



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

First Committee

5th meeting

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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: Before I open the floor for statements, delegations are reminded that the list of speakers is now open for the thematic discussion segment, which will start next week on Wednesday, 17 October.

We will now turn to today's list of speakers. I once again urge all delegations taking the floor to kindly keep in mind the suggested time limit for statements.

Mr. Sharma (India): The delegation of India congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at its seventy-third session and assures you of its full support and cooperation.

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

This year has been a momentous one. The international security situation is in flux. That also has implications for India's national security, which cannot be viewed merely in the regional context.

India has always supported efforts to bring about peace and stability on the Korean peninsula through dialogue and diplomacy. In that context, we welcome the United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea summit and the three summits between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

India maintains that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully through dialogue and diplomacy and by respecting Iran's right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the international community's strong interest in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We encourage all parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to remain engaged in order to resolve the relevant issues.

While the subsidiary bodies held substantive discussions this year, it is disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) could not adopt a programme of work. Owing to the narrow perceptions of national security interests and the quest for parity, the CD has been prevented from adopting its programme of work. While reiterating our commitment to preserving the disarmament machinery and system created by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, we are concerned about the tendency to resort to forums outside the existing disarmament machinery.

In that respect, we reiterate that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, negotiated outside of the Conference on Disarmament, does not create any obligations for India, which is bound solely by the treaties to which it has given its sovereign consent. India believes that the Treaty in no way constitutes or contributes to the development of any customary international law. However, India stands ready to work with its signatories to achieve our shared goal of nuclear disarmament.

We believe that the divide within the international community on different pathways to a nuclear-

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weapon-free world needs to be bridged through dialogue, cooperation and commitment to multilateralism. There is a need for meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. Towards that end, India will once again submit draft resolutions on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and on reducing nuclear danger.

India remains committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It believes that this goal can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework, as outlined in our working paper on nuclear disarmament (A/C.1/61/5, annex), submitted to the General Assembly in 2006. India is also participating in the group of governmental experts (GGE) to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

Moreover, without prejudice to the priority that we attach to nuclear disarmament, we are ready to support the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the mandate contained in CD/1299. The report of the GGE on an FMCT (see A/70/81) underlines that the treaty and its negotiation in the CD remain a priority and that CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein remain the most suitable bases for negotiations to commence. India welcomes the work done in the High-level Expert Preparatory Group on an FMCT, in accordance with its mandate. We hope that this will propel the CD to commence negotiations on an FMCT at the earliest opportunity.

India attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which embodies the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. We share the concern about allegations coming from different parts of the world on the use of chemical weapons. It has been India's consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody and under any circumstances cannot be justified and that the perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable. At a time when the Convention is facing serious challenges, India is committed to maintaining its credibility and integrity.

We are happy that the Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,

Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) in 2017 was successful, owing to the constructive engagement of all States parties, which led to the adoption by consensus of an intersessional programme for 2018-2020. We share the widespread interest among BWC States parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. We welcome the substantive discussions in the meetings of experts, held earlier this year.

The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) has served as an important and useful instrument. India had the privilege for two years to chair the GGE on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which has successfully adopted reports by consensus, including the possible guiding principles. As another contribution to the CCW, India, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross, hosted an international conference on the CCW in December 2017 in New Delhi, bringing together more than 80 participants from 24 States. In view of our abiding interest in the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we are actively participating in the work of the GGE on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and look forward to its substantive outcome.

The accelerating pace of technological changes necessitates a comprehensive, system-wide assessment of the potential impact of developments in science and technology in the area of international security and disarmament. With that objective in mind, India presented resolution 72/28 in 2017 — an initiative that we intend to take forward this year. We thank the Secretary-General and welcome his report on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts, as contained in document A/73/177. We also thank Member States for submitting their views on that important subject.

We would like to reiterate our commitment to non-proliferation in all its aspects. Accordingly, India has joined various multilateral export-control regimes. With a view to addressing global concerns on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists, India will once again table the consensus draft resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. With a view to promoting the effective implementation of Security

Council resolution 1540 (2004), India, in cooperation with Germany and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, hosted the India-Wiesbaden conference 2018 in April.

India is fully committed to upholding multilateralism and the institutions it engenders. To that end, we have instituted an annual disarmament and international security fellowship programme for young diplomats, commencing in January 2019, and hope that it will make a valuable contribution to our common purpose.

Mr. Skinner-Klée Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your recent election to guide the work of the First Committee. I assure you that you can count on my delegation's support for the work of the Committee.

Guatemala aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2) and by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/73/PV.4).

The current international situation is characterized by recurrent terrorist threats. Above all, there is a latent risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors and the possibility of a new nuclear incident. Arms expenditure continues to rise, while, on the other hand, it is said that there are insufficient resources to combat hunger, poverty and disease. In the absence of quantitative advances in the reduction of nuclear arsenals and in the light of the growing threat of the nuclear-weapon States updating and improving them, States are deviously and deceptively claiming that they are indispensable to national security.

Meanwhile, the trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition continues to stoke conflict and exacerbate violence, while sadly depleting our most precious capital — people, including women and children, with children sadly paying the highest price. The Committee must resolutely return to its founding principles and take effective, action-oriented decisions that demonstrate the will of the international community to ensure the relevance of multilateralism as the only way to achieve peaceful and sustainable societies that are also free from the threat of mass destruction.

Guatemala is firmly committed to the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. That is why we are a firm promoter of general, complete and verifiable disarmament. For that reason, it is a great honour for my country to be a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first densely inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world and has served as an example for the creation of other similar zones. Since its establishment, it has reminded the nuclear Powers of our countries' rejection of the existence of those deadly weapons.

Adhering to those principles, we celebrate the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which constitutes a historic milestone and a fundamental step towards nuclear disarmament. For that reason, on 20 September 2017, Guatemala signed that instrument and is currently in the final phase of its legislative process to achieve ratification. My country reiterates its position that the Treaty complements the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and strengthens its three pillars of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Treaty establishes the categorical and widespread prohibition of nuclear weapons, a framework for their destruction and total elimination and ways for the nuclear-weapon States wishing to do so to become States parties. Moreover, among other things, the Treaty prohibits the use of nuclear weapons and all nuclear tests, under any circumstances.

On the eve of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is even more important that the international community make clear that it will not be satisfied with a simple reiteration of the commitments already made on previous occasions, the deadlines for which cannot continue to be indefinitely extended. We therefore urge the nuclear-weapon States to comply with their obligations in good faith, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their security and defence doctrines and policies and cease the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons. In addition, we believe that it is imperative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to continue to urge the eight annex 2 countries to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to adhere to that instrument so that it can enter into force as soon as possible.

Moreover, my delegation expresses its concern about a potential arms race in outer space, taking into account the fact that that outer space could become a setting for military confrontation. Such actions would run counter to the Charter of the United Nations and international law and have deeply tragic consequences for humankind. We cannot fail to mention new technologies and artificial intelligence, among other issues, and we therefore believe that the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is the appropriate forum to continue working on the issue, in particular on an instrument that prohibits lethal autonomous weapons.

With the aim and hope of improving the situation, one of the main priorities of our Government has been citizen security, which has been severely affected by armed violence throughout history. That scourge is strengthened by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which undermines the protection of people and their physical and moral integrity, while unquestionably hindering the creation of an environment favourable to promoting full and sustainable human development. That is our most serious commitment to disarmament in all its aspects, and the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and other international instruments on the subject reflects the importance of this issue for my country.

In that regard, we welcome the report (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3) 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. We are pleased that the instrument addresses the issues of ammunition, gender perspective, complementarity with other instruments and the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Guatemala has a vocation for peace and is committed to the effective, realistic and sensible regulation of arms trading. We are a country that has suffered the terrible consequences of weak international regulations that are not commensurate with the challenges we face. We therefore demand that the security of our populations and the shared responsibility of the global community serve as terms of reference for efforts to prevent violent individuals, terrorists and, above all, transnational criminal organizations from accessing firearms.

Finally, the international community is facing significant challenges to strengthening its actions in

favour of disarmament. To overcome those, we need above all to design a set of concrete, scheduled and verifiable actions that allow us to abandon rhetoric aimed at forcing us to recognize progress, even though arsenals continue to not only exist in exorbitant amounts, but also to be modernized.

Ms. Ferreira (Angola): Allow me first and foremost to echo others in this room by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We also seize this occasion to wish you success in guiding our work and relations at this session in order to find common ground on and long-lasting solutions to the majority of draft resolutions and decisions to be put forward for action.

The Republic of Angola 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). We attach great importance to multilateral efforts towards the disarmament of nuclear weapons, as they pose a high risk to humankind. We therefore advocate the need for their total elimination.

As members may recall, in 1961 the General Assembly adopted resolution 1652 (XVI), the first to call upon Member States to consider and respect the African continent as a denuclearized zone. In 1964, the Organization of African Unity issued a declaration on the denuclearization of Africa, which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly. To that end, the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, was signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996 by 47 out of 53 African States. The Republic of Angola signed the Treaty on the same day and ratified it on 20 June 2014. The majority of regions also have nuclear-weapon-free zones. We therefore appeal to the region of the Middle East and others to quickly embark on that path, in the same spirit.

With regard to conventional weapons, the Republic of Angola participated in the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty this year in Geneva. The holding of that Conference served once again to help States parties and signatories to fully implement the Treaty and its universalization through domestic procedures and activities. In that regard, the Angolan authorities are fully committed to ratifying the Treaty in the near future.

As the Committee may be aware, after 30 years of fratricidal war our country was strongly affected

by several types of landmines. Thanks to the commitment of the Government and its partners, such as non-governmental organizations, the international community and the International Red Cross, it was possible to conduct a successful demining process, which facilitated the free movement of people and goods and the rehabilitation of railways and road networks and boosted our agriculture and livestock development.

In that same vein, the Republic of Angola, together with 19 African countries, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Network on Explosive Weapons and other civil-society organizations, met in Maputo, Mozambique, on 27 and 28 November 2017 to share knowledge and evidence of the distinctive pattern of harm caused to civilians through the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and to explore steps to address that harm at the political and operational levels.

In direct exchanges, representatives concluded that the involvement of African States and civil society can play a pivotal role in protecting civilians from the harm caused by explosive weapons, at a time when armed conflicts are increasingly fought in population centres, and acknowledged, among other things, the need to encourage the collection of data and information to increase awareness of and enhance knowledge about the impact of explosive weapons on civilians in populated areas; refrain from the use of explosive weapons with far-reaching effects in populated areas; fully support a process that will lead to the negotiation and adoption of an international political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; promote bilateral and regional cooperation by sharing experiences, good practices and expertise on reducing harm caused by explosive weapons to civilians; constructively engage in discussions and initiatives at the international level that could effectively provide greater protection to civilians in armed conflicts; further foster deeper engagement with African States and facilitate their increased involvement as a group of States; continue to strengthen cooperation and partnerships with international organizations and civil society organizations to draw upon the relevant expertise and support; contribute to the draft international political declaration on the matter; and engage in advocacy at the national, regional and international levels.

The successful conclusion of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which took place in May 2010, resulted in an action plan with concrete measures to be undertaken by States parties in the three main thematic pillars of the Treaty: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Despite the renewed signs of commitment to nuclear disarmament, there is still much to be done. More than 40 years after the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the continued existence of numerous stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear proliferation keep alive the possibility of the use of such weapons — be it intentional, accidental or by miscalculation — with catastrophic consequences for all humankind. That possibility only increases with the emergence of new countries with nuclear weapons and access to explosive nuclear technology by non-State actors, such as terrorist groups. There is hope that such developments can be reversed as soon as possible, in the light of the commitments made or reiterated at the 2010 Review Conference, in order to ensure the credibility and future sustainability of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

The opening ceremony for the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on 20 September 2017, was a clear illustration of the commitment of a number of nuclear-weapon States and others to contributing greatly to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and for international peace and security. The Republic of Angola therefore signed the Treaty during the high-level week of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. Angola believes that the international community should continue to prioritize the nuclear-disarmament process, as there is an urgent need for concrete measures to reflect a clear commitment to the complete elimination of such weapons, in accordance with the obligations assumed by the nuclear Powers under the NPT.

Mr. Almanzlawiy (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. We are confident in your ability to successfully steer the work of the Committee. We also commend the efforts made by your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Iraq, in his capacity as Chair at the previous session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the

Group of Arab States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international legitimacy as fundamental pillars of its foreign policy. We therefore attach great importance to promoting the role of the United Nations in all areas, in particular with regard to issues of international security and disarmament. We believe that those issues represent an integrated whole without which the world cannot live in peace and stability. In that context, my country underscores the importance of achieving nuclear disarmament, which should start with the endorsement by the international community of existing treaties and legal and ethical frameworks that seek to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, in particular in the Middle East.

Promoting international peace and security requires genuine political will and strong determination on the part of all the countries of the world, especially those in possession of nuclear weapons, so as to achieve disarmament in the sphere of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as to forgo reliance on those weapons as tools of national security. My country also welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017 and hopes that it will help to promote international peace and security and to totally rid all countries of all weapons of mass destruction, without exception.

Many regions of the world have succeeded in establishing zones free of nuclear weapons thanks to cooperation among the countries of the regions concerned in order to bring about peace once and for all. Regrettably, however, the Middle East region continues to defy international and regional efforts to free it of nuclear weapons. That is due to Israel's rejection of any endeavours in that regard and refusal to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear State and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In that context, my country intends, along with the Arab Group, to submit a draft resolution mandating the Secretary-General to call on the countries of the region and the three sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution to participate in a conference to negotiate a treaty to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and

other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as of 2019. The conference should make its decisions by consensus, in accordance with arrangements to be freely arrived at by the States of the region,

In the past, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has supported the nuclear deal among Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany, based on our conviction of the need to do everything it takes to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the world. However, unfortunately, Iran used the economic revenue that was generated by the lifting of sanctions to perpetrate activities that have destabilized the region. It is developing ballistic missiles and supporting terrorist groups in the region, in particular the terrorist organization Hizbullah and the Houthi militia, which continues to launch ballistic missiles of Iranian make and origin towards cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A total of 199 had been launched as of yesterday. Iran is also continuing to carry out activities to undermine the security and safety of maritime activities in the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and the Red Sea threatening the world economy.

My country calls on the international community to take a firm and united position against Iran and its actions aimed at destabilizing the region. It must call upon Iran to refrain from supporting terrorism, commit to the Security Council resolutions regarding ballistic missiles, in particular resolution 2231 (2015), and stop interfering in the internal affairs of other States, while respecting the Charter of the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia underscores the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in accordance with IAEA standards. We also support the call to facilitate the transfer of technology, expertise and equipment related to the acquisition of atomic energy for peaceful uses. The NPT is based on three pillars: the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of atomic energy. We urge industrialized countries to remove any obstacles hampering the transfer of those technologies to developing countries in general.

My country stresses the importance of implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regrets that the Syrian regime continues to perpetrate atrocities against the Syrian people using chemical weapons. We call for the regime to be held accountable.

In terms of enhancing the peaceful use of outer space and managing activities therein, my country believes that outer space is the common heritage of all humankind and that, therefore, any effort to govern the use of outer space should not limit the inalienable right of States to its peaceful use.

In conclusion, my country strongly believes that with international resolve, we are capable of arriving at radical solutions to all of the obstacles in the way of resolving many of the issues addressed by the First Committee. We are also confident that the acumen of Committee members will lead the work on this issue to success.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that your rich diplomatic experience and wisdom will guide this session to success. My delegation wishes to assure you, Mr. Chair, and the other delegations of its full cooperation.

This year marks the centenary of the end of the First World War. The two world wars and the more than 40 years of the Cold War taught humankind profound and painful lessons. This year also marks the fortieth anniversary of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) and the adoption of its final document (resolution S-10/2). That session brought countries together to pursue dialogue and cooperation and promote the multilateral disarmament process, which remains fresh in our memories.

Today's world is undergoing major developments, profound transformation and change. As the world moves towards multipolarity and becomes more digitized and globalized, a new round of the technological and industrial revolution is bringing opportunities and unseen challenges. The Cold War mentality and power politics have become even more outdated, while unilateralism and protectionism are getting us nowhere. The international community needs to work together to uphold the rules-based international order.

Facing such new developments, challenges and tasks, Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for renewed commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and joint efforts to build a community of shared future for humankind and a world of lasting peace and universal security. That

vision can be achieved only through cooperation, and the international community must work together to make it a reality.

First, multilateralism remains an effective approach to dealing with common challenges and resolving international disputes. In the current context, the world needs multilateralism more than ever. We must firmly uphold the international order based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; pursue common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; bridge differences and resolve disputes through dialogue and consultation; and accommodate the legitimate security concerns of every country so as to achieve common and universal security.

This year, the situation on the Korean peninsula has undergone major changes. Positive progress has been made on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. Parties are getting back on track towards a settlement through dialogue and consultation. History has proved that dialogue and negotiation are the fundamental ways to advance denuclearization on the peninsula and maintain peace and stability in the region.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a multilateral agreement endorsed by the Security Council, is a significant achievement of the international community. All parties must firmly uphold the JCPOA to preserve this great achievement of multilateral diplomacy.

On Syria, many years after the conflict began, a political settlement remains the only right and viable way to resolve the issue. China is of the view that there must be a full, objective and impartial investigation into all alleged uses of chemical weapons so as to ensure that conclusions are based on solid evidence and stand the test of time. Recriminations and prejudgment would only make matters more complicated.

Secondly, we must uphold the authority and sanctity of the existing international rules and norms and reject double standards and the practice of placing domestic law above international law. Certain countries impose unilateral sanctions and long-distance jurisdiction based on their domestic law. That can only undermine trust among countries and seriously violate the basic norms of international law.

The international community should earnestly implement existing international rules and norms in the nuclear, biological and chemical fields and safeguard

the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) must act in strict accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. When it comes to compliance, the OPCW mandate should not be arbitrarily distorted or expanded. On implementation, equal importance should be attached to the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles and abandoned chemical weapons. Decisions on all substantive issues in the multilateral disarmament machinery should be made by consensus, which is an effective arrangement to ensure security for all.

Thirdly, we should bear in mind the new security situation, bring creativity into full play and enhance communication and consultation so as to make global security governance fairer and more equitable and effective.

The importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery established by SSOD-I is growing. Although the work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) this year cannot be described as perfect, the creation of subsidiary bodies to discuss core issues is in itself a big step forward. All countries should continue to inject vigour into the CD instead of setting up new external groups that undermine its role and authority.

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence, the destructive effects caused by the combination of weapons of mass destruction and artificial intelligence are of particular concern. That calls for necessary regulations on the military application of such technologies under new international rules and norms developed through negotiation.

China is a champion of multilateralism and is true to that path. China has resolutely supported and upheld the JCPOA and honoured and fulfilled its commitments and obligations. China supports the disarmament agenda put forward by the Secretary-General, commends the people-centred vision embodied in the agenda and stands ready to work with other parties to inject new impetus into the multilateral arms control and disarmament process. China is committed to enhancing strategic mutual trust and cooperation among the five permanent members of the Security Council, while maintaining global strategic balance and stability.

China is a defender of international rules and norms and firmly upholds the existing disarmament

machinery. China has actively participated in discussions in the CD and its subsidiary bodies, called for breaking the deadlock by introducing new topics and supported the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty involving all parties concerned in the CD, in accordance with the Shannon mandate. China has long played an active part in the review process of the NPT, promoted the three pillars of the NPT in a balanced manner and supported the early convening of an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As one of the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, China has always honoured its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear tests. Since last year, a batch of International Monitoring System stations in China have been certified by the Provisional Technical Secretariat and real-time data transmission has been operationalized.

China is a contributor to the development of the international system and actively promotes global security governance. The first meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on issues related to outer space, proposed by China and Russia, was successfully held this year. We hope that parties will also play an active role in the follow-up discussions in order to lay the foundation for an early start of the negotiations on a treaty. China attaches importance to the impact of developments in science and technology on international security and arms control. We stand ready to cooperate with all parties, including the United Nations, on the issue in order to promote global governance in those new frontiers. China will continue to host training courses on non-proliferation, nuclear safety and security for countries in the Asia-Pacific region and provide demining assistance to neighbouring countries to contribute to easing the humanitarian crisis.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): Allow me to first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-third session. I wish you every success in the discharge of your mandate, and you can be assured of Guyana's full support. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Guyana aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/73/PV.2) and wishes to highlight a few points in its national capacity.

First, Guyana remains unwavering in its commitment to the disarmament agenda of the United Nations in all its aspects. The maintenance of international peace and security, which is the core purpose of the United Nations, requires the collective effort of the entire membership, and disarmament is a crucial component of our efforts to achieve that objective. Disarmament is even more urgent when we consider that development depends on peaceful, stable and secure societies and vice versa. As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rightly recognizes, there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. Guyana has therefore been greatly encouraged by the many positive developments recorded over the past year in the field of disarmament.

We welcome the successful convening last June 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. Efforts at all levels to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are especially important to Guyana as a small developing country, given the serious humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences of the proliferation of the illicit trade in our territories. That trade and associated illegal activities, such as transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, is an obstacle to peace, security, stability and sustainable development in our region and fuels a culture of violence.

Guyana is of the view that the Programme of Action makes an important contribution to combating that scourge and welcomes the outcome of the third Review Conference (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex). We were especially encouraged by the small but significant inroads made by including references to ammunition. We hope that in the coming years, Member States can reach consensus on the need to broaden the scope of the Programme of Action to address the question of ammunition in a comprehensive manner. We urge all Member States to work towards the full implementation of the Programme of Action, and we wish to underscore the importance of international cooperation and technical and other forms of assistance to countries such as Guyana.

We reaffirm our commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty and encourage those Member States that are yet to ratify the Treaty to do so at an early date in order to ensure its universalization.

On the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Guyana remains firm in its conviction that nuclear weapons have no place in our world and that their continued existence is contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the spirit of the Charter. The adoption last year of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons closed an important legal gap and strengthened the global norm for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Guyana recognizes that the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world depends on action by nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. We were the first country to both sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a sign of our commitment to contributing to that goal, on which the security of our planet and its peoples depends. We urge all Member States to ratify the Treaty in order to secure its early entry into force.

We also wish to underscore the need for all Member States to commit to the obligations provided for in the other legal instruments underpinning the disarmament architecture, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and we appeal to all stakeholders to demonstrate responsible leadership on the question of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Guyana reaffirms the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances. Our position is that the use of chemical weapons is in violation of international norms and standards and of the human rights of persons affected by their use. We are alarmed by the incidents of chemical weapons use confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and we welcome the decision taken at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC on addressing the threat from chemical-weapons use. We wish to underscore the importance of attributing responsibility whenever chemical weapons are used as a means of ensuring that perpetrators of that war crime do not act with impunity. We also believe that the process of attribution should be evidence-based and conducted in an impartial manner.

In conclusion, Guyana is pleased with the increasing recognition of the need to include a gender dimension in our deliberations on questions of disarmament, peace and security. We recognize the essential contribution that women make on those critical issues and believe that women should be included at all levels of discussion and decision-making. Guyana reiterates

its strong and principled commitment to the United Nations disarmament agenda and its aspiration to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We therefore intend to remain actively engaged in the work of the Committee.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): Let me also begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee for this session. I assure you of my delegation's full support for the success of the Committee under your able leadership.

During the general debate of the First Committee last year, which was held at a time of escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula, we spoke with one voice in calling for united action to bring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea back to the path towards denuclearization. Today's debate is taking place in a very different context, as the situation on the Korean peninsula dramatically turned around at the beginning of this year and enormous changes have been taking place since then for the better. The leaders of both Koreas and the United States did not fail to take advantage of the much-sought but very narrow window of opportunity provided by the PyeongChang Winter Olympics in February. As a result, three inter-Korean summits took place in Panmunjom and Pyongyang after a decade of hiatus, and the historic United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea summit was held in Singapore, the first ever in the relations between the two countries.

Through the Panmunjom Declaration of 27 April, the two Korean leaders confirmed the common goal of the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which was reaffirmed in the Singapore joint statement of 12 June, signed by the leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who also agreed to work towards transforming their bilateral relations and establishing a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula. During the third inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang in mid-September, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea leader, Chairman Kim Jong Un, also agreed to dismantle the Dongchang-ri missile engine test site and launch platform under the observation of experts from relevant countries. He also indicated his willingness to permanently dismantle nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, if the United States takes corresponding measures.

Despite the ups and downs and hiccups in between, the United States-Democratic People's Republic of

Korea negotiations now appear to be getting into gear, thanks to the successful visit by President Moon Jae-in to Pyongyang in September, followed by his summit meeting with President Donald Trump, here in New York, a week later, as well as the follow-up visit to Pyongyang by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo this past Sunday, all of which may combine to lead to the second United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Summit, hopefully within the year.

Such a positive development on the Korean peninsula during the past several months, albeit with a bumpy road ahead, provides a glimmer of hope in addressing the other challenges of disarmament and non-proliferation that the world is facing today, especially on this memorable occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In that regard, we cannot overemphasize the indispensable role of the United Nations in our joint efforts towards global disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope and expect that the Secretary-General's recently announced agenda for disarmament can address the current and emerging challenges in a more effective and comprehensive manner.

To achieve our shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, we should take into consideration the current geopolitical reality, as well as its changing dynamics. That is why we believe that a progressive and step-by-step approach based on the NPT, a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation architecture, is the most pragmatic, especially in view of the need to engage nuclear-weapon States in the process.

In doing so, we believe that the focus should be placed on the two tasks that are long overdue: the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and kick-starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force must be elevated to the top of our priorities, as it has played a prominent role in strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. My delegation calls on the remaining eight annex 2 States to the Treaty to ratify it so that the Treaty can enter into force sooner rather than later. It is also critical to launch negotiations on an FMCT at the earliest possible date. As a member of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group, the Republic of Korea will spare no effort in paving the way towards that end.

The international community should also step up its collective efforts to address the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) involving non-State actors, violent extremists and global terrorist groups. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) has played an important role in preventing WMD terrorism, and we will continue to provide full support to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). In that context, last month the Republic of Korea hosted for the second time the Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) Regional Industry Outreach Conference for the Pacific Alliance State and Brazil, under the auspices of the Wiesbaden process, in Seoul. With the participation of many countries of the region, as well as non-governmental organizations and global companies, the Conference served as a meaningful opportunity for regional stakeholders to share best practices and build necessary capacities.

In addition, we should not overlook the danger of conventional arms, as small arms and light weapons continue to be the weapons of choice in armed conflicts and violence around the world. In fact, they have become the true weapons of mass destruction of our age and represent a serious threat to not only international peace and security, but also sustainable development.

It is in that context that, at this session, the Republic of Korea and Australia will jointly submit, for the last time, a draft resolution on preventing and combating illicit brokering activities. Our assessment is that the biennial resolution, which has been introduced since 2008, has served its purpose in advancing united efforts to combat illicit brokering activities. Considering the redundancy of contents, as found in a number of resolutions presented every year, our joint decision to bring the resolution to close will, we hope, have a positive impact on our efforts to make the work of the First Committee more efficient.

Finally, I must emphasize that emerging technologies call for our concerted efforts in areas such as outer space security and cybersecurity. In that regard, we take note of the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and its first meeting, successfully held in Geneva in August.

On the issue of cybersecurity, we find it necessary for the First Committee to agree on the re-establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts

on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. The re-established GGE should continue to build upon the discussions based on the GGE's reports of 2010 (see A/65/201), 2013 (see A/68/98) and 2015 (see A/70/174). As a member of the Group of Friends on E-Governance and Cybersecurity, we will work closely with other members to further deepen and broaden our discussions on that transnational challenge in the First Committee in a timely manner.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm my delegation's commitment to the success of this year's First Committee and look forward to constructive discussions over the next four weeks.

Mr. Carazo Zeledón (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. You can count on the resolute support of my delegation.

The use and threat of use of nuclear weapons continue to be the focus of our discussions, during which the rhetoric and actions of some parties remind us that, as an international community, we must remain vigilant and demand that all States unequivocally comply with their international obligations on the matter, without exception.

The adoption in 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons presents a renewed opportunity for a world free of nuclear weapons, while strengthening and complementing the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The adoption of the Treaty constitutes a fundamental step towards the irreversible, verifiable and transparent elimination of nuclear weapons. We again invite all States to adhere to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which, once in force, will allow us to strengthen legal and political norms against the use of nuclear weapons, with our main premise the humanitarian imperative to prohibit nuclear weapons.

It is imperative that nuclear States comply with their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We anticipate a successful process leading up to the 2020 Review Conference, as well as concrete results in the revision process, since a deadlock similar to that experienced in 2015 is simply unacceptable. Similarly, we reiterate the urgency of the universalization of the Comprehensive

Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the call on annex 2 States to ratify it as soon as possible.

We are very pleased with the steps that have been taken regarding disarmament on the Korean peninsula, of which we were informed a few minutes ago, and we encourage the effective implementation of the agreements reached with a view to complete denuclearization.

We also reaffirm the call on nuclear-weapon States to adopt new measures to reduce their stockpiles in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. The continued development, life extension and modernization of nuclear arsenals must be stopped. In that regard, we recall that advances in science and technology must be used for the development and welfare of humankind.

Regarding the ban on fissile production, we note the report of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group (see A/73/159). Costa Rica reiterates the need for a treaty that prohibits the production of fissile material and other nuclear explosive devices and includes regulations for existing material, as well as verification mechanisms and confidence-building measures. Such a treaty should be an integral part of the international non-proliferation legal framework and, in particular, have the main objective of achieving nuclear disarmament.

The elimination of chemical and biological weapons is imperative in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. We emphasize the importance of universalizing conventions on those matters, and we reiterate that any indiscriminate use of chemical and biological weapons, especially against the civilian population, is unacceptable. Moreover, we consider the sustained paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament to be inadmissible, and we reiterate our willingness to resume and reinvigorate the agenda of the Conference.

The universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty is a priority for comprehensively addressing the unregulated arms trade and thereby curbing its negative effects on global peace and stability. Multiple and serious violations of the main objective of the Treaty continue to directly affect the civilian population, especially those in situations of armed conflict. Illicit transfers to conflict zones should cease and those who do not comply with regulations should be called to account for their irresponsible actions.

In that vein, there is much to do in terms of adequately addressing the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. 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 gave us the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the implementation of the Programme and its complementary elements, such as the inclusion of ammunition in the Programme of Action with a view to its effective implementation. Although progress has been made in that area, we still have a lot of ground to cover, such as the acknowledgement that there must be greater controls on supply and demand and greater control over access to small arms and light weapons by civilians. With respect to cluster munitions, we condemn their use by any actor and in any circumstance.

We believe that peace and security call for more than arms control. Costa Rica will continue to insist that security doctrines based on strictly military paradigms need to evolve into those that are focused on the consideration of people and are primarily based on the promotion of and respect for the rule of law and on the paradigms of sustainable development and human security.

We call for efforts to be focused on the prevention of conflicts. We must also bolster the multilateral system and foster negotiations and dialogue on international disarmament. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, whose approach coincides with the aforementioned objectives.

Ms. Çalışkan (Turkey): I would like to join others in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I would also like to express our delegation's determination to fully support and contribute to the work of the First Committee.

We are again meeting at a time of ever-increasing risks. Unfortunately, trust among Member States has been seriously eroded, there is entrenched division on how to proceed towards nuclear disarmament and the use of chemical weapons has reappeared, with no accountability. Despite challenges, our collective endeavour is to find ways to advance disarmament, while taking different views into account.

Critical developments were witnessed in the nuclear cluster last year. Any act against the international non-proliferation regime should be clearly countered and positive steps should be welcomed. In that respect, while

waiting for concrete steps towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, we welcome the inter-Korean talks and the dialogue between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We sincerely hope that this historic opportunity will bring full and verifiable denuclearization and lasting peace to the Korean peninsula. That will be instrumental in achieving regional and international security.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is one of the foremost achievements of multilateral diplomacy. All reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), mandated to monitor the implementation of the deal in accordance with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), confirm Iran's compliance with the deal. The JCPOA should be preserved and implemented fully and without interruption, in a transparent manner and under the monitoring of the IAEA.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Unfortunately, a consensus outcome was not possible at the latest Review Conference. We should use the opportunity of the upcoming Review Conference in 2020. We need progress on the 2010 NPT action plan and on the conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is our shared goal. However, there is no short cut to that process, and efforts should be realistic and actively involve nuclear-weapon States. We are ready to work on rebuilding confidence with our Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative partners. We echo the calls made in this room for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the commencement of the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in Geneva and nuclear-disarmament verification.

The use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and a violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and relevant Security Council resolutions. It is difficult to accept the fact that the use of those substances has now become daily news. We regret that the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism on chemical-weapons use in Syria was not extended last year. The firm and wide rejection of impunity

for the use of chemical weapons has led to the fourth special session of the Conference of States Parties to the CWC, when the Secretariat was called upon to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Turkey has strongly supported that initiative at The Hague. Still, that development does not exempt the Security Council from its primary duty to unite and find a solution to that matter. The upcoming Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, to be held next month, will provide an opportunity to take stock of the current situation and strengthen the implementation of the Convention.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is the main framework regarding the use of those substances. Although the outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention in 2016 was not satisfactory, we are pleased that the Meeting of States Parties in December last year resulted in a new programme of work during the intersessional period. In that context, we support the timely submission of voluntary confidence-building reports by all States parties to the Convention.

Turkey has the honour to be the last President of the Conference on Disarmament this year. In accordance with the importance that we attach to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, we have conducted negotiations in a responsible and transparent manner, with a view to reaching consensus on both the report of the Conference (A/73/27) and the resolution on the report. The draft resolution on the report will be presented to the Committee.

There is also ample room to advance our work in the field of conventional weapons. Every year more than 500,000 people are killed by small arms and light weapons. We welcome the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) achieved 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. We are committed to the effective implementation and strengthening of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Arms Trade Treaty is also an important instrument in that area.

We are committed to the peaceful use of outer space. We welcome the inclusion of outer space as an agenda

item in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the creation of a Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. We would like to announce that the preparations to establish a Turkish space agency are also under way.

In this environment, it is necessary to return to a cooperation-based security understanding. In that respect, our deliberations here should focus on ways to find common ground, with a sincere effort to understand each other and to compromise. Upholding the existing treaties, agreements and Security Council resolutions remains a key aspect. On this occasion, we also welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General on bringing the disarmament agenda to the forefront and look forward to assisting him in those efforts.

Mr. Paudyal (Nepal): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

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).

Nepal's unwavering commitment to disarmament and international peace and security emanates from the norms of world peace that are enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal and form the basis of our foreign policy. We believe that only strengthened norms of world peace can ensure time-bound, general and complete disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons. Nepal believes that the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction is against the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian, human rights and environmental law.

Nuclear weapons, in particular, are the source of constant security dilemmas and are not effective deterrents. Therefore, they should not form part of the security doctrine of any State. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use. Until such elimination, the international community should develop legally binding international assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. Moreover, the nuclear-weapon States should respect the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and

verifiability of nuclear weapons, in order to achieve their time-bound and total elimination.

We believe that the early conclusion of the fissile material cut-off treaty will give true meaning to nuclear-disarmament efforts. Establishing and maintaining the sanctity of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world could complement non-proliferation efforts.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an encouraging achievement. Nepal supported the Treaty during its adoption and was a subsequent signatory. We are now initiating internal legal and constitutional processes for the ratification of the Treaty. We call upon all Member States to sign and ratify the Treaty to ensure its early entry into force.

While the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention is a notable achievement, we must consistently work towards universal adherence to it. We hope that the fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, to be held next month, will be an important opportunity to further strengthen the treaty regime and reinforce its compliance.

In the light of rapid biological and technological advancements, Nepal recognizes the importance of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. There is an urgent need for a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding institutional mechanism to comprehensively implement the treaty provisions and tackle the issue of biological threats.

Nepal welcomes the outcome of the third 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. Specific acknowledgment in the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) of the link between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the Programme of Action is a welcome development.

Technology has been a powerful agent of change and transformation. At the same time, human control over new and automated technology has become even more important for international peace and security. The weaponization of drones, 3-D printers, artificial intelligence, automated robots and cyberspace pose a serious threat to humankind. The misuse of technological advancements is bound to raise serious

ethical and moral questions. It calls for sound regulatory frameworks at the national and international levels and the need to promote responsible behaviour among States and non-State actors.

Nepal believes that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes only and kept absolutely free of weapons and an arms race. An atmosphere of trust and security must be preserved on the issue of outer space through the transparency of activities and confidence-building measures. Nepal also believes that women, youth, civil society and the private sector have important roles to play in spreading awareness in support of disarmament.

Nepal recognizes the value of the regional disarmament process in complementing global efforts. United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament can play an important role in promoting nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels. Regional centres should also be encouraged to share good practices and lessons learned among themselves.

As in previous years, Nepal will submit a draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific during this session of the Committee. We would appreciate the continued support of all delegations for the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus. We also request all traditional sponsors and other delegations to kindly co-sponsor the draft resolution. Moreover, Nepal also echoes the Secretary-General's call on countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations, as well as to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, Nepal welcomes the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, in the hope that it will provide a renewed impetus for disarmament. We hope that its implementation plan will make the disarmament agenda a priority of the United Nations. We believe that the Agenda will be able to reinvigorate dialogue and negotiations on international disarmament. However, such a dialogue should not be a repetition of positions, as in the past; rather, it should be genuine dialogue, in order to pursue disarmament and non-proliferation, build confidence towards eliminating existential threats to humankind, build a safer and more secure world, prevent the weaponization

of new technology and outer space and leave a secure world for our posterity.

Mr. Bah (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to express to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau the sincere congratulations of the Guinean delegation on your election to steer the work of the First Committee. We assure you of our full support.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on her powerful statement to the Committee.

The Guinean delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.2). However, we would like to make additional remarks in our national capacity.

Our deliberations are taking place against an international backdrop marked by progress in conventional-arms control and the desire to further strengthen international cooperation, in order to find adequate responses to global challenges, despite the lethargy of our main disarmament mechanism, the Conference on Disarmament.

The commitment of the Guinean authorities to disarmament and non-proliferation is a strategic choice that demonstrates their strong commitment to independence, peace and security. Faithful to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, Guinea is a State party to the relevant international instruments concerning weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, it advocates the promotion of multilateralism for general and complete disarmament, in particular for irreversible, transparent and verifiable nuclear disarmament.

We are convinced that nuclear weapons, and weapons of mass destruction in general, cannot guarantee international security and stability. On the contrary, their existence constitutes a permanent threat to international peace and security, which weighs, in particular, on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Their elimination must therefore be the focus of our concerns, given their consequences for humankind and the environment.

Guinea is in favour of launching negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for the production of weapons and other nuclear explosives in the build-up to the 2020 Review Conference of

the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Guinea believes that the NPT remains the cornerstone of disarmament and, as such, its universalization can guarantee international peace and security.

Like countries that have signed or ratified international instruments on weapons of mass destruction, Guinea, as a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), took part in the work of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held from 20 to 24 August in Tokyo. I wish now to thank the ATT secretariat and the Japanese authorities, who spared no effort in ensuring the success of that important meeting.

My delegation welcomes the positive results achieved, including the adoption of the final report containing the decisions and recommendations resulting from the work of the Conference. We reiterate the will of the Guinean authorities to implement in an effective manner the ATT, as well as all relevant legal instruments, and are confident that the next Conference of States Parties, to be held in Geneva, will be an opportunity for them to reaffirm their political commitment to the effective implementation of the ATT and its universalization.

Guinea is already taking legislative, administrative and practical measures to prevent and combat the illicit trade in arms and small arms through responsible arms transfers aimed at reducing human suffering and disasters. With the technical and financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, from 19 to 21 September, in Conakry, we organized a regional seminar for West African parliamentarians who manage defence and security issues on the contribution of legislation to the implementation of the ATT in the Economic Community of West African States region. We must therefore ensure that arms transfers and ammunition do not end up in the hands of non-State actors that then use them to commit war crimes or serious violations of international human rights law.

The worrying situation currently prevailing in the Sahel-Saharan region, as a result of the illicit trafficking of arms and the proliferation of networks and terrorist groups, calls for States to strengthen cooperation on the basis of an inclusive approach. Guinea believes that subregional, regional and international cooperation are an essential lever in the fight against the irresponsible flow and trafficking of arms and ammunition. In this

vein, Guinea supports the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Tracing Instrument.

With regard to the situation prevailing on the Korean peninsula, we welcome the positive developments that are marked by the Singapore summit and the thaw in relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. We call for the strengthening of diplomatic efforts towards the denuclearization and stabilization of the entire region.

In the face of all the pressure aggravating nuclear risks, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, which focuses on the issues of non-proliferation, disarmament and international peace and security. Peace and disarmament are a very precious common good. We must demonstrate the political will to overcome our political and strategic differences, with a view to building a nuclear-weapon-free world and leaving the arms race behind, for the benefit of the fight against poverty, pandemics and environmental degradation.

Mr. González (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau, and express my delegation's support for the successful completion of the work entrusted to us. It is particularly pleasant for me to greet my colleagues from the disarmament field and my many friends in this room.

As the President of my country stated on 26 September before the General Assembly,

"Today more than ever, the world needs cooperation and multilateralism. It is time to come together and not to isolate ourselves. It is time to make [...] cooperation the path of shared opportunities" (*A/73/PV.8, pp. 24-25*).

However, for cooperation and multilateralism to work, we need political will and an intention to transform the implementation of international legal instruments on disarmament, non-proliferation and international security.

The control of conventional weapons is crucial to preventing their illicit trade. It must be recalled that conventional weapons, rather than weapons of mass destruction, cause the greatest number of victims in our countries. All measures and actions taken to fight

the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are of the utmost importance to my country, the region and the world, as they help to ensure that weapons do not reach people or illegal groups that pose a threat to international peace and security and undermine the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16.

We are convinced that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a central tool for the international disarmament and arms-control regimes, and we highlight the results achieved at the third Review Conference of the Programme, in June. We believe that practical and concrete actions are necessary in order to achieve results in the area. With regard to the Arms Trade Treaty, our internal ratification process is ongoing, and we hope to conclude it as soon as possible.

Year after year, together with South Africa and Japan, we have submitted the draft resolution entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (A/C.1/73/L.63). I take this opportunity to thank all the States represented here for the support over the years that has enabled the text to be adopted by consensus. We hope that this tradition will be upheld at this session.

Colombia is taking comprehensive action to address mines, including education on their risks, the task of land clearance, assistance to victims and the backing of development projects in affected communities. In this regard, we reaffirm our solid commitment to the pillars of the Ottawa Convention, which is guided by a humanitarian approach and places the victims of such devices at the centre of its actions.

With regard to improvised explosive devices, we have developed multiple initiatives to counteract their indiscriminate effects. We have developed initiatives using two specific approaches. The first seeks to gain a greater understanding of improvised explosive devices, including the various types of devices developed by illegal armed groups, and the second, of the development of improvised explosive devices that are similar to anti-personnel mines and also used solely by unlawful groups. We believe that this issue must be approached with a comprehensive strategy that encompasses assistance to victims, development and the application of models for education on risk and on the use of differentiated and inclusive approaches.

Finally, and with respect to the recent approval of standards for the provision of improvised explosive devices, we believe that those should be applied according to the needs and realities of the affected countries, without duplicating efforts and, in particular, without ignoring the International Mine Action Standards.

We hope that the recent rapprochement between the Republic of Korea and the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea will make headway in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, thereby strengthening peace and security in the region and, by extension, the world. Until concrete progress is made in that area, it is the responsibility of all States to comply with the provisions adopted by the Security Council in its resolutions on the subject.

Colombia is a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. In accordance with the Treaty, the country has enforced an agreement for the application of safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As an additional sign of our commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation and the IAEA, we have an additional protocol to that agreement in force.

We believe that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a milestone in the history of nuclear disarmament and that its application will substantively contribute to international peace and security. Colombia stresses the urgent need to achieve the universalization of the NPT, the cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and reiterates its call on States that have not yet done so to sign the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. At this point, we wish to reiterate our support for the candidacy of Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi of Argentina for the post of President of the NPT 2020 Review Conference.

With regard to biological weapons, we support the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention, and we call on States that are not yet parties to the Convention to sign it. We believe that it is wise to resume negotiations and dialogue with a view to strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention in multilateral forums. We acknowledge the validity of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group created by the Special Conference of the Parties to the Convention to develop a verification protocol.

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

Thanks to the support of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States, it was possible to carry out a peer-review exercise in October 2017 between Chile and Colombia on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The objective of the exercise was to exchange each country's good practices, with a view to implementing the mandates of the resolution, identifying the persisting challenges to its effective implementation and establishing opportunities for cooperation between the two countries. In June, the final report of that important and significant exercise was presented to the 1540 Committee.

Finally, I would like to mention the disarmament machinery as the most appropriate forum for achieving effective nuclear disarmament. We deplore the deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament, which is why we believe that, in order to make the Conference's work more dynamic and not to undermine the will of States to maintain international peace and security, it is necessary to overcome the procedural obstacles that hinder work in this context.

Mrs. Pobee (Ghana): My delegation joins previous speakers in warmly congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We have confidence in your able leadership and wish to assure you of our support and cooperation.

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

Ghana remains convinced that employing multilateralism to address global disarmament and non-proliferation issues is vital for achieving a safer and more secure world, which is particularly critical in the light of the current political polarization and challenges to international peace and security, including the

increased threat of terrorism and the existential menace posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is a matter of concern to my delegation that the overall objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the foundation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, has eluded us for decades.

We are equally disappointed that, following the latest NPT Review Conference, in 2015, which concluded without a substantive outcome document, three Preparatory Committee meetings of States parties have so far not signalled any meaningful prospects for consensus outcomes in the forthcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference. Instead, the world is witnessing high investments of billions of dollars by some States in the development, modernization and acquisition of nuclear arsenals and other weapons of mass destruction, at the expense of global human suffering and sustainable development. Some States are also defining, redefining and reneging on their international obligations, as well as replacing existing commitments with vague security assurances, in order to maintain their stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

Notwithstanding those developments, we believe that the United Nations is indispensable in dealing with existing global challenges to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this context, we welcome the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, which has been fashioned to reposition disarmament and non-proliferation issues at the centre of United Nations activities. It is our expectation that the agenda will expedite progress and contribute to securing the world and future generations from the existential threats of nuclear arsenals and other weapons of mass destruction.

Ghana believes that a world free of nuclear weapons would be in our collective interest and that the only guarantee to ensuring the total elimination of such weapons is to completely prohibit them. For this reason, we are encouraged by the successful adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in July 2017 to complement and reinforce the NPT against the backdrop of humanitarian and environmental consequences of the use, testing and accidental detonation of nuclear weapons. Ghana signed the Treaty when it opened for signature and is making efforts towards its early ratification. We encourage States that have yet to sign the Treaty to do so without further delay.

We also acknowledge the significant contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the Treaty of Pelindaba, to the overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and renew our call on all stakeholders, particularly States in the Middle East, to continue to constructively engage in efforts to ensure that the region is also free of nuclear weapons.

We underline the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to the disarmament and international security regime and urge all States that have yet to sign and ratify the CTBT, particularly the remaining eight annex 2 States, to do so without further delay. Ghana further believes that the high-level meeting of the General Assembly held on 6 September to mark and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests will help to create public awareness about the effects of nuclear-test explosions and the need for their cessation. Similarly, the annual commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26 September, will enhance international commitment to the goal of achieving the noble aspiration of a more peaceful and secure world without nuclear weapons.

A verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) to address existing stockpiles and ban future production of all fissile materials remains an important step towards nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we call for the commencement of negotiations on a possible FMCT, ideally under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament. We encourage all States to continue to support programmes and activities that advance the aims and objectives of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions and prevent the non-proliferation of such weapons.

The uncontrolled flow and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons continues to disrupt communities around the world and pose a considerable threat to international security. The scale of harm, havoc and instability caused by illicit transfer, excessive accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, particularly in Africa, cannot be underestimated. For this reason, we welcome the successful outcome 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, held in New York in June. We are encouraged that, despite the protracted nature of the negotiation process, the third Review Conference yielded several positive developments and

adopted an outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex), which, for the first time, included references to ammunition, gender-based violence, gender equality in participation in disarmament processes, and sustainable development.

We also acknowledge the contribution of the Arms Trade Treaty since its entry into force and the successful convening of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, held in Tokyo in August. We reiterate the need for the necessary technical, financial and material assistance to be extended to developing countries to fulfil and implement obligations set forth in the Treaty and further urge non-State parties to consider signing the Treaty to achieve its universalization.

The increasing dependence of societies on space-based platforms and satellites for human endeavour in the twenty-first century appears threatened by a new form of colonial competition and the possible damage that self-seeking exploitation might cause. This is a matter of international security, and we call for renewed focus on ensuring safety in outer space.

In conclusion, Ghana looks forward to supporting new and innovative approaches that can bridge our differences and build confidence and transparency in the pursuit of general and complete disarmament. We also encourage further positive engagements, negotiations in good faith and the implementation of all agreed measures and commitments by all stakeholders.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the work of the First Committee at its seventy-third session. I want to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support during our deliberations.

Eritrea fully aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and of Morocco on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.2). My delegation would like to stress the following points:

Seventy-three years ago the United Nations was established with the aim of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and ensuring justice and development for all. Yet peace and development remain elusive for humankind. This year, death, destruction and displacement caused by conflicts have continued unabated, despite the resolve of the international community to address their root

causes by enhancing conflict-resolution mechanisms. In Africa — from the East to the West and in the North — in the Middle East and on all continents, extremism and terrorism are spreading and continue to find fertile ground in instability and poverty.

Eritrea believes that the international security architecture starts at the regional level. Achieving peace and security in any region necessitates meaningful cooperation and engagement among countries of a region to address the roots of the twin evils of insecurity and poverty. This requires a multilateral regional conflict-resolution mechanism that organically evolves to address the particular challenges of the region. A wounded region — a region whose main components view security in a non-inclusive way — can hardly provide security for its citizens or contribute to global peace and security. Worse, instability provides fertile grounds for terrorists and other transnational organized crimes and becomes a source of displacement.

The Horn of Africa region has been described as conflict-ravaged, volatile, hostile and underdeveloped, owing to conflicts and international interventions. In the past half-century, the citizens of the Horn of Africa have endured conflict, extreme poverty and displacement within and beyond their countries of origin. This has been the story of the Horn of Africa for the past two decades.

Since June, the countries of the region have shown a determination to change the story of their neighbourhood. As a result, the region is experiencing significant and rapid positive developments. The countries of the region are making remarkable progress by ending a distorted situation in a region marked by conflicts and zero-sum competition. The new phase is allowing the countries of the region to make their neighbourhood peaceful and cooperative. Eritrea has always believed in the shared destiny of the people of Horn of Africa; they can only progress together.

Through their bilateral and trilateral agreements, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia have shown their determination to seize the emerging historic opportunity to forge closer political cooperation and accelerate economic integration. Moreover, the leaders of Eritrea and Djibouti met in Saudi Arabia and agreed to establish a new chapter of cooperation and good-neighbourliness.

Even though some progress has been made in the right direction, the world is still witnessing setbacks in

achieving nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which is the most critical step for global disarmament and non-proliferation. Peace and security are not threatened by nuclear weapons alone. Other weapons, such as illicit small arms and light weapons, and their proliferation, transfer and circulation are also known to have destabilizing effects across several countries and regions. Multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, provide a solid basis for addressing disarmament and peace and security issues. In this regard, Eritrea reiterates its commitment to the work of disarmament and international security, as nuclear disarmament can be achieved only on a multilateral basis.

The lack of meaningful progress in the field of nuclear disarmament is a concern. Eritrea believes that the only guarantee that humankind has against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is through the total and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons.

Eritrea firmly believes that legally binding nuclear negative security assurances, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty are critical steps towards general and complete nuclear disarmament. Eritrea attaches great importance to the role played by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in maintaining international peace and security. Eritrea reiterates its position on the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which should be fully guaranteed and respected without compromising the goals and objectives of the NPT.

Eritrea wishes to underscore the full observance of all principles and norms of international law, including the full respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is vital that all nations, peoples and political and social forces that stand for peace, independence, international law, justice, equity and sustainable development forge a common front, in order to defend the time-tested principles of equal sovereignty of nations, respect for territorial integrity, peaceful coexistence, the right of nations to choose their social and economic path of development, respect for the dignity and rights of citizens and migrants and fidelity to the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Let me conclude by reiterating that disarmament benefits humankind because it not only eliminates threats to peace and security, but it also prevents the diversion of scarce material and financial resources away from developmental efforts.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I also congratulate the members of the Bureau. We assure you of my delegation's full support.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

My country attaches great importance to disarmament issues and the promotion of international peace and security through our active involvement in the deliberations on these issues and our support for the various related United Nations resolutions and international treaties and conventions. We are highly aware of the threat to international peace and security posed by the production and accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as other kinds of weapons, which can spread panic among humankind as a whole and result in diseases and epidemics.

We note that increased global military expenditure is exponentially accelerating at a time when hundreds of millions of people are living in abject poverty and suffering from food and water insecurity, without shelter or access to education. Those expended funds should be redirected to respond to humanitarian needs instead of being spent on weapons, and the Committee's role in transforming our world should not be questioned. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes for the first time an international master plan, if broadly implemented in an urgent and effective manner by funding development, would build peaceful and inclusive societies capable of putting an end to such poverty. The First Committee itself has a crucial role to play in implementing that plan. The issues of disarmament, peace, security, development and human rights are all intertwined. Ultimately there can be no sustainable peace without sustainable development or sustainable development without sustainable peace.

Despite the full commitment to ensuring the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we were once again

disappointed, as were other delegations, at the outcome of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Certain States prevented the Conference from reaching an outcome document, due to the inclusion of a single paragraph that called for the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This raises concerns regarding the seriousness of those countries, in view of the fact that the 1995 Review Conference called for the establishment of such a zone, thereby forming the basis for the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is an irrevocable precondition to ensuring stability in the region and is the basis for building trust. We therefore call for the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in the region and insist on the need to ensure that nuclear facilities and all nuclear activities are subject to inspection, without discrimination, pursuant to the NPT safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We welcome the efforts of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its temporary Technical Secretariat to establish all elements of the Treaty's verification regime. We also welcome the progress achieved in establishing the International Monitoring System, as well as the satisfactory performance of the International Data Centre, which has proved its ability to provide independent and credible means to ensure compliance with the Treaty. In that context, we urge all countries that have not yet signed or ratified the NPT to do so without delay. We also urge the eight countries that have not signed and ratified the CTBT to promptly do so in order for it to enter into force.

Millions of people are currently suffering in many places from the negative repercussions of destructive armed conflicts, including in my country. Heavy conventional weapons destroy cities and infrastructure, while small arms and light weapons kill thousands of people. The illicit trade in these weapons leads to widespread human suffering, increases crime, weakens economies, curbs development and undermines political stability. We must build on the current international momentum to prevent, eliminate and fight the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as per 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 (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex).

The effects of chemical and biological weapons are not limited to a particular moment in time or to a specific location. These weapons have appalling consequences for the environment and for humankind. Accordingly, my country has effectively contributed to achieving the goal of eliminating them. It is an active member of the relevant conventions and has met all its commitments related to the Chemical Weapons Convention. In cooperation with the secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and other friendly countries, we have dismantled all our chemical stockpiles. Indeed, on 23 November 2017, the elimination of all our chemical precursors was confirmed by the secretariat of the Organization. We call on other countries to follow suit as soon as possible. As for the Biological Weapons Convention, the National Committee on Biosafety and Bioethics, which is a national contact point, cooperates with the Treaty Implementation Support Unit to promote biorisks management at the national level.

My delegation stresses the vital role played by the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral international forum on disarmament, pursuant to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In this regard, we call for intensified efforts to reach consensus on starting serious negotiations leading to the adoption of global conventions on the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the manufacture, testing, stockpiling, transferring, use or threat of use of those weapons and ultimately eliminating them under strict and effective international control, in a verifiable manner according to a specific timetable.

The success of the Conference on Disarmament undoubtedly depends on our collective and consensual ability to reach the optimal formulas to promote the fundamental balance upon which the Conference was established. The aim is to find the right solutions for addressing the grave challenges of complete and general disarmament while achieving a stable and peaceful world.

In conclusion, Libya stresses once again that it is dedicated to meeting its commitments under international instruments on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. We will spare no effort in effectively cooperating at the international, bilateral and multilateral levels to reach this goal. Moreover, we are convinced that international cooperation and serious political will are the bases for achieving the

goals of disarmament, harnessing material capabilities and using enormous scientific and technical developments to establish a safe and prosperous world for future generations. We hope that this the First Committee will be able at this session to adopt practical recommendations that contribute to achieving international peace and security.

Mr. Khoo (Singapore): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the work of the First Committee at this session.

Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.2).

This year, we commemorate the centenary of Mr. Nelson Mandela's birth. Just a few weeks ago, our leaders gathered to pay tribute to the ideals embodied by Mr. Mandela, in particular his dedication to the service of humankind, including in the field of disarmament (see A/73/PV.4). It is worth recalling what Mr. Mandela said 20 years ago:

"We must ask the question, which might sound naive to those who have elaborate sophisticated arguments to justify their refusal to eliminate these terrible and terrifying weapons of mass destruction — why do they need them, anyway?" (A/53/PV.7, p.14)

Since then, there has been limited progress and the question posed by Mr. Mandela remains unanswered.

During the general debate last year, we expressed grave concern over the missile launches and nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see A/C.1/72/PV.7). We are pleased that tensions on the Korean peninsula have been significantly reduced, and we welcome the positive developments there. Singapore was honoured to make a small, concrete contribution by hosting the summit between President Trump and Chairman Kim earlier this year. We welcome the continued dialogue among the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all concerned parties to take concrete steps towards the realization of lasting peace and stability on a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

We were also encouraged that Tuvalu and Thailand signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), respectively. With Thailand's ratification, all ASEAN member States are States

parties to the CTBT, which demonstrates South-East Asia's unwavering commitment to efforts towards nuclear disarmament. The same commitment is enshrined in the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), which Singapore resolutely supports. We will continue our efforts with nuclear-weapon States to resolve outstanding issues and work towards the collective signing and ratification by nuclear-weapon States, without reservations, of the protocol to the SEANWFZ.

Singapore reaffirms its support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We are pleased that Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, was elected Chair of the 2019 Preparatory Committee. We are confident that, under his able leadership, we will make substantive headway prior to the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

While nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons should certainly be one of our foremost priorities, disarmament efforts encompass more than that. We are therefore pleased that the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, launched in May, provides a comprehensive framework for reinvigorating dialogue and negotiations on international disarmament, and we take note of the launch of the initial implementation plan just last week. I would like to focus on three specific areas of the agenda.

First, advances in science and technology have given rise to a rapid digital transformation and a growing reliance on cyberspace in our everyday lives. Inevitably, we have become more susceptible to cyberattacks. In July, one of Singapore's health databases was compromised by a well-planned, deliberate and targeted cyberattack. A country's state of preparedness does not guarantee it immunity from cyberattacks. Singapore welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to facilitating dialogue among Member States and to foster a culture of accountability and adherence to norms, rules and principles for responsible behaviour in cyberspace. We believe that the United Nations has an integral role to play. We support the continued work of the United Nations, including the re-establishment of an inclusive and consultative Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). We will elaborate on this topic during the relevant thematic debate.

Secondly, the Secretary-General's agenda highlights that the norms against chemical weapons have been challenged in recent years by the repeated use of chemical weapons. Singapore condemns the use of chemical weapons by any party under any circumstances, as it constitutes a grave violation of international law. As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Singapore takes its international obligations seriously. We support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and call for its work to be carried out in a comprehensive, objective and impartial manner.

Thirdly, Singapore firmly believes that outer space should remain a peaceful global commons. An arms race in outer space should be prevented at all costs. Singapore welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to deepening engagement on the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and on the elaboration of effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also welcome the timely deliberations within the United Nations Disarmament Commission and within the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. We look forward to the open-ended, intersessional and informal consultative meeting between the Chair of the GGE and Member States in January 2019, and remain of the view that the GGE should be transparent, inclusive and broadly focused.

Permit me to conclude with another quotation from Mr. Mandela, who said, "It always seems impossible until it is done." The current prognosis may seem bleak, but we need to renew our efforts to find common ground. Singapore will continue to constructively work with all parties to reach a successful outcome.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the First Committee. I believe that the Committee will achieve significant successes under your able leadership.

As recognized by the world, there has been a fresh trend towards peace and stability on the Korean peninsula this year, which has changed the direction and development of the situation. With a firm determination and strong will to open up a new chapter in Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relations, Comrade Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea, held a historic summit with Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, in Singapore, on 12 June.

Amid the unparalleled interest and expectations of the entire world, a joint statement was adopted at the Singapore summit specifying the commitments of both sides to joining efforts to establish new Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relations, building a lasting and durable peace regime and working towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The global significance of the Singapore summit lies in its demonstration that even countries with decades-long hostile relations can resolve issues concerning regional and world peace and security through dialogue and negotiation.

A fundamental change in the inter-Korean relations, launched by Chairman Kim Jong Un's New Year address, has developed into exchanges and cooperation in various fields, including politics, sports, culture and others, and has led to three rounds of historic inter-Korean summit talks and the adoption of the Panmunjom Declaration and of the Pyongyang Joint Declaration, in September.

As a result, the international community's concern over the situation on the Korean peninsula has transformed into applause, support and welcome. This epochal change, centred around the Korean peninsula, has had a positive impact across the world. Many countries supported and welcomed the atmosphere of détente created on the Korean peninsula, thanks to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's proactive initiative and efforts, as a significant contribution to world peace and security, and have expressed their hope that such a trend of development will continue.

Ever since the Singapore summit, the attention of the international community has been focused on the follow-up steps intended to implement the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint statement. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea stands firm in its determination and commitment to implementing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint statement in a responsible and good-faith manner. Confidence-building is the key to the full implementation of the joint statement.

If one insisted on discussing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula without addressing deep-rooted distrust, it would not help to solve the issues. It is self-evident that denuclearization is possible

only when sufficient levels of confidence between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, which have had long and hostile relations for several decades, are achieved.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already taken the initiative of discontinuing nuclear and intercontinental ballistic-missile tests, while irreversibly dismantling its nuclear-test ground, in order to ensure transparency in the discontinuation of nuclear tests. Everything will go smoothly once the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States build mutual trust and feel comfortable with each other as they engage in the process of ending their long-standing and deep-rooted hostile relationship. It is necessary to work towards phased steps of action for improvement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relations and the realization of denuclearization on the Korean peninsula in due order.

The shortest way to solve the problem is to take a fresh, step-by-step approach by departing from old methods and resolving feasible issues one at a time, while giving priority to confidence-building. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains unchanged in its will to faithfully implement the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint statement in the spirit of the Singapore summit and will facilitate close contact and dialogue with the international community, in order to defend peace and security on the Korean peninsula and across the world.

Ms. Pylvänäinen (Finland): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you, Mr. Chair, of the full support of my delegation.

In addition to the statements made on behalf of the European Union and the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.2), allow me to highlight a few key issues from our national perspective.

"We are living in dangerous times." These are the opening words of the Secretary-General's *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. It is an assessment that is very easy to agree with. With increasing international tension and volatility, the backdrop to our meeting this year is indeed less than encouraging, which is why the Secretary-General's initiative is so important and timely. The Agenda for Disarmament is a call to action for the United Nations system, but also for us, the States Members of the United Nations. It should remind us all of why we are gathered

here and what our shared responsibility is — securing our common future, as the agenda puts it.

We particularly welcome the emphasis of the agenda on the links between security, disarmament and development. Nowhere are these clearer than in conventional-arms control. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development already clearly showed the contribution that disarmament and arms control can make to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Now it is time to ensure that this is reflected in our daily work at the United Nations and in our capitals.

Given the current security situation, our deliberations this year should be guided by one key consideration — how we can most effectively strengthen the international arms-control architecture and pave the way for concrete progress in the months ahead. In nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, our shared aim must be to support and strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). With the NPT review process well under way, we must look beyond our differences and focus on our common interests in reinforcing the Treaty. The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty should be an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to all three pillars of the Treaty and to commitments undertaken at previous Review Conferences, including, importantly, on its article VI.

Concrete steps in nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States will be crucial to reducing tensions and contributing to a successful review. Negative security assurances and transparency and confidence-building measures related to tactical nuclear weapons are some of the issues on which we believe progress is possible over the next two years.

The continued implementation of the New START Treaty and Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is of vital importance to international and European security. We call on the United States and Russia to extend the New START, as a matter of priority.

The prevention of nuclear terrorism, if anything, is a challenge that we need to tackle together. Finland is currently responsible for the international coordination of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), a network of 88 countries and six international organizations that work together to prevent, detect and respond to nuclear threats. Russia and the United States are Chairs of the initiative, which focuses on hands-on and practical cooperation among national authorities

working on nuclear security. I invite Committee members to join us for a side event on the GICNT on Wednesday, 24 October.

Regarding chemical weapons, our most urgent priority is to preserve the integrity of the norm against the use of chemical weapons and to ensure that those that violate it are held to account. The decision on attribution taken at the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in June, marked an important milestone. Reinforcing the capacity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons is the first important step in combating impunity for those crimes, which we have witnessed time and again over the past months and years in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

Going forward, we must ensure that the OPCW has the support and resources needed to implement that decision. However, even with the OPCW's new capacities, final responsibility for achieving real accountability still rests with the Security Council. We are yet to see the Council fully shoulder that responsibility.

Raising the profile of conventional arms is one of the merits of the Secretary-General's agenda. Those are the real weapons of mass destruction, causing by far the most victims, but they are often overshadowed in international discussions. Yet conventional arms are also an area where even small investments can bring immediate results and where real progress is possible, with profound benefits for the lives of civilians. Regarding conventional arms, our task is clear: to ensure the effective implementation of commitments made under the different instruments on the matter. In that regard, international assistance is often essential.

Four years after its entry into force, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has already proved its worth. Promoting national implementation and the universalization of the Treaty remain key priorities. The ATT has a pioneering role with regard to gender-based violence. We are very pleased that the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in June also clearly highlighted, for the first time, the importance of combating gender-based violence and mainstreaming gender in all

implementation efforts. That is an important example to follow not only in the area of conventional weapons but also for all other arms-control instruments.

In conclusion, Finland has actively engaged in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The discussions of the GGE have been extremely useful in bringing countries closer to a common understanding of the risks and benefits related to that emerging technology. Despite divergent views on the issue, all parties agree that any weapon system, whether autonomous or not, must be used only in accordance with international humanitarian law. That is the consensus that we should now build upon. We look forward to continued deliberations in the GGE format next year. Meanwhile, we do not see merit in attempting to ban something that we have not yet been able to adequately define. Instead, an agreed set of principles or a political declaration would seem the best way forward.

With our overall objective in mind, namely, strengthening the rules-based international system and the institutions that work to uphold it, we look forward to working with you, Sir, and all delegations to make this session a success.

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

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the United States Administration mentioned in her statement yesterday the importance of upholding international and humanitarian norms (see A/C.1/73/PV.4). However, it seems that she deliberately forgot that the United States is the one that has used weapons of mass destruction whether nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, which is well known to the Committee. Her country established 700 military bases around the world, most of which are equipped with nuclear weapons. As the Committee is aware, that is in violation of international conventions, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Let us look at the difference from the principles set out by United States President Woodrow Wilson that led to the establishment of the League of Nations following the First World War. Those principles were against waging wars and upheld the right of people to self-determination, unlike those of the current Administration, which seek to create confrontational

wars across the world. That begs the following questions. When will the United States proclaim its guilt over the invasion and destruction of Iraq, Libya and Syria? Moreover, how many millions of innocent people were killed by United States weapons in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Palestine, Latin America, Grenada, El Salvador, Panama, Nicaragua and Cuba? It also seems that representatives of the United States Administration deliberately forget that their country fully supported the apartheid regime in South Africa for a long time.

We accept constructive criticism, but definitely not from the delegation of the United States Administration. I would like to reiterate that the United States, through its current and former Administrations, facilitated the transfer of toxic chemicals to terrorists in Syria from abroad and also trained terrorists to use them in neighbouring countries, in particular Turkey and Syrian territories. Of course, we should not forget the illegal United States presence on parts of the Syrian territories.

I am compelled to remind the representative of France of the fact that his country has not adhered to the rules of international and humanitarian law or international conventions. France may have forgotten its nuclear explosions in the Polynesian archipelago and the Algerian desert, during which Algerians were tied to posts while they were alive. In that regard, I would like to say to the representative of France that the testimonies of United States citizens are questionable, but French policies are a key element in causing crises, particularly in my country. France therefore cannot be the defendant and the judge at the same time. It cannot claim to be a member of the fire brigade while being fond of arson. The representative of France may also have forgotten the involvement of the former French Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius, in the transfer of chemical weapons to terrorists in Syria.

Regarding the false allegations made by the representative of the Saudi regime, there is an Arab proverb that says that wrongdoers should not brag about their sins. I would like to say to him that his country abducted a Prime Minister, detained three quarters of the Saudi regime and recently seized a former Saudi agent in Turkey, while the United States exploits his country's resources. His country financed terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and provided terrorist groups in Syria with toxic chemicals to be used against civilians and military personnel. His country is also

waging a bloody war in Yemen and promoting the spread of terrorism across the world.

Turkey is the main actor behind the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Terrorists were and continue to be trained on Turkish territory in mixing and using toxic chemicals. Turkey facilitates the transfer of toxic chemical weapons to terrorists across the border.

With respect to the reference by certain delegations to the resolution adopted during the Special Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), held in The Hague, I would like to note the following. That resolution runs counter to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and sets a dangerous precedent in the international order because giving a technical organization, which should be concerned with scientific and technological issues, the authority to conduct criminal and legal investigations falls beyond its purview with regard to determining liability for using chemical weapons. That is a clear violation of the competence of the international body that maintains international peace and security, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Syrian Arab Republic also notes other gross violations in that resolution. We underscore that the adoption of the resolution was supported by less than half of the States members of the OPCW, which begs real questions about its legal legitimacy.

In that respect, we warn that the Western States that supported the adoption of that resolution through enticement and intimidation will take advantage of it and wage hostilities against countries that oppose their policies and hegemony. We believe that the resolution will only add new complications to the work of the OPCW, undermine its performance and increase divisions among its member States, leading to further polarization within the Organization. For those reasons, the resolution cannot be implemented in practice.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): Yesterday the Russian representative told us a story (see A/C.1/73/PV.4). Let me tell those present some facts. In March, two Russian nationals — officers of the Russian military intelligence service — travelled to the United Kingdom to carry out an assassination attempt in the city of Salisbury. That despicable, brazen and reckless act left four people fighting for their lives and one innocent woman dead.

After a careful investigation by the police, the evidence has led the Crown Prosecution Service to bring charges against the two Russian nationals. The police have no other line of inquiry. The European Union and a large number of other countries have also concluded that it is highly likely that the Russian State is responsible for that act and that there is no plausible alternative explanation.

Those are the facts. The Russian representative's outrageous allegations made here yesterday show no regard for the truth or respect for the dignity of this forum. They are a desperate fabrication, in keeping with the Russian State's concerted and blatant disinformation campaign. It will fool no one.

Mr. Ghaniei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today the representative of Saudi Arabia once again made baseless allegations against my country. He accused Iran of transferring ballistic missiles to Yemen. That is clearly a fabrication to conceal the widespread systematic war crimes that the country is committing in Yemen. He failed to recall the huge military expenditure of his own country. For years, Saudi Arabia was ranked as the world's third largest military spender. It is also by far the largest military spender in the region and a giant importer of beautiful American weapons — the same weapons that are used to kill Yemeni children in schools and on school buses and to target religious and medical sides, with a high number of civilian casualties.

Saudi Arabia spends huge amounts of money to silence the media, but it needs to understand that it cannot change the truth about its brutalities and violations of international law in Yemen and elsewhere. It cannot buy security with its petrodollars and it cannot reject the political solution in Yemen forever.

The Saudi representative also did not mention that, in addition to Israel, the only one whose name is synonymous with terrorism is Saudi Arabia. It is Saudi Arabia that exports extremism and trains, finances and arms terrorists. It is the biggest exporter of terrorism in the region and a large number of foreign terrorist fighters are its citizens.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I requested to exercise my right of reply to respond to the charges that were levelled against my country yesterday by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran (see A/C.1/73/PV.4). The representative said that the United States was addicted to withdrawing from international institutions. That is just a farcical charge and not

worthy of much more of a response. As we have seen, what Iran has been trying to do is to create an image of itself as a peace-loving country of moderation that champions international law. The truth is something completely different.

Speaking of an addiction, it is Iran that has an addiction to fomenting terrorism around the world, and I just want to provide a few examples of that. In 2012, four Quds Force operatives entered Turkey to attack Israeli targets, but the attack was thankfully disrupted by Turkish authorities. In that same year, Lebanese Hizbullah — one of the regime's most loyal proxies — bombed a bus in Bulgaria carrying six Israeli tourists. Six people were killed, including the driver, and at least 32 were wounded. In 1992, Iran provided logistical support to Lebanese Hizbullah operatives who assassinated four Iranian Kurdish dissidents at a cafe in Berlin. But Iran's State-supported, lawless terror is not confined to Europe; it is global.

In 2013, three Iranian operatives were arrested in Nigeria for planning attacks against offices of the United States Agency for International Development, an Israeli business, a Jewish cultural centre and hotels frequented by Israelis and Americans. In 2012, two Quds Force operatives were arrested in Nairobi for planning bomb attacks against Western interests. Thirty-three pounds of explosive materials were found.

In South America, in Uruguay in 2015, a senior Iranian diplomat was expelled for planning an attack near the Israeli Embassy. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, Iran provided logistical support to two suicide-vehicle attacks, one in 1992 and then again in 1994. Those attacks killed a total of 114 people and wounded nearly 500, with the 1994 bombing being the deadliest terror attack in the history of Argentina.

In Kathmandu in 2013, an Iranian travelling on a fake Israeli passport was arrested for conducting surveillance of the Israeli Embassy. In New Delhi in 2012, the Quds Force directed a bomb attack against an Israeli diplomat. In Karachi in 2011, Iranian operatives assassinated a Saudi diplomat. Since 2006, Iran has provided the Taliban with a broad range of arms, including rocket-propelled grenades, mortar rounds, rockets and plastic explosives.

Iran has tried to carry out the same activities right here in North America. In 2011, the Quds Force supported a plan to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the United States. In August, the United States

arrested two alleged agents of Iran for conducting covert surveillance and intelligence-collection activities against Israeli and American targets here in the United States.

Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) requires that all Member States refrain from providing any form of support to entities involved in terrorist acts. Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) requires that all Member States prevent the direct or indirect supply of weapons to Lebanon by their nationals from their territories, with just a handful of exceptions. None of those exceptions has stopped Iran from arming Hizbullah in Lebanon. The export of arms from Iran is prohibited by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), and yet arms for the Houthis have been moved, in violation of that stipulation by the United Nations.

Between 2006 and 2010, the Security Council adopted six different resolutions governing Iran's nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. But between 2007 and 2015, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency issued no fewer than 33 reports detailing Iran's non-compliance with each of those resolutions. Security Council resolution 1929 (2010) stated that "Iran shall not undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons". But Iran conducted multiple ballistic-missile launches between 2010 and 2015, every one of them in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions. And even when, in connection with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action sanctions relief, the Security Council superseded that provision in resolution 2231 (2015), with a call to Iran not to undertake any activity related to such missiles, Iran's pace of missile activity, launches and tests did not diminish. Iran has conducted multiple ballistic-missile launches since 2016, when the deal was first implemented. Today Iran has the largest ballistic-missile force in the Middle East, with each of those missiles costing more than \$1 million. Iran is therefore in no position to point fingers at any State. Instead of making ridiculous charges against others, it should focus on treating its increasingly violent addiction to terrorism.

To respond briefly to the comments just made by the representative of Syria, it first goes without saying that it is understood that Syria has used chemical weapons against its own people, and that is not in question. It was interesting to hear the representative express his concerns about innocent civilians. It was his Government that repeatedly gassed its own

people — men, women and children. Syria is a major State sponsor of terrorism. Its word has no value or credibility. It is an outlaw State, and it will be held accountable for the crimes that it has committed against its own citizens.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to exercise my right of reply in response to the statement just made by the representative of Syria, who made a crude attempt to divert the First Committee's attention to a topic that has absolutely nothing to do with what we are concerned about here.

What we are concerned about are the repeated chemical attacks in Syria. What the Committee is concerned about is the fact that the Syrian regime is systematically and repeatedly violating all its international obligations. The list of violations is long and shocking, and we know about them all, including violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the 1925 Geneva Protocol, key elements of international humanitarian law and one Security Council resolution after another. Massacres using chemical weapons have continued in Syria since 2013. The Syrian regime's responsibility for such acts was demonstrated three times by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which each time was prevented from carrying out its mission once it had been clearly demonstrated that Syria was responsible. There is no point in distorting the facts. Disputing the evidence is a crude ploy to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes go unpunished. That is happening before our eyes as we commemorate the 100th anniversary this year of the end of the First World War, in which so many soldiers were gassed. Here in the First Committee we should denounce the immense risks of proliferation that Syria's transgressions present. That is of concern to us all, and the recent attacks in Kuala Lumpur, Iraq and the United Kingdom are testament to that.

With regard to the decision taken at the special session in The Hague of the Conference of States Parties to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the representative of Syria said that it was illegitimate and that Syria did not recognize it. But that decision was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the States parties and should be implemented with the force of law. We supported it, and I am surprised that the Syrian representative is disputing a decision that was arrived at in accordance with all the rules of multilateralism. It speaks volumes about the respect

that Syria has for the OPCW, which is doing so much to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Al Mutairi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is exercising its right of reply to respond to the statement by the representative of Iran. Iran has continued its destabilizing activities in our region and its support to the terrorist Houthi militias, which have fired more than 199 missiles at my country. Iran must act responsibly and stop interfering in the affairs of other States of the region and supporting terrorism.

With regard to the Iranian regime's allegations about my country with regard to Yemen, Saudi Arabia is a responsible State that abides by international laws and conventions and cooperates with the relevant specialized entities in addressing the issues. We are not afraid of our responsibilities. We reiterate our commitment to a political solution in Yemen, in accordance with the three relevant terms of reference, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the national dialogue and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia once again calls on the international community to seriously address the Iranian nuclear-weapon programme, Iran's ballistic missiles and its support for terrorism. We firmly believe that if we are to achieve peace and security in the Middle East Iran's expansionist and destructive policies must end. Iran must be a responsible State and cease its interference in the affairs of other countries of the region, as well as its support to the terrorist Houthi militias, which have fired numerous missiles at my country.

In response to the representative of the Syrian regime, I will start from where he started when he said that wrongdoers should not brag about their sins. It is ironic that he is accusing my country of violating international law while his country's forces are committing massacres that result in the deaths of hundreds of Syrian, mostly children, on a daily basis. There are more than half a million victims of the Syrian regime so far, and more than 2 million have been injured or permanently disabled. On top of that we have seen the displacement of more than 14 million people and wide destruction of infrastructure, hospitals and schools. The Syrian regime has used internationally prohibited weapons, thereby showing total disregard for all international laws and conventions, while completely

ignoring the ceasefire agreements reached at a number of international meetings. The representative of Syria is the last person who is qualified to speak about upholding human rights or the rights of citizens of other States. His Government respects no rights at all and has no regard for the thousands of dead and injured and the millions of the displaced who are victims of its regime.

Mr. Ghaniei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Iran's record in fighting terrorism in the region is perfectly clear. When invited by our neighbours, we hastened to help them fight terrorists who were created by the United States, as President Trump has said himself. The United States may choose to fund and support terrorists, and to transfer them from Syria to Afghanistan, for example, but we feel compelled to fight them. Since the United States has chosen to provide a completely fabricated list of incidents, we should provide a similar list of actual incidents all over the world that have been supported by the United States.

In response to the representative of Saudi Arabia, I have to say that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a Kingdom of terror where even journalists are not safe from its terrorist acts. The representative of Saudi Arabia is apparently misinformed about his country's behaviour, including its repeated refusal to engage meaningfully in any peace initiative since the war in Yemen began.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation condemns the intense campaign of disinformation and lies by France against my country, as well as its false allegations. France has participated wholeheartedly in the aggression against Syria and has close ties to the armed groups in my country, led by the terrorists of the Al-Nusra Front and Da'esh as well as other affiliated terrorist groups. It has armed terrorist groups in Syria with intelligence, equipment and ammunition, including toxic chemical weapons. I urge the representative of France to read *Les Chemins de Damas*, by Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot, which confirms that Laurent Fabius, the former Foreign Minister of France, was complicit in an incident in August 2013 in which chemical weapons were used in eastern Ghouta, near Damascus.

The reply of the representative of the Wahhabi Al Saud regime, which has sponsored takfiri ideology all over the world, was filled with hypocrisy and errors of fact in a desperate attempt to cover up the crimes of the Al Saud regime in Yemen, Iraq, Syria and

Afghanistan. The terrorism that the Al Saud regime supports has reached Nigeria and Western capitals as well. Incredibly, the Al Saud regime has helped to finance the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism by providing it with more than \$100 million while it continues to violate Security Council anti-terrorism resolutions by channelling billions of dollars to finance terrorist groups in Syria and other parts of the world with the aim of spreading its Wahhabi ideology, which foments hatred of other religions and calls for death and destruction. The Al Saud regime is founded on its oppression of the Saudi people, particularly in the eastern part of the country, where it has completely destroyed the city of Al-Awamiyah. Last year alone the regime beheaded more than 100 people by the sword, just as Da'esh has done. It is spending billions of dollars on arms and on providing terrorist groups with weapons instead of dedicating those resources to society's development.

I would like to remind the representative of the United States of the WikiLeaks documents that circulated in his country referring to classified communications in 2006, including a plan to topple the my country's Government. I urge him to read Hillary Clinton's memoir in which she admitted that it was United States Administrations that created Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and Al-Qaida. The United States and Saudi Arabia financed Al-Qaida to the tune of more than \$600 million in the 1980s. I also urge him to read the scores of books published on the subject in the United States and Europe, all of which discuss how political Islamist terrorism was used manipulatively against our Governments in the Arab world and the Middle East. Can anyone forget the events in Iraq that produced the scandal of the Iraqi occupation and the disasters that it led to in our region and in Iraq itself? Can we forget that the preceding United States Administration spent \$500 million to train 50 terrorists that it claimed would liberate Syria from the current regime, while instead 47 of those terrorists ended up joining the Al-Nusra Front and Da'esh using United States weapons?

The current United States Administration uses terrorist groups as part of its foreign policy. The United States is currently developing secret programmes in the area of biological weapons in more than 25 countries, not to mention the fact that to this day it has still not eliminated its stockpile of chemical weapons.

The Chair: I want to once again remind delegations to limit their second statements to five minutes. Five minutes is the same on all five continents.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I will just respond very briefly to the Iranian representative. His country's record on terrorism is very clear. I just gave a sample of some of the major terrorist events that Iran has been behind. I could continue, because the list is quite long. I could go back to the 1979 seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran and the taking of hostages for over several hundred days, which was a

gross violation of international law. I am prepared to do that. I wanted to make that very clear. With regard to the Syrian representative, I have nothing more to say about him. He is a joke.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I will also be brief in responding to the representative of Syria and in repudiating his deluded approach. France does not finance or support terrorism. We have been a victim of it, and we fight it everywhere with total determination.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.