a balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments and recognition of their direct causal relationship with the continuing reliance on nuclear weapons.

Pakistan has positioned itself as a mainstream partner in the international non-proliferation regime. Pakistan meets the international standards for gaining access to civil nuclear technology to meet its growing energy needs in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner. Through a series of actions in diverse areas, we have demonstrated our credentials for joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and we expect a non-discriminatory expansion of the membership of the Group.

The full version of this statement will be shared on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Skoknic Tapia (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We wish you every success in this year's work, as we do the other members of the Bureau. We are firmly committed to contributing actively and positively to the outcomes of the deliberations.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2) and the statement to be delivered by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. We also want to take this opportunity to add some considerations and specific views from Chile's perspective.

My country believes that coexisting in a world without nuclear weapons is possible and that maintaining international peace and security without recourse to nuclear deterrence is also an ethical imperative and an attainable goal, in line with the international system for the protection of human rights.

Chile demonstrated its clear commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation by its signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Treaty seeks to eliminate the last category of weapons of mass destruction that are not explicitly prohibited by a legally binding instrument and opens a promising pathway towards our common goal of a planet free of nuclear weapons, while strengthening and complementing the current legal architecture in this area.

We want to emphasize that for Chile, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We stress the importance of achieving its universalization and a balanced application of the three pillars that give it its fundamental structure — disarmament, non-proliferation and the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In that regard, we reiterate our support for Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi of Argentina in his candidacy for the presidency of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

In addition, Chile reaffirms its commitment to supporting multilateral efforts in favour of disarmament, non-proliferation and the prohibition of the use or possession of all weapons of mass destruction. As well as condemning the military use of biological and chemical weapons in all circumstances, we call for universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, with a view to achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

In the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition we see a scourge whose destructive effects are immeasurable and go beyond international security, having a direct impact on socioeconomic development and human rights and exacerbating the sexual and gender-based violence that is being inflicted on millions of people. For that reason, we are pleased that language on ammunition was included for the first time in the outcome document of the third United Nations Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex), held in June.

Chile deposited its instrument of ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty on 18 May, thereby confirming its commitment to the effective regulation of the international trade in conventional weapons. We value the contribution of that instrument to reducing the human suffering caused by illegal and irresponsible arms transfers, improving regional and global security

and stability and promoting accountability and transparency in States that are party to it.

Cyberspace, especially the Internet, offers us considerable benefits as a public asset. At the same time, however, it requires responsible management of its possible risks, taking into account its global and cross-border nature. International cooperation is therefore essential to maintain a free, open and secure cyberspace, based on international regulations that preserve the rights of individuals and regulate the conduct of States in that realm. For that reason, and as the Secretary-General has said, we must remain attentive to the emergence of new weapon technologies that could endanger the security of future generations, and to the possible challenges that they could represent for existing legal, humanitarian and ethical standards.

In conclusion, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome and proclaim our support for the initiative launched by the Secretary-General in his report entitled *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, which includes a comprehensive, coherent and practical vision that is also linked to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. That renewed vision connects the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the realization of objectives such as peace, justice, solid institutions, poverty reduction, economic growth, health, gender equality and sustainable cities and communities, objectives that Chile fully shares. The First Committee can count on our commitment to contribute positively to its work.

Mr. Jato (Sweden): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair this year's session of the First Committee. I can assure you of the Swedish delegation's full cooperation.

Sweden aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) and on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2). I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

The backdrop to this gathering is a tense and unpredictable global security environment. An uptick in global nuclear arsenals, for the first time since 1986, could soon be a reality, taking us further from the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Modernization programmes are under way among nuclear-weapon States that draw on technological developments to improve the capabilities of both

warheads and delivery systems. The notion of enhanced usability is particularly worrisome, as it can blur the line between nuclear and conventional warfare, thereby lowering the nuclear threshold.

In seeking to revive disarmament diplomacy, we should make full use of the strong engagement of the Secretary-General. His Agenda for Disarmament will inspire the United Nations system, and it should inspire us, including to consistently apply a gender perspective and involve civil society in our work.

We are about to enter the second half of the current review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). With the 2020 Review Conference plainly in sight and our national positions outlined at two Preparatory Committee sessions, we must now start to formulate the desired outcomes more concretely. From a Swedish perspective, a crucial element would be a declaration that reaffirms our commitment to the Treaty itself and to the obligations undertaken at successive Review Conferences, including those related to article VI.

To dispel any notion of the usability of nuclear weapons, we should also make it clear that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Such a policy statement should be underpinned by practical measures covering all three pillars of the Treaty. In that regard, Sweden has previously pointed to nuclear-risk reduction and transparency measures as potential common ground. Disarmament verification offers another promising avenue for cooperation, as it builds transparency and confidence. Transforming those ideas into concrete summit deliverables will hinge on the constructive engagement of the nuclear-weapon States themselves.

In following key regional proliferation dossiers, we are reminded on a daily basis of how indispensable the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system is. We must give it the necessary political and financial support and the necessary inspection tools, including by ensuring that the additional protocol is universally applied. But the Agency is much more than a nuclear watchdog. It makes crucial contributions in areas such as health, food, agriculture and water purification. As a member of the Board of Governors, Sweden will be engaged in all areas of the IAEA's broad mandate.

The ongoing implementation of the New START Treaty continues to be fundamentally important and

is the one bright spot in an otherwise bleak strategic-arms-control landscape. We call on the United States and Russia to extend the Treaty to 2026. Meanwhile, the concerns about Russia's non-compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty must be addressed.

As current regional proliferation crises indicate, increased attention must be paid to countering the spread of ballistic missile technology. The Hague Code of Conduct is designed specifically for that purpose. That voluntary arrangement, which Sweden is pleased to be chairing from 2018 to 2019, contributes to transparency and builds confidence. We encourage more States to join the 139 States that have already subscribed to the Code. I invite First Committee members to join us for a side event on The Hague Code of Conduct on Friday, 12 October.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) demonstrates the full potential of determined and sustained diplomacy. As the IAEA has confirmed by applying highly intrusive safeguards, Iran continues to fulfil its nuclear obligations under the agreement. As long as that is the case, the JCPOA effectively curtails Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons. Against that background, Sweden, and indeed the EU, deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement. Iran's role in the region and its missile activities are clearly matters of concern. Those can and should be addressed separately, however, and not at the expense of the JCPOA.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programmes remain a major threat to the global non-proliferation regime. Diplomatic efforts in recent months deserve our full and active support. All the parties must now work to maintain momentum. For the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that means that commitments must be translated into legally binding undertakings, including signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Importantly, the IAEA should be given a role early on in the verification of a denuclearization and disarmament process.

The recurrent use of chemical weapons has been an appalling recent trend, challenging a norm that we had come to view as well consolidated. Chemical warfare once again occurred in Syria during the past year, an atrocity in the midst of a devastating humanitarian crisis. The deadlock on that issue in the

Security Council, which prevented it from attributing responsibility, was a particularly depressing episode during Sweden's term as a Council member. A nerve agent was also used in Salisbury in a reckless murder attempt that prompted an investigation to which Russia should lend its full cooperation.

Against that background, a lot is at stake as we approach the Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. The norm against chemical weapons use must be upheld, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) must be given the means to conduct its work. Above all, we should do our utmost to avoid further politicization, as that could seriously impair the OPCW.

The vast number of casualties caused by small arms and light weapons should serve as a constant reminder of the need for further action. The Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held this past summer resulted in good progress, not least with regard to gender and the linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals. More needs to be done on other issues, ammunition among them. The further universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty should also remain a priority.

Multilateral institutions that have served us well for decades have come under unprecedented strain. Rather than undermine what has been carefully constructed, now is the time to demonstrate, in words and deeds, our basic commitment to that framework. Hopefully, therefore, our deliberations here in New York can pave the way for concrete progress during the upcoming year. The global security situation demands nothing less.

Mr. Phansourivong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I wish to assure you of our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and the Philippines on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), respectively.

Disarmament and non-proliferation have been at the top of the agenda of the United Nations for many

years. All Member States must support those objectives in order to maintain and promote international peace and security. The Lao People's Democratic Republic therefore attaches great importance to the work of the First Committee.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, remains a matter of serious concern with regard to international peace and security, because as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional detonations continues, thereby potentially exposing humankind and the environment to their catastrophic effects.

For that reason, we firmly believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. We therefore commend countries that have signed or ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which has been open for signature here at Headquarters since 20 September 2017. It is gratifying to note that 69 countries have signed the Treaty to date, while 19 have ratified it. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is among the countries to have signed this important Treaty, and my delegation hopes that it will enter into force in the near future so that it can help to rid our world of nuclear weapons.

My delegation also welcomes the General Assembly meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held on 26 September. We believe that we should redouble our efforts to raise public awareness and promote education on the danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction so that future generations will not follow the path of acquiring them.

We are all well aware that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, as the only relevant international instrument that is currently enforced and near universal. It is therefore incumbent on us to undertake in good faith effective measures to fill the legal gaps related to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, including with regard to the full implementation of article VI of the NPT, so as to achieve and sustain a world free from nuclear weapons. My delegation supports the implementation of the three pillars of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which are well

articulated. We firmly believe that they serve the best interests of the international community and should be implemented equally, yet discrepancies remain and nuclear disarmament lags behind.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes the recent historic summit of the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America in June, which constitutes an important milestone in the relations between the two countries. We also welcome the third summit of the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which helps not only to improve bilateral relations between the two countries but also to address the issue of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We hope that positive momentum will be strengthened and contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability and denuclearization in the region as a whole.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic stresses the importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which aims to promote nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, more than two decades after its adoption, the CTBT remains ineffective. It is therefore the duty of the international community to ensure the entry into force of the Treaty. We hope that those that have not yet signed and ratified the CTBT will do so.

For our part, to support international efforts, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has become a State party to a number of international instruments on disarmament and is committed to fulfilling its international obligations under those treaties. The Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as they have significantly contributed to strengthening the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear-non-proliferation regimes, as well as to enhancing regional and global peace and security. We therefore strongly support preserving the South-East Asian region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic recognizes the significant role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology,

nuclear safety and nuclear safeguards, and has signed the IAEA Additional Protocol.

My delegation wishes to touch on the danger of cluster munitions, as their use creates indiscriminate and dangerous long-term effects on people and development. A case in point was the heavy use of cluster munitions in my country during the nine-year-long war. Such munitions continue to kill and maim our people and hinder the development of the country. It is a painstaking process to clear unexploded ordnance, and we do not know how many years it will take to clear the contaminated areas, because they are so large. Huge resources to support that work are needed. Our efforts to clear unexploded ordnance, with the support and assistance of the international community, have yielded only limited results in recent years.

For that reason, in order to continue to address that serious and lingering problem, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has gone the extra mile by adopting a national sustainable development goal 18, entitled "Lives safe from unexploded ordnance". We call on the international community to support and assist us in implementing it, together with our other national sustainable development goals, in order to help rid our country of unexploded ordnance.

My delegation would like to emphasize that in order to overcome the difficult deadlock and move the very important issue of disarmament and non-proliferation forward, strong political will and collective efforts on the part of every State are critical, as is a multilateral approach to realizing the ultimate goals of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. That will require greater efforts from every State in working together to achieve our common goals so that the world can be free from fear and the threats posed by the various kinds of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee at its seventy-third session.

While aligning ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), we would like to highlight some issues in our national capacity.

As the Secretary-General notes in *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, we live in a world of unpredictability, tensions and an ever-changing security environment. The rules-

and treaty-based multilateral system faces serious challenges. The war in Syria has lasted seven years and has involved serious violations of human rights and the repeated use of chemical weapons. In Europe, the aggression against Ukraine is a reminder that not everyone has respected the fundamental principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The spectrum of security threats today is broader than ever. Conventional military threats, cyberattacks, hybrid threats and terrorism, as well as proliferation and even the use of weapons of mass destruction, pose a pressing need for responses.

The proliferation and re-emergence of the use of weapons of mass destruction remain serious threats. We are concerned about the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria, and we want to reiterate our strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in the United Kingdom earlier this year. Those attacks, both confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), are grave violations of international law.

We deeply regret that the renewal of the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism was vetoed in the Security Council (see S/PV.8073). As there can be no impunity and those responsible must be held accountable, we welcome the decision of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction to enhance the OPCW's capacity to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons and develop a universal attribution mechanism. In addition, Estonia welcomes the efforts conducted within the framework of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resume compliance with its international obligations under Security Council resolutions and to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome the ongoing diplomatic efforts with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that have contributed to easing tensions. However, until the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes concrete steps towards denuclearization, all States must continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions.

Estonia continues to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We reiterate the need

for Iran to continue abiding strictly by all its nuclear-related commitments and cooperating fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the true cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Estonia shares the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and continues to support a progressive approach that is pursued in a realistic and responsible way. To that end, Estonia supported both resolution 71/259, on a fissile-material cut-off treaty, and resolution 71/67, on nuclear disarmament verification. Estonia actively participated in the work of the high-level expert preparatory group, and it is our hope that this process will bring us closer to the commencement of official negotiations.

We are still concerned about the long-standing deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament (CD). It is important to continue exploring ways for its revitalization. I would like to reiterate Estonia's request to participate fully and equally in the disarmament discussions as a full member of the CD.

Estonia recognizes that cybersecurity has become a key issue in the context of international security. The role and involvement of the United Nations in seeking consensus on the norms of responsible State behaviour in the First Committee are increasingly relevant. Over the years, the Committee's groups of governmental experts have reached consensus on a number of recommendations that the General Assembly has repeatedly endorsed. It is our task as States to fully implement those recommendations. Estonia supports the further development of a strategic framework for conflict prevention and stability in cyberspace that is based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations in particular, as well as the development and implementation of universal norms of responsible State behaviour and regional confidence-building measures.

Estonia supports efforts to universalize and strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We are convinced that the CCW is the most appropriate forum for discussion of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Estonia actively contributed to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and welcomes the agreed guiding principles.

Estonia welcomed the outcome of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. The fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), held in Tokyo, continued progress towards advancing a number of ATT goals. Universalization, effective Treaty implementation, strengthened cooperation with all stakeholders and awareness-raising on gender-based violence should continue.

Estonia continues to contribute to humanitarian demining and mine action, including by providing support for the United Nations Mine Action Service and humanitarian projects within bilateral and international frameworks. We also urge all States to join the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

Finally, Estonia is determined to contribute to global efforts to strengthen international law and the rules-based order and to the implementation of existing disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation instruments. Our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period from 2020 to 2021 demonstrates Estonia's long-term commitment to taking more responsibility for promoting international peace and security and would offer the Council the perspective of a small State.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. We look forward to working closely with you in carrying out our task.

Japan is always committed to working with the international community to further promote our efforts in the areas of security, disarmament and non-proliferation. We are living in a difficult security environment, with emerging new technologies that have been affecting a broad range of issues regarding disarmament and non-proliferation.

In those circumstances, we should cooperate further in a cross-cutting way, while reducing divergences of opinion. In that regard, Japan welcomed the document *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, which the Secretary-General presented in May. Japan supports it and hopes to work

with the United Nations and other Member States in an action-oriented and mutually reinforcing manner, while building on relevant efforts already under way.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The vision of a world without nuclear weapons needs to be refocused. The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is the shared responsibility of all NPT State parties to increase international momentum towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Japan will lead that effort, together with the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, a cross-regional grouping of 12 non-nuclear-weapon States.

Nuclear weapons have not been used for 73 years. The international community shares the common goal of advancing towards a safer world free of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the threats posed by nuclear weapons still exist. We have to seek security and nuclear disarmament simultaneously. We have to strike a balance between those two goals while taking concrete and practical measures, with the cooperation of both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

We believe that interactive discussion involving both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States is essential. In the medium-to-long-term perspective, it will be essential to discuss issues such as how to effectively contribute to threat reduction and how to address security concerns that may emerge from the nuclear disarmament process. The necessity of restoring civility in discourse and respect for divergent views must also be emphasized in those discussions.

Japan will once again submit its draft resolution entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons” (A/C.1/73/L.54), which provides a common denominator on a wide range of issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, while confronting new challenges. We hope that it will again garner wide support from Member States. All States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, are encouraged to discuss and improve their understanding of transparency, verification, threat and risk reduction and security concerns during the nuclear disarmament process. We believe that the resulting measures represent clear opportunities for advancing nuclear disarmament through cooperation and collaboration with all States.

Furthermore, they serve as confidence-building measures and as a basis for a stable international and regional security environment.

Japan is determined to continue its efforts with a view to contributing to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, we welcome the recent ratification of the Treaty by the Kingdom of Thailand and its signing by Tuvalu. Japan once again calls on the remaining non-ratifying and non-signatory States, particularly the annex 2 countries, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of North Korea’s nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programmes and related facilities, as well as its ballistic missiles of all ranges, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Mindful of recent developments, including the United States-North Korea summit held in Singapore in June and the three inter-Korean summits, Japan calls on North Korea to take concrete steps towards denuclearization. We also call on all Member States to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Aside from nuclear-weapon issues, Japan has been committed to pursuing other disarmament efforts, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Progress in the regulation of conventional weapons is also important. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains one of the most insidious challenges to security, safety and stability, resulting in a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences at the local, national, regional and international levels. We need to work hard to save lives, particularly of the civilians who continue to bear the brunt of criminal acts and armed conflict. In that context, it is important for Member States to implement appropriate measures, in accordance with the documents adopted at the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in New York in June under France’s presidency. It will also be important to implement and build on what was achieved during the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Tokyo in August under Japan’s presidency. Japan will continue to work actively and with an integrated focus at the international, regional and subregional levels in order

to tackle the problems that result from the diversion, unregulated proliferation, excessive accumulation or misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Education has an important role to play in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. We should cultivate critical thinking and an understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear detonation and proliferation. Tackling those questions in a practical way is very useful for cultivating critical thinking and a drive to achieve enduring will, aspiration and wisdom on the part of all stakeholders all over the world.

The 2020 NPT Review Conference is less than two years away. In that connection, I want to stress three important “I’s” — implementation, initiative and interaction. That means the implementation of practical measures for advancing nuclear disarmament and improving our security environment; the initiative to facilitate constructive dialogues in which the international community can discuss new risks and challenges; and the interaction of all stakeholders based on civil discourse and respect for differing views. We believe that these three will foster united action for that important event. We have a long journey ahead towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to your important position. You can count on our full support in conducting constructive discussions on our agenda items.

As we can all see, international relations today are increasingly unpredictable, both militarily and politically. In the circumstances, the problems of ensuring strategic stability take centre stage. Those problems have to be solved if we are to create the conditions necessary for strengthening international security and establishing equitable cooperation in order to progress towards comprehensive and complete disarmament. As a responsible and consistent supporter of nuclear disarmament, the Russian Federation has been making an enormous contribution to the reduction of strategic offensive arms for more than half a century. On 5 February we announced that we had reached the threshold level for delivery vehicles and warheads provided for in the New START Treaty. As a result, Russia’s nuclear arsenal has been reduced by more than 85 per cent since its Cold War peak. We intend to continue progressing in that direction, and we are ready to explore the option of extending the

Treaty, which it allows for. However, before that it is essential that we settle all outstanding issues regarding our partner’s implementation of the Treaty. Mere declarations regarding the withdrawal of strategic offensive weapons, unaccompanied by compliance with the Treaty’s standards, are not acceptable. If we are to extend the Treaty, we need a responsible partner.

Further progress towards nuclear disarmament is impossible without the involvement of all States with military nuclear capabilities. That applies particularly to those countries of the NATO military alliance that possess nuclear weapons. To our deep regret, however, none of those countries have expressed any such intention. We support the idea of ridding the planet of nuclear weapons, while also advocating a balanced and gradual approach that takes into account all factors affecting strategic stability. It is vital that the security of all those participating in the process of eliminating nuclear weapons be simultaneously and mandatorily strengthened.

Factors such as the emergence in the updated nuclear doctrine of one of the most developed States of plans that could result in a lower threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, and also of the same State’s unrestricted expansion of its global anti-missile defence systems, have severely destructive consequences. There are also increasing indications that it is preparing to conduct military operations in near-Earth outer space. We reaffirm the long-standing and growing numbers of serious questions we have for our partner regarding the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, such as the issue of the ground deployment of universal Mark 41 vertical launching systems in Romania and Poland, a significant threat to the Treaty.

Nuclear disarmament is also hampered by the continued presence of foreign non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, accompanied by the practice of so-called nuclear sharing, a shocking practice for the twenty-first century in which non-nuclear NATO States are involved in training in the use of nuclear weapons, which is a direct violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The political games being played with regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are also a serious and destructive factor. As the First Committee is aware, the new nuclear doctrine of one particular State essentially wipes out any prospects for the Treaty’s entry into force, and needless to say, in the circumstances there can be no question of accelerating

the establishment of a CTBT verification mechanism and implementing it.

In the middle of the latest NPT review cycle and approaching the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature, we all find ourselves in a very difficult situation, with disputes between nuclear and non-States intensifying and disagreements worsening even within these two groups of States. Universally recognized norms and mechanisms are being undermined and revised, and that is compounded by attempts to exploit the NPT review process by using it as a rostrum from which to put political pressure on certain States as well as for the deplorable practice of using the forum of the NPT to raise issues that have nothing to do with the Treaty.

We have still had zero results regarding the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Continued inaction in that area is likely to have serious consequences. We support the draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1) presented by the League of Arab States on convening a conference on such a zone in the Middle East. The draft resolution is not at odds with the interests of the States of the region and in fact will help to achieve a political resolution of the issue. We call on the sponsors of the 1995 resolution to take a similarly constructive position.

As the Committee is aware, the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to address the situation of Iran's nuclear programme was a major success in the area of nuclear disarmament. Tehran has fully honoured its obligations, as the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly confirmed, and Iran is currently the State most frequently subject to inspection by the Agency. The withdrawal from the Plan of Action by one of its initiators is a major miscalculation and a politically short-sighted move.

The Russian Federation fully supports the international regimes that prohibit chemical and biological weapons.

Before concluding, I want to briefly address Russia's initiatives on preventing an arms race in outer space. Since a single powerful State is blocking them, we have been compelled to take the route of political initiatives on the non-first-placement of weapons in outer space rather than that of legally binding agreements. If we all support such political initiatives, we could achieve a political solution to one of today's most important

problems, the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and save humankind from horrors such as those that we all experienced after the United States bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki with a problem — that of nuclear weapons — that we still have not solved. We cannot allow that to happen with weapons in outer space.

The full version of our statement is available electronically, and print copies can be found at the entrance to this room.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I want to once again remind delegations to limit their statements to eight minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you that you will have my delegation's full support as you steer the work of the First Committee.

The primary purpose of the United Nations, as set out in the very first article of the Charter of the United Nations, is to maintain international peace and security and to end threats to peace through peaceful means. It is therefore very clear that the founding fathers of the United Nations sought to achieve peace and security through disarmament. The Charter's vision of a peaceful and prosperous world can be achieved only through disarmament, by divesting from arms production and investing in reducing poverty, increasing our ability to adapt to climate change and guaranteeing fundamental human rights. That may sound utopian, but it is the only realistic way forward, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shows how it can be done. We should practice what we preach. The First Committee's work must be closely aligned with that of the Second and Third Committees. A holistic approach to peace and development can start at the Committee stages here in the General Assembly.

The Maldives has never produced any armaments or weapons of any type, nor do we have any desire to do so in the future. Maldivians have always believed that improving our people's quality of life will make us secure and stronger. A stronger Maldives is good for the security of the Indian Ocean region. We believe it is our moral obligation to work to strengthen international disarmament regimes. The Maldives is a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and several other disarmament instruments. We can make

progress on disarmament, especially in discussions and negotiations on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, only if there is trust and good faith among the parties. Recent developments in non-proliferation suggest a need to uphold the fundamental characteristics of the international State system and the principles of multilateralism. It will be crucial to ensure that the Security Council resolutions that guide such discussions and decisions are fully adhered to. Respect for international law must be promoted, especially when it is inconvenient to do so.

The threats that acts of terrorism pose to international peace and security are growing in size and number with every passing year. We need closer collaboration between the discussions of the First Committee and the Sixth Committee if we are to achieve greater synergy in shaping our recommendations on international peace and security. The Maldives has always argued for the mainstreaming of non-traditional security threats in discussions on international peace and security. Conflicts are driven by threats such as transnational organized crime, terrorist attacks — such as those identified in resolution 49/31 — and emerging issues such as climate change. Addressing them requires going above and beyond the traditional discourse on security and disarmament. The Committee should therefore consider expanding its horizons and examining ways in which such issues could be addressed more holistically.

If we are to succeed in the endeavour of achieving a world without nuclear weapons, countries that possess them must dismantle their nuclear-weapon programmes and renounce their possession. We believe we can achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, but only through the collective efforts of both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. We must make global disarmament and non-proliferation a shared responsibility.

Mr. Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam): I congratulate you, Sir, and the other Bureau members on your election to chair the First Committee at its seventy-third session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

As our world continues to face multiple and constant threats posed by prolonged conflicts, violence, the arms race, the illegal trade in conventional arms and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the

role of the Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in advancing the global non-proliferation and disarmament agenda, including the issues of cyberspace and outer-space security, is more important than ever. Generally speaking, it is encouraging to see new efforts and development in the fields of non-proliferation and disarmament. We welcome and support the new Agenda for Disarmament under the leadership of Secretary-General António Guterres. We support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also support the further enhancement and reinforcement of the whole United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly the revitalization of the work of the CD and UNDC.

We welcome the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a historic event after more than 70 years of international efforts on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Viet Nam is proud to have been the tenth country to ratify the Treaty. We also welcome the new and encouraging development on the Korean peninsula and commend the efforts of all the parties involved towards the settlement of nuclear non-proliferation issues on the peninsula through the realization of lasting peace and stability for the region.

We are of the opinion that it is of the utmost importance to uphold multilateralism as a core principle of negotiations in non-proliferation and disarmament and an effective tool for building trust among countries. We stress the importance of efficient and rules-based approaches, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We firmly believe that addressing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must be coupled with substantive progress in their disarmament towards the goal of their general and complete elimination.

We underline the importance of building and strengthening regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. As a member of ASEAN, we are strictly implementing the plan of action of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone for the period from 2018 to 2022. We continue to call on nuclear-weapon States to sign the respective protocols to the Treaty as soon as possible.

Regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we welcome the work done by the Netherlands and Poland in the first and

second sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. We look forward to the chairmanship of Malaysia at the next session of the Preparatory Committee and to the success of the Conference.

Regarding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we have joined as a member, we continue to call on the remaining annex 2 countries to sign and ratify the Treaty to allow its early entry into force.

Regarding other weapons of mass destruction, we recognize the threat and danger of the existence of the use of chemical, biological and radiological weapons. We call for universal adherence to the applicable international legal instruments, including the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Viet Nam recognizes and shares the concerns about the danger and consequences of conventional arms. We respect and fully support the implementation of obligations under related international agreements and control regimes, including the annual submission of arms trade reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. At the same time, we affirm the right of States to sovereignty and to acquire, manufacture, trade and retain conventional weapons for their national self-defence and security.

With regard to the Arms Trade Treaty, there should be a balance between its regulatory security purposes and legitimate national rights to self-defence. In addition, it should avoid placing unnecessary burdens on legitimate trade and economic activity. We are of the view that technical assistance should be strengthened to support member countries and others in dealing with the illegal trade in conventional arms.

Viet Nam is still suffering greatly from the unexploded ordnance left over from a protracted period of war. We support the humanitarian objectives of the relevant international mechanisms in assisting the countries affected in addressing the after-effects of war. We are currently implementing our 2010-2025 national mine action plan, which focuses on demining and supporting affected victims. We thank all our international partners for their valuable support and call on others in a position to do so to join us in that humanitarian endeavour. For our part, we are ready to share our experience of post-conflict peacebuilding, demining and victim assistance with other countries.

Viet Nam has a consistent policy of supporting non-proliferation and the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction with a view to their general and complete disarmament. Viet Nam is a party to, and has fully complied with its obligations under, all key treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction and non-proliferation and disarmament. As a responsible partner of the international community, we strictly implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325 (2016).

In conclusion, I firmly believe that with goodwill, trustworthy cooperation and responsible collective action, we can all move ahead together on the Committee's agenda.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau, and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their presence and statements made yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

The international community today faces challenges and threats that require effective and efficient commitments. We are facing a complex scenario that reminds us of the absolute necessity of eliminating weapons of mass destruction, which constitute an existential threat to all humankind. Those challenges require solutions achieved through dialogue and consensus-building.

Argentina has built a security and non-proliferation policy based on two pillars — respect for the right to development and the peaceful use of advanced technologies, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, and their delivery systems and related technologies.

As we celebrate World Space Week, Argentina supports the non-militarization of outer space and, as humankind's heritage, its use strictly for improving the living conditions and promoting peace among the peoples who inhabit our planet. On Sunday, 7 October, Argentina put into orbit satellite SAOCOM-1A, the most modern of its kind, developed and manufactured by Argentina's National Space Activities Commission.

The SAOCOM mission has carried into space complex Earth-observation technology that is designed to provide data in any weather conditions, day and night, transmitted by L-band microwaves. Those characteristics give it an unlimited number of observation capabilities that are especially helpful in preventing, monitoring, mitigating and assessing natural or human disasters, with applications useful for farming such as on soil humidity, for monitoring snow, ice and glaciers and for security and defence, among other areas of strategic interest, which will benefit all countries of the region.

The issue of nuclear disarmament is a priority for Argentina, and we have made significant efforts in that area, reflecting a clear and sustained commitment to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. As a producer and exporter of nuclear technology, my country maintains an active nuclear programme for exclusively peaceful purposes within a framework of strict respect for the norms enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which continues to be the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament regime, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Within the framework of its commitment to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, Argentina has presented its candidacy to preside over the 2020 NPT Review Conference, a particularly significant event that will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

General, complete and internationally verifiable disarmament, with guaranteed irreversibility, is a challenge that can be effectively addressed by the international community only if it is approached in a constructive manner and on a basis of broad consensus. The review process of the NPT will be the next opportunity to foster that joint work.

Argentina's commitment to the need to continue working towards the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons has meant that my country participated in the negotiating process of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Argentina shares the spirit that underpins the Treaty, which is why we voted in favour of adopting it. We are also analysing the impact that the Treaty could have on other relevant areas of the current non-proliferation regime and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

At the end of last year, Argentina hosted the fifth plenary meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We participated in that initiative in the belief that if we are to make progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons, it is critical to maintain constructive dialogue among nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. Argentina is also actively collaborating with the Groups of Governmental Experts on the prohibition of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, the verification of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The latest incidents in which the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has verified the use of chemical weapons or chemical substances as weapons are shocking, and we condemn them unreservedly. Argentina reiterates that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and in any circumstances is unacceptable and constitutes a flagrant violation of the international obligations under the Convention on Chemical Weapons and international law. Everyone responsible for their use must be brought to justice. We call on all States to comply strictly with all their obligations under the Convention. We also want to highlight the consensus that has made it possible for the fourth Review Conference of the Convention to take place at the end of this year, in the firm belief of the importance of moving closer to a world free of chemical weapons and an impending future when part of our work will have to be focused less on destroying arsenals and more on how to prevent the resurgence of chemical threats.

We believe that our discussion process should be aimed at building a new consensus on the way in which we should face those challenges, seeking to strengthen existing multilateral mechanisms and avoiding divisions that weaken them. Due to its scope and legal nature, resolution 1540 (2004) is the clearest response that the United Nations can offer to the problem of weapons of mass destruction and of non-State actors' access to them. In that regard, in 2019 our country will have the honour of hosting the plenary meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Small arms continue to pose a key problem. We must reiterate the importance of international mechanisms related to the issue and the need to explore synergies among them, including the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its

Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Arms Trade Treaty. In that regard, we emphasize Argentina's traditional support for the Programme of Action, which held its third Review Conference in June. We also welcome the holding in Tokyo in August of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, a fundamental instrument that combines three central aspects of the arms trade — human rights, production and responsible trade. In that respect, its consolidation and the advances in its implementation and universalization are of vital importance. In conclusion, I would like to once again emphasize Argentina's commitment to the work of the Committee. We hope that this will be a productive session in which the Committee can count on my delegation's full cooperation.

The Chair: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I apologize for having to take up the Committee's time so close to the lunch hour. Unfortunately, however, we have once again heard fabrications that bear no relation to reality about Russia from behind the nameplate bearing the revered name of Ukraine. Considering their absurdity, there is perhaps no point in commenting on them here. However, the one thing we do want to do is to once again express our condolences to our brother people of Ukraine, who have been enduring what is perhaps the most difficult time in their history in the wake of the brutal and bloody coup in Kyiv of February 2014, backed by the United States and the European Union, in which the legitimate Government and President were ousted and the implementation of the Constitution and the work of political parties and the judiciary were terminated. The State itself essentially ceased to exist. Ultra-nationalists then came to power in Kyiv, and a civil war was unleashed. The killing of any who dissented in the onslaught of nationalism began.

Needless to say, no reasonable person in Ukraine agreed with this horrifying turn of events. The inhabitants of Crimea, in particular, would not allow

the nationalists and extremists to enter their territory. A national referendum was held in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, in compliance with all international legal norms, with a 93 per cent voter turnout, of whom 95 per cent voted in favour of withdrawing from a State that by then had ceased to exist. In line with all international legal norms and domestic legislation, the Republic of Crimea then returned to the Russian Federation. From a historical standpoint, this issue has been definitively and irrevocably settled. For centuries Crimea was part of Russia, and Crimea now is and will remain part of Russia. There should be no illusions in that regard. In line with the core principle of the Charter of the United Nations regarding self-determination, that decision was taken by the people themselves, the residents of the peninsula. The entire situation was settled completely democratically and with no violence of any kind. Not a single shot was fired and there was not a single casualty.

The situation in the rest of Ukraine is very different. Kyiv continues to conduct hostilities against the people of south-eastern Ukraine and has not refrained from using the dirtiest methods, including the vile murder of the people's chosen leaders. The only acceptable solution to the problem is the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which were reached between Kyiv and south-eastern Ukraine with the mediation of the leaders of Germany, France and the Russian Federation, as we all know, and which are supported by the Security Council's corresponding resolution 2202 (2015). Anything else is an unrelated fabrication and there is no need to take up the First Committee's time with it. Kyiv has yet to implement a single provision under the Minsk agreements — which are well known and available for all to read — and that is the essence of the problem.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): On this point, I will be brief. With regard to some of the comments that were made yesterday by the Syrian representative (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), he accused the United States of providing chemical weapons to terrorists in his country. That is just absolutely and positively absurd. It is bizarre, outrageous and not worthy of further comment, and therefore I will leave it there.

Moving on to the remarks made by the Russian Ambassador, at every session of the First Committee he comes with a laundry list of things to complain about with regard to the United States. We have our own list, which he will be hearing more about later on. Let me

first take an issue he raised from that laundry list of the usual complaints, regarding the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START).

Let me be very clear. The United States is in full compliance with the New START Treaty, and has been since February. Regarding an extension of the New START Treaty, to which Ambassador Yermakov referred, we will consider how to proceed with regard to an extension at the appropriate time. But I must say that, when one looks at the Russian violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty, its flouting of its Budapest memorandum commitments, violations of other conventions and highly concerning behaviour in Europe, it is very difficult to ignore all of those actions in the decision-making process.

With regard to the Ambassador's comments about Russia needing a responsible partner, that is indeed interesting. We have been saying for years that we are waiting for Russia to be a responsible and willing partner on a number of issues. It is therefore interesting to see that they have now co-opted our language.

Let me be very clear. It is Russia that is in violation of the INF Treaty, having produced and flight-tested a ground-launched cruise missile beyond the 5,500-kilometre range. When we first raised that issue, Russia denied that it had produced a ground-launched cruise missile. Later it admitted that it had done so, but said that it had not violated the 5,500-kilometre limit. Well, we are not sure what to believe about Russia these days.

With regard to outer space, Russia is producing terrestrial anti-satellite weapons at a very disturbing rate. It continues to push the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which does not address the issue. We have called on Russia to address the issue in substance, which it has not done.

Ambassador Yermakov also raised the issue of NATO nuclear-sharing, which he regularly does here, at meetings regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in other forums. Once again, nothing that NATO countries do is in violation of the NPT. All of those issues were discussed during the Treaty's negotiations. I therefore do not know why he continues to raise the issue. I suppose he thinks that

he can get an audience for it, but it is a little bit tired and old.

In the interests of time, I will stop there.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your assumption of your duties. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

In exercising our right of reply in response to the statement by the Japanese representative, I would like to clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea vis-à-vis the current situation on the Korean peninsula. As everybody recognizes, there is a new trend towards peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, thanks to the initiatives and peace-loving efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

This year, the whole world witnessed three rounds of inter-Korean summits and the historic Singapore summit, with the adoption of milestone documents, such as the Panmunjom Declaration on Peace, Prosperity and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula and the joint statement delivered by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. Those developments have had a positive influence on the progress towards stability in North-East Asia.

Many countries welcome and support the ongoing dialogue process as a significant contribution to regional and global peace and security and have expressed the hope that the trend can continue. However, there is only one country in the region that feels very uncomfortable with the current developments. Japan is deliberately throwing a wet blanket on the situation. The Japanese representative's statement regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is nothing more than a diversionary tactic to distract attention from its isolation and exclusion from the ongoing dialogue structure. Frankly speaking, Japan has nothing to do with the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is not its business in which to interfere.

The Norwegian representative, speaking yesterday on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2) and today in his own capacity, said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme is an unacceptable violation of its obligations under international law. Well, Norway has no moral authority

to say such things. I wonder why a country that attaches such importance to international norms and rules has not yet signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Moreover, Norway's remarks regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea only reveal its ignorance of the origin and basic essence of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea stands firm in its commitment and determination to implement the joint statement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States responsibly and in good faith. The significance of the Singapore summit lies in its demonstration that even countries with a long history of hostile relations can resolve their outstanding peace and security issues through dialogue and reach agreements for peaceful coexistence.

My delegation expects that the international community will encourage and nurture the ongoing constructive dialogue and trust-building process.

Ms. Bila (Ukraine): I would like to draw the First Committee's attention to a rather funny issue. Our statement was scheduled for yesterday, and we therefore gave our text to all the interpreters and delegations, including the Russian delegation. Despite the time they had, they did not even manage to write something new, but simply copied and pasted their comments from last year. I will therefore not comment on that fantasy, which is absolutely inadequate.

Having declared that its nuclear facilities from Soviet times had been shut down, Russia managed to deploy new nuclear facilities in Crimea. We must stop that aggressor before it moves into all of our countries, as it did in the United Kingdom in Salisbury by using chemical weapons, which was a new development.

I would also like to draw the attention of the First Committee to the fact that the Russian delegation is the only one that has expressed disrespect to other delegations present. There are other countries in this room that dislike each other and are political rivals, but none have permitted themselves to speak in the disrespectful manner that the Russian Federation used.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to exercise my right of reply in response to the allegations made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I would like to reiterate what I just said in my statement. Mindful of the risks and recent developments,

including the United States-North Korea summit in Singapore in June and the three inter-Korean summits, Japan calls on North Korea to take concrete steps towards denuclearization. That means that it is our great hope that the ongoing diplomatic efforts will lead to North Korea's complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges under the relevant Security Council resolutions, which is the common goal that we all share.

I hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea representative is aware of the differences between my statements last year (see A/C.1/72/PV.4) and this year.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to comment briefly on what we just heard from the representative of the United States. To be honest, I like the fact that our American partners are acknowledging that we should be conducting a responsible dialogue. That is no doubt exactly what should unite all of us here at the First Committee, and the Russian Federation has always been willing to engage in such dialogue, including with our United States partners.

We have things to discuss and things to agree on. The problems plaguing United States-Russian relations with regard to strategic offensive weapons, among other things, have always existed. Can we solve them overnight? Of course not. We will have to engage in lengthy and responsible dialogue. It is therefore hardly necessary to bring issues to the First Committee that are being discussed by experts and specialists, including right now in Geneva, where another meeting has begun of the Bilateral Consultative Commission Under the New START Treaty, in which Russia's concerns are being discussed.

Unfortunately, perhaps due to some illusions about its impunity and real economic, military and political power, the United States sometimes decides for itself that it can interpret agreements the way it wants. We do not agree with that, and we are trying to resolve those issues with our partner under the Treaty. We certainly do not wish to bring them into the Committee's general debate. We have never previously voiced our concerns about the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty here, although we have had them since the end of the 1990s and our United States partners are well aware of them. We have consistently said that they have to

be resolved within the framework of the Treaty itself and that we have to come to an agreement. However, our United States partners have probably been under the illusion that Russia is less powerful than the Soviet Union was and that therefore there is no need to reach an agreement with the Russian Federation and Russia can simply be pushed around.

We would our American partners to shed those dangerous illusions. Russia will not be pushed around. There have been violations for years and we have discussed them all. But the worst violation is the placement on Romanian and Polish territory of Mark-41 systems capable of launching Tomahawk missiles, including with nuclear capacities. That is a direct breach of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. That issue has to be resolved, and that is why the United States is anxious and is attempting to get its NATO allies, even here in the First Committee, to suddenly talk about some kind of non-compliance by Russia. Russia is abiding by its obligations and our United States partner has no evidence to contradict that. No one, anywhere, has ever identified violations by the Russian Federation in that regard. As for the NATO missions in which non-nuclear States are made to do nuclear-weapon training directed at Russia, they are a direct breach of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The United States should read articles I and II of the Treaty.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to respond briefly to the Japanese representative's comments. I have taken his words at face value and do not actually see any difference between his statements this year and last year (see A/C.1/72/PV.4).

There are other issues that Japan should pay serious attention to. It knows very well what it should do with regard to redeeming the wrongs that it committed in its sinful past.

I want to once again take this opportunity to express my expectation that all Member States value the current hard-won atmosphere of dialogue and cooperation and are willing to work to secure lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I will be very brief. It is heartening to hear that my Russian colleague wants to have dialogue with the United States. We have tried to resolve this issue over the years, particularly with regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces

Treaty (INF). As I said, it has been extremely difficult to first get Russia to admit to having tested such a missile in the 500- and 5,500-kilometre range, and it still refuses to admit that it is in violation of the Treaty. We will continue to try to work on the issue with them diplomatically, but I want to be very clear that our patience is not infinite. This is a very serious Treaty that we agreed to with the former Soviet Union, now Russia, and it has very serious implications for arms control. We continue to call on Russia to address its violations and come back into compliance with the Treaty. We will continue to try and work with our Russian colleagues not only on this issue but on a range of other issues, but that is an extremely challenging task.

My last point on the INF Treaty is directed to my Russian colleagues. Our patience is not infinite, and I therefore ask them to come back into compliance with that important Treaty.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): With regard to the statement made by the representative of the United States today in exercise of the right of reply, my country has actually sent 160 letters to the Security Council, the counter-terrorism committees and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). We have provided them with detailed information about chemical experts from the United States and other countries who oversee the transfer of toxic chemical agents from other countries to Syria and from terrorist groups outside Syria to territories controlled by the same terrorist groups inside Syria.

We have also provided the Council and counter-terrorism committees with detailed information regarding the arrival of United States chemical experts in Syrian territory and their training of terrorist groups on how to mix those chemical agents and use them as chemical weapons. Those United States chemical experts have also trained terrorists in Syria's neighbouring countries on how to use toxic chemicals as weapons. We have information about places and dates and the names of those experts and terrorists. We have also informed the Security Council and counter-terrorism committees, including the 1540 Committee, that terrorist groups in Syria possess napalm manufactured in the United States. So far, the United States has denied that dangerous information. How did napalm reach terrorist groups in Syria?

The Chair: Before adjourning, let me again remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close at 6 p.m. today. All delegations intending to take the floor should make every effort to inscribe their names on the list before that deadline.

I would also like to remind delegations that I am hosting a reception this evening at 6.30 p.m. at the Permanent Mission of Romania. All representatives are invited. It will not be a reception with scheduled speeches or a pre-established agenda, just an

opportunity for team-building. I very much hope that all members will be able to attend.

The next meeting of the First Committee will be held tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. in Conference Room 4. We shall continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. I once again appeal to all delegations to be punctual in order to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.