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First Committee

23rd meeting

Monday, 4 November 2019, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))

In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Bonkougou (Burkina Faso), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

Action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items

The Acting Chair: Today we will be guided by the same procedure that I explained last Friday (see A/C.1/74/PV.22). I trust that all members have a copy of the ground rules for reference. If members do not, then I ask them to request a copy from the Secretariat. We will begin by hearing from the remaining delegations that requested the floor to explain their votes after the voting on draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”, as listed in informal paper No.1/Rev.3. Altogether we have 20 delegations waiting to take the floor in that regard, namely, the Republic of Korea, Egypt, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Belarus, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Pakistan, France, the United States, Switzerland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Austria, Syria, the Philippines, Japan, Singapore, India, Iran and Ecuador.

Thereafter the Committee will take up the draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 2, as listed in informal paper No. 1/Rev.3, and will then take up informal paper No. 2, which was circulated to delegations electronically. Delegations are kindly advised that action on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.55 has been deferred, pending the issuance of document

A/C.1/74/L.55/Rev.1. Information on additional requests for votes that may have been made since the issuance of informal paper No.1/Rev.3 and informal paper No. 2 will be posted on the southern wall of the Conference Room, to the left of this podium.

I shall now give the floor to the remaining delegations that wish to explain their positions after the voting.

Mr. Baek Yong Jin (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to explain its position on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”, on which we decided to abstain during the voting.

The Government of the Republic of Korea fully supports the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and stands ready to work with the international community towards the successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference in 2020. In that context, my delegation supports the overall purpose and goal of the draft resolution, including the areas identified for joint action and future-orientated dialogue.

However, we note with regret that the draft resolution uses a term that does not address my delegation’s concerns. We strongly believe that the term used to refer to the atomic-bomb survivors should have been phrased in a more appropriate manner, in order to fully represent all survivors, regardless of their nationalities. However, when a specific State’s language is used to describe the atomic-bomb survivors, it is easy to forget

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that several thousands of them were from other parts of the world.

In addition, we are also disappointed to see that some language used in operative paragraphs moved away from previously agreed language and did not reflect a well-crafted balance.

My delegation sincerely hopes that our concerns can be addressed in an appropriate manner in future deliberations, so that we can support the draft resolution.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): I take the floor to explain my delegation's vote after the voting on the proposals contained in draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.24 and A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1.

On A/C.1/74/L.24, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", Egypt has continued to vote in favour of the draft resolution as a whole, in conformity with our continued commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as our support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its objectives. However, Egypt once again expresses its concern regarding its fourth preambular paragraph, which refers to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). Egypt abstained in the voting on the resolution in 2016 and expressed its substantive reservations about its content in detail. In that regard, we reiterate our principled position on the practice of selectively resorting to the Security Council on matters that do not come under its mandate and imposing obligations that should be negotiated in an inclusive manner by all parties. We hope that that controversial reference, which does not add any significant value to the draft resolution, is deleted in future versions, in order to facilitate its adoption by consensus.

Turning to draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, entitled "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons", Egypt again had to abstain during the voting on the draft resolution as a whole and on many of its paragraphs. The draft resolution continues to undermine nuclear-disarmament obligations, previously agreed relevant and unequivocal undertakings and the special responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States in that regard. The draft resolution implicitly links the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations to an ambiguous set of preconditions and aims to lower the level of expectation regarding the pace of implementing the relevant agreed commitments.

Some paragraphs, such as the eighteenth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 1 and 2 and 3 (a), to name just a few, continue to weaken the language of previous agreements under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its Review Conferences in a manner that reinforces an alarming trend, especially as we approach the 2020 NPT Review Conference, to be held in a few months. As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT, we caution that that alarming trend might contribute to producing the Treaty's weakest Review Conference outcome — going backwards on nuclear disarmament, instead of moving forward.

The eleventh preambular paragraph endorses the report (see A/74/90) of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, on which we have several reservations. We intend to submit those reservations to the Secretary-General in due course. In subparagraph 3 (b), the term "States possessing nuclear weapons" does not observe the established categorization within the context of the NPT, which recognizes only nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. We strongly cautioned against the unintended consequences of using such terms.

Last but not least, we deeply regret that the new version of the draft resolution omits the previous reference to the agreed objective of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

We have expressed those concerns to the delegation of Japan on numerous occasions. We sincerely hope that those concerns will be taken into consideration in the future versions of the draft resolution in order to strike a reasonable balance and strive for truly united courses of action towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Ms. Mac Loughlin (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.12, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons". The Republic of Argentina has a clear, permanent and unwavering commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. That is attested to by our membership of, and active and permanent support for, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and our regional instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

In that spirit, we participated in the negotiations that led to the adoption of the text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on 7 July 2017, within the scope of the United Nations. Argentina has begun an analysis and assessment process of the text of the agreement, which we have not yet concluded. That analysis includes an assessment of the impact that the Treaty has on the non-proliferation regime, which is ultimately enshrined in the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, in a broader sense, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we have not yet signed the Treaty, we of course abstained in the voting on a draft resolution that makes a firm call for the signing and ratification of the Treaty.

Under those circumstances, the Republic of Argentina believes that it is vital to sustain and strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, the cornerstone of which is the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That is why Argentina will preside over the 2020 Review Conference, which will coincidentally take place 50 years after the entry into force of the Treaty. In that context, the universalization and prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains a task that is worthy of being accorded the highest priority by the international community.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and any future instrument, should strengthen the NPT, while avoiding duplication or generating parallel regimes on provisions that are well established and enjoy strong acceptance within the framework of the NPT, in particular with regard to the nuclear verification and safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which was a result of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Argentina will always stand firmly in favour of nuclear disarmament. That objective is shared by all and has been the subject of an unequivocal commitment reaffirmed by all the States that are party to the NPT.

Mr. Cleobury (United Kingdom): I speak on behalf of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United States and my own country, the United Kingdom. I would like to explain our vote against draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.12, "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons".

We reiterate our opposition to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We firmly believe that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through a gradual process that takes into

account the international security environment. That proven approach to nuclear disarmament has produced tangible results, including deep reductions in the global stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons fails to address the key issues that must be overcome to achieve lasting global nuclear disarmament; contradicts and risks undermining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; ignores the international security context and regional challenges and does nothing to increase trust and transparency among States. It will not result in the elimination of a single weapon. It fails to meet the highest standards of non-proliferation and is creating divisions across the international non-proliferation and disarmament machinery, which could make further progress on disarmament even more difficult.

We will not support, sign or ratify the Treaty. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will not be binding on our countries, and we do not accept any claim that it contributes to the development of customary international law. Neither does it set any new standards or norms. We call on all countries that are considering supporting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to reflect seriously on its implications for international peace and security.

Mr. Tozik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to explain my delegation's votes in relation to the draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons".

The Republic of Belarus has always been, and continues to be, committed to the common universal goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. We maintain a consistent approach to the processes of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are convinced that in order to achieve our goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons can be achieved only by strengthening measures to build confidence between all stakeholders without exception and engaging nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike in this process.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus was one of the first countries to voluntarily abandon its significant nuclear arsenal, without preconditions, setting an example of true commitment to the ideal of disarmament, not only in words but in deed.

We voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.24, "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", as a whole and its relevant paragraphs. We believe that

the Treaty is a crucial and indispensable part of the nuclear disarmament process.

We also supported draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.36, “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty”, and draft decision A/C.1/74/L.41, “Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)”, joining the consensus on those texts.

We voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.1, “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, because we see the implementation of the decisions and requirements of the draft resolution as a crucial and paramount factors for ensuring stability and security in the region. We also supported A/C.1/74/L.22, “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas”.

We call for full compliance with assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.6, “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”, submitted by Pakistan.

We also voted in favour of Japan’s draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”. We welcome the fact that the draft resolution reflects the calls for the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements among States in the relevant regions. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are one of the main preconditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. In that connection, I wish to recall that Belarus proposed an initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe in the mid 1990s. We also welcome the fact that the Japanese draft resolution reflects the importance of further efforts to achieve the immediate signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

To conclude, allow me once to again underscore our conviction that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must remain a cornerstone of the international security, non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Mr. Pak Chol Jin (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): I take the floor to explain the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s position on draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.20, A/C.1/74/L.2 and A/C.1/74/L.19.

At the outset, my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.20, entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”, as it contains some elements that are unacceptable to us. It calls on us to abandon all of our nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the safeguards agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The draft resolution is biased and unbalanced, as it unilaterally calls on my country to denuclearize without any mention of eliminating the root cause of the problem. As we stated earlier, denuclearization can be discussed only when the threats and stumbling blocks that are destabilizing the security of our system and obstructing our development are clearly and unequivocally removed.

We all aspire to a world free of nuclear weapons, and we support the creation and expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Denuclearization should not be confined to the Korean peninsula; it should also be carried out by other parties in other regions. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea remains firm and unchanged in its position to solve all problems through dialogue and negotiation on an equal footing. We therefore cannot accept one-sided unilateral demands for our denuclearization, unless we are assured of the security of our system. With that in mind, my country will not be bound by the draft resolution. All the parties concerned should take corresponding measures and fulfil their own commitments to build a lasting and peaceful regime on the Korean peninsula.

My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.2, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea expresses its strong support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and would like to underline the importance of confidence-building measures to enhance peace and security in the region. While we support the main objectives of the draft resolution, my delegation disassociates itself from the reference to a general call for universal adherence to the NPT.

Finally, my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.19, entitled “Nuclear disarmament”. We remain unchanged in our support for nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only solution to nuclear non-proliferation and the threats posed by nuclear

weapons. In that regard, the nuclear-weapon States with the biggest nuclear arsenals should take the lead in the nuclear-disarmament process. However, my delegation expresses its reservations regarding the continued calls for adherence to the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we do not subscribe to the procedures of NPT Review Conferences, as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not a State party. Nevertheless, we share and support the main objective of the draft resolution, which calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. My delegation therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): I take the floor to deliver my delegation's explanation of vote after the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.13, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons", and draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.21, "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world".

Pakistan understands the growing sense of frustration about the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. We are also mindful of the concerns associated with the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. We participated in the three international conferences held on the subject in 2013 and 2014. At the same time, we believe that the discourse on nuclear weapons cannot be reduced solely to its humanitarian and ethical dimensions by trivializing and ignoring the fundamental security concerns of States that rely on them for their security. We need a non-divisive approach that unites us in our common endeavour to achieve nuclear disarmament, based on the cardinal principle of attaining equal and undiminished security for all States, as enshrined in the consensus Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2). In the light of those considerations, my delegation was compelled to abstain in the voting on those two draft resolutions.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.18, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", Pakistan has supported the draft resolution in the past. However, this year we decided to abstain in the voting. Pakistan continues to support international law and international arms-control and disarmament initiatives that are equitable and non-discriminatory in character. We have consistently supported all initiatives that draw attention to the risk of escalating a conventional conflict at the nuclear level. Conflict among nuclear-armed States must therefore be avoided

at all costs. However, progress on those initiatives cannot take place in a vacuum and cannot be divorced from the security challenges that trigger such conflicts.

The sponsor of the draft resolution, which claims to promote the norms of non-use of nuclear weapons, has recently issued increasingly frequent threats of nuclear use against its neighbour. It has pursued the continuous expansion and modernization of conventional and nuclear arsenals while increasing the readiness of its nuclear forces by taking steps that include honing its missiles and introducing destabilizing weapon systems and force postures and security doctrines that have an offensive, rather than defensive, intent.

Pakistan has always maintained that declared commitments on doctrines are not verifiable. What matters more in States' defence planning are actual capabilities, force configurations and postures of adversaries, rather than policy declarations. The actions of this particular State, particularly since last year, confirm that its declarations are entirely uncredible and designed to deceive the international community, and we have indicated our position in that regard. Given the gaping hole between the practices and declared policies of the lead sponsor of the draft resolution, it was difficult for us to vote in its favour.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.19, "Nuclear disarmament", my delegation supports several elements of the draft resolution, inter alia, the call for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on nuclear disarmament, the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances and the need for taking into account the security interests of all States while negotiating disarmament treaties. However, as a non-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we cannot subscribe to the implementation of the action plans and decisions of its Review Conferences. We therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. Paragraph 16 of the draft resolution calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of the mandate contained in document CD/1299. It is indeed ironic that a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament continues to promote only a non-proliferation-centric treaty on fissile material. We therefore decided to vote against the paragraph.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.20, entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”, Pakistan acknowledges the value of several aspects of the draft resolution. However, we are dismayed by the ritualistic and unrealistic call upon Pakistan in paragraph 15 to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Moreover, as a non-party to the NPT, we cannot subscribe to the conclusions and decisions of its Review Conferences. Regarding the differences in the draft resolution welcoming the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we would like to recall that Pakistan did not take part in the negotiations on the Treaty. We have elaborated on the various glaring procedural and substantive shortcomings of the Treaty on different occasions. In the light of those considerations, my delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole, as well as the twelfth preambular paragraph and paragraph 24, while voting against the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph and paragraph 15, on the universality of the NPT.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.24, entitled “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty”, Pakistan has consistently supported the draft resolution. We participated constructively in the Treaty negotiations in the CD and voted in favour of its adoption by the General Assembly in 1996. Since then, we have voted in favour of the annual draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in the Committee and at the General Assembly. In the context of South Asia, Pakistan has proposed to convert the unilateral moratorium into a bilateral legally binding arrangement. The debate in the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) on membership criteria for non-NPT States affords the NSC-participating Governments another opportunity to strengthen the norm on non-testing. In its fourth preambular paragraph, the draft resolution refers to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). We are wary of the Security Council defining legislative requirements for Member States and entering into areas that are not necessarily under its jurisdiction. We are also not bound by any provisions that emanate from the NPT or its Review Conferences, including, as stated in the seventh preambular paragraph, any other instrument to which Pakistan is not a party. My delegation, in line with its consistent support for the objectives and purposes of the Treaty, once again voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole and abstained in the voting on its seventh preambular paragraph.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, entitled “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”, Pakistan cannot support the universalization of the NPT, as it is a highly unrealistic and impractical objective. Pakistan is not a party to the NPT and is therefore not bound by its provisions; neither do we subscribe to the conclusions and recommendations emanating from its previous Review Conferences. We are also concerned that the draft resolution seeking joint courses of action towards a world without nuclear weapons seeks only to address the non-proliferation aspects of fissile materials. In view of those key considerations, my delegation was compelled to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole, while voting against the second and eighth preambular paragraphs and paragraph 3 (c).

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor regarding draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, entitled “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”. France voted in favour of the draft resolution and particularly welcomes Japan’s efforts. However, I wish to explain my country’s position on the eighteenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 3 (c), on which we abstained in the voting.

With regard to the eighteenth preambular paragraph, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are not a new concept. They have been known to all for a long time and already appear in the preamble to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There is nothing new with regard to that issue. France rejects any link established between the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. Moreover, there is no consensus that such an approach underpins efforts towards nuclear disarmament. My country supports a pragmatic, progressive and realistic approach to nuclear disarmament, which, in particular, includes the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) for nuclear weapons.

On paragraph 3 (c), it was not my country’s intention to call for a vote. However, we wish to recall that any negotiations on an FMCT should be based on document CD/1299 and the mandate therein. The failure to mention that document in the operative part of the draft resolution is the reason for my country’s abstention in the voting on the paragraph.

More broadly, I wish to make clear that this year in the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, France will continue to comment on a number of draft resolutions in the same spirit as previous years. France rejects any reading of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1 that establishes a link with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on 7 July 2017, which is particularly the case for draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.1, A/C.1/74/L.9, A/C.1/74/L.17, A/C.1/74/L.18 and A/C.1/74/L.56.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): The United States abstained in the voting on Japan's draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons". While we could not support a number of elements in the draft resolution, we want to take this opportunity to thank Japan for streamlining the text and refocusing it on the future. We also note with satisfaction that the draft resolution encourages States to conduct a candid dialogue on the relationship between nuclear disarmament and security — perhaps unique to any draft resolution before the First Committee. We stand ready to engage in such a refreshing and realistic endeavour.

For decades, Japan has been a leader in both nuclear and conventional-weapons disarmament matters. Through the draft resolution, Japan continues its long tradition of seeking to build disarmament bridges under difficult geopolitical circumstances and set the stage for a positive Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons next spring. We applaud Japan's efforts to try to strike the right balance in the draft resolution. We hope that future iterations of the draft resolution will contribute further to reducing divisions on nuclear disarmament matters, as opposed to widening them — something that we all wish to avoid.

Mr. Masmajan (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor to explain our votes regarding three different draft resolutions.

I will begin by explaining my delegation's vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". Our positive vote in favour of the draft resolution reflects the continuing importance that we attach to the full implementation of the commitments made under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by its States parties. However, we again note

with regret that the draft resolution refers to only one dimension of the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region and continues to single out one State. The scope of the draft resolution would be stronger if it addressed the situation in the region in an objective and comprehensive manner, including by taking into account a number of recent violations of the norms on weapons of mass destruction in the region.

Moreover, the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was jointly adopted by the parties to the NPT, is a goal that Switzerland fully supports. Such a zone is all the more important as the region continues to be plagued by several types of threats related to weapons of mass destruction. We hope that the forthcoming conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in the framework of the General Assembly, will lay the groundwork for a positive and inclusive process that facilitates progress on the issue, and ultimately the participation of all States of the region — a precondition for realizing such a zone.

My second explanation of vote will be on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.12, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons." We abstained in the voting on the draft resolution and on several votes on separate paragraphs of different draft resolutions on the subject, namely, the thirty-second preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.19, the twelfth preambular paragraph and paragraph 24 of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.20 and the seventeenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.40. Our position is based on the decisions taken by the Swiss Government in 2018 and 2019 not to accede to the Treaty at this stage and to instead participate as an observer in its future meetings of States parties. While we support the overall objective of the Treaty, we continue to question some of its provisions, including their impact on the existing NPT-based nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Switzerland will reassess its position on the Treaty before the end of 2020. Irrespective of its position on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Switzerland continues to fully support the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons and finds it difficult to imagine how the use of nuclear weapons could be consistent with the requirements of international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

Finally, we take the floor to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.20, entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”, including its specific paragraphs. Switzerland voted in favour of its fourth preambular paragraph, regarding the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda. Despite its national position on specific aspects addressed by the agenda, Switzerland wishes to acknowledge the exhaustive approach that it promotes and the Secretary-General’s leadership on this initiative, which has helped to give disarmament efforts a new lease of life. Like a significant number of Member States, we are actively involved in the implementation of the agenda.

Changes made to other paragraphs of the draft resolution gave rise to several questions, in particular the twenty-sixth preambular paragraph and paragraph 22. While we again voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole this year, we will closely follow its development, especially during the next session of the Committee, when the draft resolution will need to include the outcome of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Nasir (Malaysia): Malaysia commends Japan for having submitted draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, entitled “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”. The draft resolution reflects Japan’s continued commitment to try to forge common ground among all Member States on critical topics concerning disarmament and non-proliferation. Malaysia’s position is very clear. We reaffirm our principled position with regard to disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Attaining a nuclear-weapon-free world has been a long-standing desire for all of us, since the first meeting of the General Assembly in 1946. We realize that the path towards complete disarmament is not a straight line, but we remain concerned about the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament.

The nuclear-disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation architecture is being strained and pulled apart. The continuous and worrisome development of nuclear programmes is breeding instability and creating an environment that is detrimental to international peace and security. Malaysia believes that multilateral approaches are the best way of dealing with those challenges. Malaysia remains clear in its support of all initiatives and endeavours taken by any parties to ensure that the disarmament and

arms-control architecture is preserved and that nuclear disarmament is advanced. While we appreciate all draft resolutions submitted by Member States in addressing this important issue, the Committee can be reassured of our commitment and unwavering support towards realizing our common goal.

In commenting on Japan’s draft resolution, we are cognizant of the fact that the draft resolution was submitted here, in the First Committee, for consideration by all Member States. Malaysia voted in favour of the majority of separate paragraphs of the draft resolution in the First committee, while avoiding comparison with previously agreed language of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Malaysia voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. Nonetheless, we wish to highlight several paragraphs of the draft resolution that could be improved for its future iterations.

On paragraph 1, we take note of the reaffirmation by all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to achieve the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. However, we noticed that there seems to be no reference to the specific responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States in attaining that goal. In the context of the NPT, that unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States is vital, as it relates specifically to the achievement of the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty. As such, the current formulation of paragraph 1 does not accurately represent the fundamental nature of the nuclear-weapon States’ unequivocal undertaking and risks undermining their prior commitment to nuclear disarmament. For that reason, Malaysia abstained in the voting on paragraph 1.

On paragraph 3 (d), the paragraph does not contain an explicit call for annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In our view, the paragraph does not place appropriate emphasis on the imperative of bringing the CTBT into force. For that reason, Malaysia abstained in the voting on paragraph 3 (d).

In conclusion, Malaysia appreciates Japan’s continued efforts in trying to bridge the gap on this difficult topic. At the same time, Malaysia strongly emphasizes that prior commitments agreed upon by consensus should not be overwritten by efforts that are weaker than those already in existence, as that will severely undermine the trust and credibility of

the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is our hope that Japan will continue to facilitate the work of all Member States on this matter by taking into consideration the points raised with respect to the draft resolution.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): I take the floor to explain New Zealand's position on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, entitled "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons". My delegation had hoped that Japan's decision this year not to present its draft resolution of previous years, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", signalled a move away from the divisive approach towards nuclear disarmament that that text had encapsulated. We are sorry to see that that is not the case.

There is global acceptance of the fact that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. However, that will not continue to be the case, and we will not move, in the words of the title of the draft resolution, towards a world without nuclear weapons if we attempt to redraft and move away from existing legally binding NPT commitments. New Zealand regrets that paragraph 1 of the draft resolution distorts the fundamental commitments laid out in article VI of the NPT. As New Zealand is unable to endorse any attempt to rewrite fundamental provisions of the NPT, including article VI, we voted against that paragraph.

Paragraph 1 is our key concern, but it is unfortunately not at all our only one. New Zealand regrets the low level of ambition that is reflected in general in the draft resolution with respect to the advancement of nuclear disarmament. That is particularly apparent in the list of suggestions for joint courses of action in paragraph 3 and for future-oriented dialogue in paragraph 4. In that regard, we wish to draw special attention to paragraph 3 (d), which, in our view, considerably devalues the importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We believe that better characterization of that is in paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.24, which stresses the vital importance and urgency of its signing and ratification, without delay and without conditions, in order to achieve the earliest entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Similarly, with respect to paragraph 3 (e), New Zealand is certainly not opposed to any efforts to advance nuclear-disarmament verification. In fact, we fully support such efforts. However, reflecting our genuine commitment to advancing such verification, we do not think that that should be done through the framework of only one process. Such an approach, in our view, imposes an unnecessary straitjacket on the important work that needs to be done to carry forward progress on nuclear-disarmament verification. Accordingly, as a reflection of those and other concerns with the text, New Zealand abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1.

Mr. Roethlin (Austria): I take the floor to explain Austria's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, entitled "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons". At the outset, let me thank Japan, as the main sponsor of the draft resolution, for its efforts in drafting a new text.

Unfortunately, the draft resolution before us contains language that did not allow us to vote in its favour, as it replaces established consensus language with new formulations that undercut important tenets. That is particularly vital as we are entering the important final phase of the review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and my country is firmly committed to achieving a successful NPT Review Conference. Austria therefore had to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

During the voting on separate paragraphs, Austria followed its long-standing practice of voting on the merit of each paragraph. Austria is a strong supporter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which represents the cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. In the NPT review process, important commitments were agreed upon to ensure progress in implementing the Treaty and to support the delicate balance that the Treaty represents. Elements of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1 are unfortunately incompatible with the wording of existing commitments and decisions of previous NPT Review Conferences. We are very concerned about the potential negative impact of the changed language on the integrity of the NPT and the ongoing NPT review process. Austria wishes to state on the record that the NPT and the adopted outcome documents of previous NPT Review Conferences remain integrally valid.

The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons underpin nuclear disarmament. We therefore voted in favour of the eighteenth preambular paragraph in order to have that fundamental issue reflected in the text. However, we regret that the draft resolution, in its eighteenth preambular paragraph, departed from the NPT acquis, whereby the 2010 Review Conference adopted by consensus the following language:

“The Conference expresses its deep concern at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that these weapons could be used and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons” (*NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I), para. 80*).

That vote in favour by Austria cannot be construed as Austria accepting the weak language contained in the eighteenth preambular paragraph and the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

In paragraph 3 (d), we regret the strongly diluted language on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Standard agreed language on the CTBT regularly urges all States, in particular the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay and without waiting for any other State to do so. As strong supporters of the CTBT and its entry into force, and as the host State to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, we regret that the draft resolution dilutes that language by only encouraging States to make every effort to sign and ratify the Treaty. Moreover, the wording gives the impression that upholding existing moratoriums can be subsumed under every effort. It is clear that moratoriums, although their significance as an interim measure is a given, can be no substitution for a legally binding provision on nuclear tests. We therefore voted against the new language proposed.

On paragraph 3 (e), Austria intended to vote in its favour rather than abstain. We have informed the Secretariat about that fact and will vote in favour of paragraph 3 (e) in the General Assembly.

Furthermore, we regret that the draft resolution follows the narrative that the total elimination of nuclear weapons will occur only after confidence and trust have been rebuilt. That does not reflect the historic fact that major nuclear disarmament agreements were achieved precisely at the height of the Cold War. Disarmament measures are particularly needed when tensions are high.

Let me finish by once again expressing our esteem for the main sponsor, Japan, for its successful quest to act as a uniting force. We hope that future draft resolutions will regain balance and chart truly joint courses of action on which all of us can agree.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.1, “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, and draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.2, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”, as we believe in the utmost importance of this issue and its impact on peace and security in our region and the world. We also believe in the need to establish a Middle East free from nuclear weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic was one of the first countries to call for a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, following its accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1969. My country had introduced an initiative to achieve that noble goal through a draft resolution submitted to the Security Council in 2003 (S/2003/1208) on freeing the region of all weapons of mass destruction, under international collective monitoring and the supervision of the United Nations. That would promote international multilateral conventions on disarmament. However, the delegation of the United States at the time threatened to veto the draft resolution, which the Council still has in blue.

Despite the fact that the majority of States Members of the United Nations have called on Israel to join the NPT as a non-nuclear party, we all are convinced that Israel will not accede to the Treaty as long as the United States and other Member States continue to protect Israel's nuclear programme, along with Israel's biological and chemical military programmes. They even contribute to their development and promotion while protecting Israel when it refuses to implement Security Council, General Assembly and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolutions concerning the NPT. That was evident to all when the United States and Britain — both nuclear-weapon States and NPT guarantors — led to the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which encouraged Israel to further its challenge to the international will and not accede to the NPT or other conventions on banning weapons of mass destruction.

With its Zionist doctrine, Israel is itself a weapon of mass destruction supported by the countries that have provided it with those weapons and given it cover. In the 1980s, the Israeli nuclear scientist Mordechai Vanunu exposed the fact that Israel possesses and develops nuclear weapons and that the Dimona reactor was in dismal condition. The United States-based publication *Foreign Policy* recently revealed that the United States Administration covered up Israel's first nuclear explosion, on 22 September 1979 — 40 years ago — in the waters of the South Atlantic during the apartheid regime in South Africa. The United States therefore contributed, and continues to contribute, to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The United States, an NPT depositary State, is also violating the Treaty through its proliferation of nuclear weapons in non-nuclear-weapon States. As well, it violates the Chemical Weapons Convention by issuing patents related to developing chemical weapons and their means of delivery, instead of abiding by the Convention. The United States to date refuses to get rid of its chemical stockpiles, in addition to overseeing more than 25 covert laboratories for developing biological weapons. United States Administrations have also organized and trained terrorist organizations, such as Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front, on the use of chemical weapons.

As is often the case, the representative of Israel, with his comical and theatrical intervention that reminds us of the theatre of the absurd, tried desperately to mislead the Committee by making false allegations and lies with a view to distracting attention from the threats posed by Israeli nuclear weapons. Israel does not comply with United Nations resolutions related to non-proliferation. The Israeli entity has not acceded to the NPT or other relevant conventions and has not subjected its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime.

There is global consensus that the only real danger in the Middle East lies in the fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons and has the means to deliver them far beyond our region. Israel also possesses a frightening chemical and biological arsenal. Some still like to dismiss and deny that fact notwithstanding that it is a clear reality. They seek to create illusions for the sake of arguing and are driven by unfair and non-objective motives.

My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.24, "Comprehensive Nuclear-

Test-Ban Treaty", as this important Treaty offers no guarantees vis-à-vis the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, which have legitimate concerns. Moreover, the text makes no explicit reference to the illegitimacy of using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also does not explicitly call for the universalization of the NPT.

My country, Syria, believes that there are fundamental gaps in the draft resolution, which is a matter of deep concern, as Israel is the only country in the region to possess nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It is modernizing those weapons, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Israel is refusing to accede to the NPT or subject its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime. All of that impedes and undermines the efforts to establish a Middle East free of nuclear weapons. It also subjects the region and the world to the dangers of the Israeli nuclear threat, without any international reaction. For those reasons, we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. My delegation would also like to express its reservation about all paragraphs that include a reference to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in all the draft resolutions, adopted or to be adopted.

Turning to draft decision A/C.1/74/L.11, "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices", my delegation once again abstained in the voting, as our comments and those of other delegations were not taken into consideration by its sponsors — to the effect that the draft decision must include reference to fissile-material stockpiles.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to explain Japan's votes on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.13, "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons", and draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.12, "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons".

We voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.13. As the only country to have suffered wartime atomic bombings, Japan wholly shares the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and acutely recognizes the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, based on our first-hand experience. We have made, and will continue to make, various efforts to raise awareness of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we voted against draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.12. It is essential that all States work together and take joint action, based on a clear understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and an objective assessment of the severe security environment. While acknowledging all of the existing approaches, including legal frameworks, for achieving our common goal, Japan is of the strong view that all States should focus on concrete and practical measures for advancing our common goal of nuclear disarmament, regardless of divergent views.

Ms. Goh (Singapore): Singapore would like to explain its abstention in the voting on A/C.1/74/L.12, “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”. Singapore is fully committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We will continue to support draft resolutions and initiatives that contribute to concrete and meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament. Singapore’s position on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been clearly expressed and remains unchanged. Our abstention in the voting on the draft resolution and our position on all other draft resolutions and paragraphs in the First Committee that make reference to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should be viewed through the same lens. Singapore participated actively in the Treaty negotiations. We regret that our concerns were not fully taken into account when the Treaty was adopted. We reiterate our view that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should not in any way affect the rights and obligations of States parties to other treaties and agreements, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as treaties establishing regional nuclear-weapons-free zones.

There are multiple pathways to a nuclear-weapon-free world. To achieve meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament, all relevant parties need to be involved in a collective global effort. The international community should work towards finding a realistic and complementary role for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons within the existing global disarmament architecture, of which the NPT remains the cornerstone.

Ms. Lal (India): I take the floor to explain India’s votes on several draft resolutions.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.2, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”, India believes that the focus of the draft resolution should be limited to the region that it intends to address. India’s position on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is well known. The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties provides that States are bound by a treaty based on the principle of free consent. The call to those States remaining outside the NPT to accede to it and to accept International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all their nuclear facilities is at variance with that principle. India is not a party to the NPT and is not bound by the outcome documents of its Review Conferences. That also applies to certain paragraphs contained in the draft resolution.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.12, “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”, India did not participate in the negotiations on the Treaty, which were concluded in New York in 2017. India will therefore not become a party to the Treaty and shall not be bound by any of the obligations that may arise from it. India believes that the Treaty in no way constitutes, or contributes to the development of, any customary international law. India reiterates its commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. India believes that that 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 (CD/1816) entitled “Nuclear Disarmament”, submitted to the General Assembly in 2006. In that regard, India supports the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons conventions in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, which works on the basis of consensus.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.13, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons”, India voted in favour of the draft resolution, consistent with its participation in the three meetings — held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna — on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Our participation in those meetings was premised on the shared concerns about the serious threat to the survival of humankind that could be posed by the use of nuclear weapons.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.19, “Nuclear disarmament”, India attaches high priority to nuclear disarmament. We share the main objective of the draft resolution, which is the complete elimination of nuclear

weapons within a specified period of time. However, we nevertheless had to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution because of certain references to the NPT and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on both of which India's position is well known. However, we support other provisions of the draft resolution that we believe are consistent with India's position on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We compliment Myanmar on retaining vital principled paragraphs in the draft resolution that are supported by the vast majority of Member States.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.20, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", we voted against the draft resolution, as well as its operative paragraph 15, since India cannot accept the call to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. In urging India to accede to the NPT promptly and without conditions, the draft resolution negates the rules of customary international law as enshrined in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which provides that a State's acceptance, ratification or accession to a treaty is based on the principle of free consent. India's position on the NPT is well known. India is a responsible nuclear-weapon State, and there is therefore no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.21, "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", India agrees with several provisions of the draft resolution, in particular its acknowledgement that nuclear disarmament is a global public good of the highest order. We support the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (A/51/218, annex) that there exists a legal obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In that regard, India supports the proposal of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention.

The global elimination of nuclear weapons will require progressive steps towards reducing their military utility and role in security policies, as well as a universal commitment to the global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework for nuclear disarmament. Until that goal is accomplished and

reflected in specific international legal instruments, questions relating to the immorality of nuclear weapons have to be examined in the framework of the sovereign responsibility of States to protect their security in a nuclearized global order assembled on the pillars of nuclear deterrence. India's nuclear doctrine of credible minimum deterrence, with a posture of no first use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States, strikes that very balance.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.36, "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty", India respects the sovereign choice of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. That principle is consistent with the provisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines. India enjoys friendly and mutually beneficial relations with countries of the African continent. India shares and supports African aspirations to enhance the region's well-being and security. We respect the sovereign choice of States parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba and welcome its successful entry into force. As a nuclear-weapon State, India conveys its unambiguous assurance that it will respect the status of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons", we acknowledge that Japan, the lead sponsor, is the only country to have suffered a nuclear-weapons attack. We share the draft resolution's aspirations on nuclear disarmament, but, in substantive terms, the text has fallen short on that objective. India abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 3 (c), as India supports the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. The question of a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons did not arise.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor to explain the votes of my delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.24, "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", and draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons".

On draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.24, as a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Iran voted in favour of the draft resolution. The principal objective of the Treaty is terminating the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons. Twenty-three years after the Treaty's adoption, the achievement of that objective has become ever more elusive. Unfortunately, almost all nuclear-weapon States, in particular the United States, are modernizing and qualitatively upgrading their nuclear-weapon systems by using new technologies, including subcritical testing and simulations. While that undermines the CTBT's object and purpose, it is a source of serious regret that the draft resolution does not call on the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from such measures.

My delegation abstained in separate votes on the fourth preambular paragraph and dissociates itself from its references to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). First, in our view, the involvement of the Security Council in the proceedings of the CTBT preparatory process is not justified, mainly due to the particular status of the Treaty's operation and the unique provisional status of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), which operates only in order to achieve certain objectives. Secondly, the Assembly can and must express its views on any matter independently. There is no need to refer to the work of other organs done in a completely different context. There are also other aspects of the draft about which my delegation has serious reservations.

First, until the Treaty enters into force, the purpose of all the activities of the Preparatory Commission is carrying out the necessary preparations for the Treaty's effective implementation and preparing for the first session of the conference of States parties. All of the work on the verification regime at any stage of development should therefore be considered as the necessary preparation for independent and reliable means to ensure compliance with the Treaty once it enters into force.

Secondly, while we acknowledge the potential civil and scientific benefits that might be available to State signatories through the CTBTO's International Monitoring System, as reflected in the draft resolution, we stress that such benefits should neither distract our attention from the Treaty's fundamental objective nor

be used as a pretext for its de facto operationalization. Such benefits do not fall within the inherent mandate of the Treaty. The Preparatory Commission should therefore decide on the relevant request on a case-by-case basis.

On A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, Iran abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. We also abstained in the separate voting on the eighth, sixteenth and eighteenth preambular paragraphs and on operative paragraphs 1, 3 (c), 3 (d), 3 (e) and 5 for the following reasons.

First, the language used in the fifth preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 5 is contrary to the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. Secondly, the draft resolution fails to strike an acceptable balance between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. There is no reference to the urgent need for the nuclear-weapon States to fully and effectively implement their nuclear obligations. Thirdly, the eighteenth preambular paragraph fails to use the agreed language of the final document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Fourthly, we believe that negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons should commence within the context of an agreed comprehensive and balanced programme of work that also includes the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear disarmament. That view is not reflected in the draft resolution.

Iran voted in favour of the second, fourth and nineteenth preambular paragraphs and of operative paragraph 3 (f), because those paragraphs reaffirm the importance of the universality of the NPT, the continued validity of the steps agreed to in the final documents of NPT Review Conferences and the need to raise awareness about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons by the United States in 1945.

Mr. Fiallo Karolys (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor to deliver my delegation's explanation of vote on draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.18, A/C.1/74/L.24 and A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1.

Ecuador voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.18, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", as its seventh preambular paragraph recognizes that a legally binding prohibition

of the use of nuclear weapons is not contrary, but in fact contributes, to international efforts for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons. However, Ecuador wishes to note that the true path for achieving that goal is through the universalization of the existing Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which already expressly bans the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and is open to States for signing and ratification.

On the fourth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.24, entitled “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty”, Ecuador’s vote in favour should be interpreted as a reflection of our full support for the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and our conviction that the draft resolution as a whole should be adopted by consensus. However, Ecuador has repeatedly stated that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must urgently enter into force. That call has also been translated into action, as we ratified the instrument on 12 November 2001 and completed the establishment of a radionuclide station and an infrasound station in the Galapagos Islands, in accordance with our obligations under the Treaty. However, we regret that the fourth preambular paragraph includes a reference to Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), according to which the Council sought to interfere in the Treaty. Such action is not provided for in the Treaty and is not within the Council’s mandate.

All annex 2 States that have not yet done so must sign and ratify the Treaty, including the States that promoted and supported resolution 2310 (2016) in the Security Council. If that unnecessary reference had been deleted, Ecuador would have even gladly co-sponsored the draft resolution. We respectfully invite the main authors of the draft resolution to consider eliminating the reference to the controversial Security Council resolution in the future, as it in no way contributes to, facilitates or accelerates the entry into force of the CTBT.

Finally, I wish to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.47/Rev.1, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”. Ecuador sincerely shares the objective set forth in the title of the draft resolution — a world without nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, in a world where such weapons exist, they must be banned and eliminated for that objective to be realized. Unfortunately, the absence of a reference to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons renders the draft resolution an unambitious tool. The text aims to modify, or at least reinterpret and restricts, language agreed by consensus in the nuclear disarmament forums. Moreover, changing the paradigm of elimination for one of conditions could affect the integrity of fundamental instruments.

Ecuador fully and unequivocally supports the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Nevertheless, the draft resolution is insufficient, as it leaves out other cases that are equally indispensable to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution undermines efforts towards the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and, finally, it does not give the issue of humanitarian consequences the consideration it deserves. It merely recognizes the catastrophic nature of such consequences as fact and does not express the General Assembly’s deep concern in that regard. For all of those reasons, Ecuador abstained in the voting on the draft resolution and its second, eighth, sixteenth and eighteenth preambular paragraphs, as well as on operative paragraphs 1, 3 (c), 3 (d) 3 (e) and 5.

I will conclude by simply expressing my gratitude to the delegation of Japan — a country that is our friend — for the efforts that it continues to make to build bridges that help the international community to move towards the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The Acting Chair: We have heard from the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting on cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”.

The Committee will now take up the draft resolutions and draft decisions under cluster 2, “Other weapons of mass destruction”, as contained in informal paper No. 1/Rev.3. I shall first give the floor to delegations wishing to make general statements or to introduce draft resolutions and draft decisions under this cluster.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I take the floor with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”, which Poland, as sole sponsor, presents to the First Committee every year.

For years the draft resolution has contributed to international peace and security and enhanced the chemical-weapon non-proliferation regime based

on the Convention and its implementing body, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Despite its complexity, the draft resolution was able to gain unanimous support in the past. Regrettably, it has been unable to achieve consensus in recent years. Poland strongly believes that, given the current demanding situation and the fundamental challenges facing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the international community needs to send a strong and clear message of unconditional support for the CWC's comprehensive implementation, including all its pillars. We must also support the efforts of the OPCW's Director-General and its Technical Secretariat in that regard.

The draft resolution represents a factual and accurate reflection of the state of the Convention's implementation in recent months, including work related to the fourth CWC Review Conference. The draft resolution refers to critical issues such as universality, progress in destroying declared chemical-weapon stockpiles, national implementation, verification, the risks posed by the threat of the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, including terrorists, and, last but not least, international cooperation. As the integrity of the CWC and the credibility of the OPCW are at stake, the draft resolution cannot be silent on the key challenge to the Convention — the continued use of chemical weapons. Accordingly, it refers to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, adopted at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in June last year, which comprehensively addresses the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons.

Building a common understanding on those issues has proved to be extremely challenging. Poland has done its utmost to address the situation in a balanced and adequate manner while taking into account the OPCW's ongoing work. The end result before the Committee is the product of an open, inclusive and transparent process. Let me express our gratitude to all the delegations that have contributed to those discussions over the past few weeks. Let me conclude by calling on Member States in this room to support our draft resolution.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country, Syria, is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and we are committed to our obligations thereunder. We therefore handed all our chemical material to the treaty Organization

and terminated forever our chemical programme, as recognized by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Our chemical material was destroyed aboard United States vessels in the Mediterranean.

My country categorically rejects the false claims and accusations that the Syrian Arab Army has used toxic chemicals against Syrian civilians anywhere in Syria. We also stress that the Syrian Arab Army does not possess any kind of chemical weapons. It has not used them in the past and will not use them in future because we do not possess such weapons. We advise anyone who questions that to seek out the real criminals somewhere else.

My Government condemns in the strongest terms the crime of using chemical weapons. We believe that we must strive to rid the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction. Everyone knows that when Syria was a member of the Security Council in 2003, it took the initiative to present a draft resolution to the Council on freeing the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction. As members are aware also, my country joined the Chemical Weapons Convention in order to prove to the entire world that we are committed to standing against any use of chemical weapons.

My country, Syria, has honoured our commitments under the Convention, despite the difficult situation in Syria. That was confirmed by the Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission of the OPCW and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, in the OPCW report to the Security Council of June 2014 (S/2014/444, annex). With the destruction of its last two remaining sites and the investigation and verification by the OPCW of the destruction and clearing of the debris of those two sites, the Syrian Arab Republic has met all its commitments to destroying all sites related to the production of chemical weapons, and eliminated forever the Syrian chemical programme in record time. My country discusses issues related to the Syrian national media as needed in the context of the OPCW.

My country expresses its deep concern over the blackmailing and threats being used by a group of Western States, especially the trilateral aggression States against Syria — namely, the United States, Britain and France — with regard to the adoption of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 at the fourth special session of

the States Parties to the CWC that would allow them to politicize the OPCW and use it as a pretext to launch aggressions against independent sovereign States by claiming that they use chemical weapons.

Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 contradicts the provisions of the CWC and sets a dangerous precedent within the international order, since it allows a technical organization that deals with scientific and technical matters to carry out criminal and legal investigations that are not within its jurisdiction, with a view to determining who is responsible for using chemical weapons. That is a clear violation of the jurisdiction of the international body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, as contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

My country believes that this decision will further complicate the ability of the OPCW to assume its role, leaving it paralysed while deepening divisions among its Member States and furthering polarization. In other words, this decision is practically not applicable.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation was one of the first States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and has consistently advocated to strengthen it. We note with satisfaction that 193 States are now parties to the Convention. It is important for everyone that States parties to the Convention fully implement its provisions, which some find difficult. Russia fully implements its international obligations. The Committee is aware that, ahead of schedule in 2017, we destroyed the world's largest stockpile of chemical weapons — some 40,000 tons of toxic chemicals.

The international community is impatiently waiting for the United States, which has every means to do so, to follow the examples of Russia, Syria and others by eliminating its chemical stockpiles, which would be in the common interests of all. Unfortunately, unlike prior consensus resolutions on the CWC, draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10 does not reflect that fact. The document also fails to call on the United States to complete the elimination of its chemical arsenal as soon as possible. It is our United States colleagues who were the first to urge the quickest possible elimination of that very dangerous type of weapon of mass destruction and to set out target dates that then had to be repeatedly pushed back.

Russia is making every effort to increase the effectiveness of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). At the same time, we are forced to note that there has been a rift within the OPCW. The United States and its allies have rejected the practice, established over decades, of taking decisions by consensus; instead, they are putting every issue to a vote. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, adopted at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which grants the OPCW secretariat attributive functions to find those responsible for the use of chemical weapons, runs counter to the provisions of the CWC and infringes upon the mandate of the Security Council. Such activity should be considered in accordance with article XV of the Convention, namely, on the basis of consensus. That was not done and has undermined the foundations of the Convention.

We are convinced that the attributive mechanism, which is illegitimate under the CWC, will not engage in any objective investigations; rather, its goal will be to serve the ambitions of those who created it. The Organization is still unable to ensure that the work of the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic to establish the facts around the use of chemical weapons in that country is carried out properly. The Mission's reports are based on testimonies received remotely from certain opposition groups, and investigations are being carried out in non-compliance with the procedure clearly laid out in the CWC. Evidence should be collected only by the Mission's experts at the site of the incident.

On our part, we advocate the establishment of an impartial and highly professional Security Council mechanism to investigate every case of chemical terrorism in the Middle East, without exception and in strict compliance with CWC standards. The problem is that all of our logical proposals are met with fierce resistance from Western States, which continue to prefer to use provocations to discredit the lawful Syrian authorities.

Meanwhile, the Security Council and the OPCW regularly receive information about terrorists preparing yet another provocation using chemical weapons. As we understand it, some terrorists have the technological and production bases for synthesizing toxic agents and broad channels to supply precursor chemicals. There is a risk of new incidents of chemical terrorism taking place beyond Syria. It is therefore very important to

focus on countering the real threat of chemical terrorism and paying close attention to the data being transferred from Damascus to the OPCW and the Security Council.

Against that backdrop, the draft resolution accounts very poorly for counter-terrorism, as it does not take into account the latest initiatives aimed at combating terrorism involving the use of weapons of mass destruction. We decisively reject all accusations of Russian citizens being involved in the toxic-chemical incidents that took place in Salisbury and Amesbury, as no serious evidence of any kind has been presented in that connection. In recent years, the Russian delegation has repeatedly advocated the restoration of the previous, consensus-based nature of the resolution on the CWC. We have underscored that it is unacceptable to turn a draft resolution that supports the CWC into a mechanism for settling scores among particular States and promoting certain ideas that can undermine unity within the OPCW. However, our efforts have been repeatedly misunderstood and blocked. We therefore have no other option but to vote against the draft resolution.

The Acting Chair: Before the Committee proceeds to take action on the draft resolutions and decision listed under cluster 2, we will hear from delegations wishing to explain their positions.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation would like to deliver an explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

Cuba reiterates its full commitment to the comprehensive, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Cuba has always participated actively and constructively in the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). My country does not possess and has no intention of possessing chemical weapons. We categorically reject the use of such weapons and support the complete, irreversible and verifiable destruction of all remaining types of chemical weapons.

Regrettably, although Cuba shares the overall objective of the draft resolution, we cannot support it this year. We believe that we must continue to work to restore its traditional balance, in order to resume the practice of consensus-based solutions. Cuba will

once again abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10. Our delegation will also abstain in the voting on the fifth preambular paragraph and vote against operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16.

With regard to paragraphs 2 and 3, we believe that it is unacceptable to accuse a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention of using such weapons without an independent, impartial, comprehensive and conclusive investigation conducted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, based on reliable proof and evidence from the field. In the case of paragraphs 4 and 16, we believe that matters should be omitted from Committee debates if they do not enjoy consensus in the OPCW or have the support of the Security Council. The First Committee is not mandated to endorse or take action on the conclusions of reports submitted to the Security Council that are not based on exhaustive research in the field, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, adopted at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, on 27 June 2018, was not supported by all States party to the Convention. We reiterate our rejection of that decision, as it is beyond the privileges accorded to the OPCW’s Technical Secretariat by the Chemical Weapons Convention and is aimed at modifying the Organization’s mandate. We reject the creation of hasty and non-consensual mechanisms without taking into account the opinions of States parties, as they set very negative precedents for States party to the Convention.

The draft resolution disregards the cooperation of the Syrian Government in the destruction of its chemical weapons and weapons-production facilities, despite the country’s complex security situation. The pending technical issues pertaining to the Syrian declaration should be resolved within the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, without bias or politicization and in keeping with established procedures. We must overcome the confrontation and politicization that affect the spirit of cooperation of and unanimous support for the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): We wish to deliver an explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,

Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

The chemical non-proliferation regime is at a critical juncture. We have watched with horror as those weapons reappeared in Syria, Malaysia and the United Kingdom. The taboo of using chemical weapons has been broken, and we cannot responsibly turn a blind eye and act as if nothing has happened. What would happen tomorrow if the use of chemical weapons became commonplace?

We welcome the draft resolution that has been submitted by Poland this year. In a national capacity, we would have liked the text to recognize and welcome the establishment of the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, in accordance with the voting of States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, in June 2017. That voting was valid and in accordance with OPCW rules of procedure, which were accepted by consensus by all States parties. The draft resolution reflects our serious concerns and stresses the need to re-establish robust deterrence mechanisms. That is why we will vote in its favour.

I wish to be clear. France believes that the voting on the draft resolution constitutes a test for the international community. The chemical non-proliferation regime must not be held hostage, and it is unacceptable for it to be the subject of such politicization. Impunity for crimes committed using chemical weapons is not acceptable and will never be so. The chemical non-proliferation regime is almost universal, and it is up to everyone to defend and enforce it. My country calls on all States to act thoughtfully and responsibly. We must use this vote to rise to the challenge before us.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): For years, my delegation, along with other friendly delegations, has attempted to arrive at a balanced draft resolution that would enjoy consensus and reflect the positive situation regarding the total elimination of Syria’s chemical-weapons programme. Once again, some friendly delegations informed us this year that there was no use in participating in informal meetings to discuss draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, since its sole sponsor takes into consideration only suggestions from the delegations of the United States, Britain and France, in addition to other States affiliated

with them. These States continue to ignore all that has been achieved towards totally eliminating the Syrian chemical-weapons programme, while the three States have decided to practice double standards by focusing on subjects that have no relation to the content of the draft resolution.

The delegation of the United States and other affiliated delegations repeatedly claim that they are eager to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). All reports, studies and research emphasize that the Israeli protectorate is the only entity that possesses nuclear arsenal, as well as a frightening chemical and biological arsenal, in the Middle East. However, all that has still not persuaded the United States and others to pressure Israel to join international conventions and treaties on the elimination of WMDs. All international reports unambiguously indicate that Israel has used radiological, chemical and biological weapons more than once against peoples of the region, in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, since 1948. The Israeli entity also supplies toxic chemicals to terrorist groups in Syria and, worse still, Israel supplies terrorists with Grad-type missiles equipped with chemical warheads. Thus, it supplies them with complete chemical weapons.

The 2009 Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48) confirmed that Israel had used white phosphorus and depleted uranium against civilians in Gaza. However, all that information has still not convinced the United States and other liars and hypocrites to investigate Israel’s WMD programmes and violations, which threaten international and regional peace and security.

My country’s Government is convinced that the use of WMDs, including chemical weapons, is unacceptable and immoral and must be condemned. As my country seeks to establish a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and WMDs, it demonstrates to the entire world our opposition to any type of chemical weapon. That is why it joined the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and submitted draft resolution S/2003/1208 to the Security Council in 2003 to free our region from those weapons. However, our efforts at the time were faced with a United States threat, leading to the failure of the draft resolution.

The Syrian Arab Republic is a full-fledged member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and engages in its meetings and discussions on various issues, like any other Member

State. Since joining the CWC, my country has been committed to implementing all the requirements as a member ahead of schedule and to the decisions of the OPCW. We have been cooperating positively with OPCW and United Nations staff. Such efforts have been repeatedly welcomed by the two organizations and international public opinion.

Despite the full cooperation of my country in various fields with the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), it has been proved that the Mechanism was exploited by some Western States, foremost among which were the United States, Britain and France, to make unfounded accusations against my country, contained in unprofessional and non-scientific reports that lack any physical evidence. Those accusations are also noted in draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10. The JIM and the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria refused to go to all places alleged to have seen chemical incidents in order to deal with them on the ground. Their excuses were unacceptable. However, they were cited in the reports of the JIM, whose work was ended because of its mistakes, non-professionalism and fabricated accusations pushed by the United States and Britain.

The Fact-finding Mission, some of whose reports are mentioned in the draft resolution, continues to operate in violation of the CWC and the terms of reference signed between the Syrian National Committee and the OPCW. The Mission conducts remote investigations. Is that not a strange way to prepare reports, when the Mission has not visited the sites where the alleged incidents occurred? There are three conditions that must be met in any credible investigation. Investigators must collect the samples themselves; the collection must be done on the alleged site; and the collection must be done as soon as possible. The Committee is aware that the Fact-finding Mission has met none of the three conditions. Instead, it depends on the open sources of terrorist groups and videos fabricated by terrorist organizations, first and foremost the White Helmets organization, created by Britain.

The Mission's work does not comply with the chain of custody stipulated in the Convention. I ask members to take note of the report by Ian Henderson, who travelled to Douma and refuted the chemical incident on the basis of information from the OPCW. In addition, 15 eyewitnesses — many of whom visited the OPCW in The Hague — have denied the use of any chemical use in Douma. Some of these eyewitnesses

had appeared in videos fabricated by the terrorists of the White Helmets organization based on orders from their operators, especially the British. Is it not odd that the Fact-finding Mission should produce samples of evidence six months after an alleged chemical incident? The Mission issued its final report on the allegations concerning the Douma incident, in order to cover up the trilateral aggression against my country by the United States, Britain and France. The Mission's work is absurd and cannot be tolerated. It works remotely from The Hague and from a country neighbouring Syria.

The draft resolution cites the adoption in June last year of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 at the fourth special session of the States parties to the CWC. In this regard, we reiterate that this decision is illegitimate, as it was adopted by fewer than half the member States, in breach of the CWC. It sets a dangerous precedent within the international order because a scientific and technical organization was given a mandate to conduct criminal investigations.

As to the initial Syrian declaration, it is merely a technical issue and Syria will discuss it with the OPCW in The Hague. In that regard, last month my country received the Declaration Assessment Team, whose director noted that the visit was successful and fruitful.

Given that the submitted draft resolution is politicized, biased and ignores the facts that we have mentioned, in particular in its fifth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16, my country's delegation calls on all States and urges all delegations to vote against those paragraphs and against the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Iran reaffirms its strong support for and commitment to the CWC as a unique, multilateral agreement that has codified and reinforced international norms against chemical weapons, made remarkable progress in their elimination and provided a framework for international cooperation and the exchange of scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities among States parties for peaceful purposes. It is essential to preserve the CWC's effectiveness and its implementing institution, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In fact, the draft resolution is expected to serve that purpose.

However, it is unfortunately being used for political ends rather than to contribute to the CWC's implementation. It is being used to highlight controversial issues and deepen divisions among the States parties, rather than to move them towards consensus. The draft resolution contributes to further confrontation and polarization among the States parties, rather than uniting them around the CWC's main objectives. It advocates a particular point of view on issues about which member States' opinions differ substantially, rather than providing a balanced and professional detachment from such positions.

It has been drafted to align with the specific political views held by a single group of States parties, thereby polarizing the OPCW and attempting to shape its Technical Secretariat into a political organ rather than a technical implementation body. The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. However, the condemnations of a State party to the Convention that has shown an unprecedented level of cooperation with the OPCW in destroying its chemical stockpiles in the shortest possible time are not acceptable, based as they are on unproven assumptions and unsubstantiated claims. Strict observance of the principles of impartiality and independence, as well as the preservation of the integrity of the chain of custody, is of the utmost importance in conducting investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons and drawing reliable and professional conclusions.

Some of those principles were not observed in preparing the relevant reports. Conclusions have been based not on authorized information but on speculation, assumptions, remote assessments, interviews with certain people and information from open sources and terrorist groups, which seriously undermines the reliability and credibility of the reports and their conclusions.

My delegation will vote against the draft resolution, as a number of its paragraphs are highly politicized. We hope that the politicization of the draft resolution and of the OPCW's work will end, thereby enabling the Committee to adopt a consensus-based draft resolution on CWC implementation in the future.

Ms. Rodríguez Martínez (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to explain its position on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition

of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Venezuela has signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention and does not possess such weapons. My country has always shared the key objective of strengthening and universalizing the Convention and the entire regime prohibiting chemical weapons. However, Venezuela wishes to express its concern about the progressive trend towards the politicization of those instruments for the geopolitical objectives of a few countries, to the detriment of the majority of the international community. In the particular case of the draft resolution, we regret the progressive trend towards a biased approach that deviates from the fundamental objective of strengthening and universalizing the Chemical Weapons Convention and ignores the need to improve the joint work of the international community in the prohibition, production and storage and use of such weapons.

For that reason, Venezuela calls for a return to the formulation of consensus language that allows us to truly fulfil what should be the key objective of the draft resolution and avoid specific points that lack legitimacy and recognition. Our country will therefore again have to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution, as we did last year. We call on members to take note of the fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16, which my delegation will vote against.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10 was submitted by the representative of Poland on 14 October. The sponsor of the draft resolution is listed in document A/C.1/74/L.10.

The Acting Chair: Separate, recorded votes have been requested on the fifth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16 of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10. I shall now put those paragraphs to the vote, one by one.

I shall first put to the vote the fifth preambular paragraph.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Myanmar, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, United Republic of

Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The fifth preambular paragraph was retained by 125 votes to 7, with 31 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 2 was retained by 116 votes to 13, with 36 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Indonesia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 3.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Suriname, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 3 was retained by 117 votes to 12, with 35 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 4.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania

Operative paragraph 4 was retained by 111 votes to 18, with 38 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 16.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint

Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 16 was retained by 106 votes to 13, with 46 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, as a whole. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece,

Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Cambodia, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Rwanda, Suriname, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, as a whole, was adopted by 147 votes to 7, with 24 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.16, entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction".

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.16 was submitted by the representative of India on 11 October. The sponsors of

the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/74/L.16. Guinea Bissau, Malawi and Burkina Faso have also become sponsors.

The Acting Chair: The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.16 was adopted.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.44, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.44 was submitted by the representative of Hungary on 17 October. The sponsor of the draft resolution is listed in document A/C.1/74/L.44.

The present oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 10 and 11 of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.44, the General Assembly would request that the Secretary-General continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to continue to provide such services as may be required for the conduct and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences; and appreciate that the meeting of States parties in Geneva, in December last year, adopted a set of financial measures, as set out in paragraphs 20 to 24 of its report (BWC/MSP/2018/6), including the establishment of a working capital fund as an interim measure, to be reviewed at the ninth Review Conference, and resolved to continue to monitor the financial situation of the Convention, and note that the 2018 meeting of States parties requested the Chair of the 2019 meeting of States parties, in close consultation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Implementation Support Unit, to report on the overall financial situation of the Convention, the implementation of the aforementioned measures and possible further measures to bring

about the timely payment of assessed contributions, as required, for consideration by the 2019 meeting of States parties.

It is recalled that all activities related to international conventions or treaties that, under their respective legal arrangements, ought to be financed outside the regular budget of the United Nations may be undertaken by the Secretariat only when sufficient funding is received in advance from States parties to those conventions. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.44, no additional requirements would arise under the proposed programme budget for 2020.

The Acting Chair: The sponsor of the draft resolution has expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.44 was adopted.

The Acting Chair: I now call on delegations wishing to make statements in explanation of vote after the voting.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): My delegation would like to explain its abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

Egypt actively participated in the negotiations leading to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and has always strongly supported its objectives, in line with our firm stance against all weapons of mass destruction. Egypt also continues to support and contribute to international efforts to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, including through the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Despite the draft resolution’s many shortcomings, my delegation voted in favour of its previous iterations for years, in a reiteration of Egypt’s principled position in support of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and firm condemnation of any use of such weapons by any party, in any circumstances. However, Egypt can no longer continue to support the

draft resolution at a time when many of its proponents are resisting any effort towards nuclear disarmament, including the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, while arguing that the security conditions are not conducive.

We reiterate that States that rely on nuclear weapons and strongly resist any genuine efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, based on arguments related to their strategic stability or the international security environment, are simply not in a position to preach on the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate that human values and moral standards are inseparable and that the security of some States is not more important than that of others.

Moreover, while we continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons by any party, in any circumstances, my delegation is again not in a position to take an informed decision in favour of several paragraphs related to the work and investigations of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, contained in recent versions of the draft resolution. We reiterate that the continued politicization of the draft resolution undermines its credibility, and we believe that the attribution of incidents involving the use of chemical weapons must be based on an independent, multilateral and evidence-based process within the framework of the United Nations.

Lastly, we also wish to reiterate that serious efforts to implement the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East could have saved the region and the world from the horrors of the incidents involving the actual use of chemical weapons in the region in recent years.

Mr. Mohd Nasir (Malaysia): Malaysia expresses its appreciation to the delegation of Poland for its work undertaken in presenting draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

Malaysia remains firm in its principled position with regard to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The existence of weapons of mass destruction — be they nuclear, chemical or biological — remains a significant threat to international peace and security. Malaysia is

fully supportive of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and recognizes the valuable contributions made by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in upholding that legal instrument. The CWC, adopted 27 years ago, was a major breakthrough, as it was the first comprehensive multilateral treaty outlawing an entire class of WMDs. Malaysia commends the tireless efforts of the OPCW in realizing the objectives and purpose of the CWC. We are pleased that to date, 97 per cent of the world's chemical-weapon stockpiles have been eliminated.

Despite that remarkable progress, we regret and condemn the re-emergence of chemical-weapons use of late, which is morally unacceptable and a flagrant breach of international law, especially the CWC. While noting decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, adopted on 27 June 2018 during the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Malaysia is cautious in its approach with regard to the potential implications of the decision. Malaysia maintains its position that the special session of the Conference was not the appropriate venue for States parties to decide on matters that would affect the scope of the OPCW's work and the Convention. Malaysia reiterates the need to protect the OPCW, a respected technical organization, from extraneous influences on the conduct of its work. On that basis, Malaysia abstained in the voting on paragraphs 4 and 16 of the draft resolution, as we did last year at the seventy-third session of the First Committee.

Mr. Menashe Moreno (Israel): I would like to explain our vote with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10.

Israel voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole and its separate paragraphs. The prevalent use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, which acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and vowed to forgo its entire chemical-weapons programme, is clearly stipulated, *inter alia*, in the 2016 report (see S/2016/738) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The latest report of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic joins the numerous reports of and statements made by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) regarding gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian declaration. That is a source of concern that must be addressed clearly and firmly by the international community in order to prevent

further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons. We hope that the new mechanism, the Investigation and Identification Team, will succeed in carrying out the task of attributing chemical attacks to their true perpetrators.

The use of chemical weapons is a deeply concerning development, especially in the light of the ambitions of State and non-State actors to acquire and use those capabilities in the future. Such cases continue to demonstrate the erosion of the chemical taboo and that terrorists are motivated to follow suit. It is vital that the international community step up its efforts to deal with that challenge effectively and curtail any chance of chemical weapons being used in the future by State and non-State actors.

At this point in time, it is also evident that Syria's residual chemical capabilities, including research and development, must be fully dismantled. Any other course of action will allow the Syrian regime to continue its shameful pattern of behaviour and eventually rehabilitate its chemical-weapon programme. We therefore commend the French initiative, the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. We also commend the establishment of the attribution mechanism under the CWC to hold accountable the perpetrators of those horrible acts.

Finally, Israel, for its part, voted in favour of the draft resolution due to its long-standing support for it and the goals and purposes of the CWC, which we signed in 1993. Israel maintains a close dialogue with the OPCW and is party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Ms. Bhandari (India): I have asked for the floor to explain India's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

India voted in favour of the draft resolution, given the high importance that we attach to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and all its provisions aimed at addressing concerns regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons. India has always maintained that any use of chemical weapons shows a complete disregard for humankind and is reprehensible and contrary to the provisions of the CWC, as well as to accepted international norms. India is against the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone

and in any circumstances. The perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable.

Mr. Zhang Xin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China voted against draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”, as a whole and against paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16. We abstained in the voting on the fifth preambular paragraph. I wish to take this opportunity to briefly elaborate on China’s position in that regard.

China has always firmly opposed the use of chemical weapons by any country, organization or individual, regardless of the circumstances or purpose. China currently has the following main concerns with regard to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC).

First, under the leadership of a certain country, many issues that should have been resolved by consensus have been put to a vote, which has escalated political confrontation among States parties. Secondly, under the leadership of that same country, matters such as attribution have not been resolved as they should be within the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), in accordance with the provisions of the CWC. Thirdly, many important elements of the CWC have not been paid sufficient attention. For example, a certain country has failed to destroy its chemical-weapon stockpile by the stipulated deadline, and Japan is delaying the destruction of its abandoned chemical weapons.

China hopes that, out of mutual respect and while seeking common ground, parties will narrow their differences and build consensus through dialogue and consultation, jointly respond to the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons, safeguard the authority and effectiveness of the Convention and avoid actively impacting the future development of the Convention and politicizing the work of the OPCW.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to explain Japan’s reasons for voting in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10 as a whole and its separate paragraphs.

The use of chemical weapons is not permissible. We condemn in the strongest terms the use of such weapons in Malaysia, Iraq, Syria and the United Kingdom,

which are tragedies that should not be repeated. In order to prevent the use of chemical weapons, the perpetrators, including non-State actors, should be identified and held accountable. In that regard, Japan attaches great importance to the implementation of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, on a mechanism to identify perpetrators, which was adopted at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in June 2018, and welcomes the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Japan is confident that the draft resolution on the CWC contributes to the reinforcement of the Convention and the OPCW. Japan will continue to cooperate with the international community to realize a world free of chemical weapons.

Mr. Yakut (Turkey): I am delivering Turkey’s explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution and its related paragraphs, in line with its principled position and strong support for the Chemical Weapons Convention as an essential pillar of the international disarmament and counterproliferation architecture. We would again like to stress that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances is a crime against humankind. Turkey condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons that has re-emerged in certain parts of the world.

The case of Syria is a matter of particular concern in that regard. The impartiality, objectivity and professionalism of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in investigating chemical-weapons attacks in Syria and other places is highly commendable, as it contributes to our endeavours towards seeking accountability and combating impunity. Having said that, we would have liked to see stronger wording in the draft resolution specifically condemning those who have used chemical weapons, particularly the Syrian regime. The regime is responsible for repeatedly using chemical weapons against its own people, as has been well documented by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Moreover, the draft resolution should not have shied away from reflecting the latest developments in the Syrian chemical file, such as the establishment of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team. The full and effective implementation of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, on attribution, taken at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, on 27 June 2018, remains an urgent priority. In line with that decision, the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team was a positive step towards identifying the perpetrators of chemical-weapons attacks in Syria. We urge the Syrian regime to cooperate with the Team, especially by providing access to places where chemical attacks were committed. The draft resolution would have been better if it had reflected the actual situation by taking into account the ongoing cooperation between the OPCW's Secretariat and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. That could have significantly encouraged Member States in their efforts to combat impunity for chemical-weapons use in Syria.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our strong support for the important work of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Declaration Assessment Team, and we underline the Syrian regime's responsibility to fully cooperate with the Declaration Assessment Team in order to eliminate the ongoing concerns about the declaration and destruction of its chemical weapons and chemical-weapon production facilities.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I am delivering an explanation of vote on behalf of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and my own country, the United States of America, on draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Our respective countries voted in favour of the draft resolution, as we believe that it sufficiently reflects

the objectives and goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and supports the extraordinary work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We express our deepest appreciation to the brave women and men of the OPCW for their dedication and professionalism in investigating chemical-weapons attacks in Syria and other places, when called upon to do so. While we were striving for stronger language specifically condemning those countries that have used chemical weapons and emphasizing support for the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team, the draft resolution nevertheless highlights the grave concerns of chemical-weapons use that we have seen in Syria, Malaysia, Iraq and the United Kingdom.

Nearly every country in the world, including Syria and Russia, is party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Yet, the Al-Assad regime continues to flout its international obligations and disregard the standards of basic humanity by repeatedly using chemical weapons against its own people. In the simplest terms, the Al-Assad regime must cease the use of chemical weapons; provide a complete and accurate declaration of all its chemical-weapon holdings, materials and equipment; and verifiably eliminate the entirety of its chemical-weapons programme, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Flouting international obligations without consequences breeds impunity and undermines global objectives towards international security, arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. It is imperative that all responsible nations stand against chemical-weapons use or risk it becoming normalized. In that regard, we call on Russia to not only take concrete steps to prevent the continued use of chemical weapons by the Al-Assad regime, but also to change its own behaviour and abide by its obligations under the CWC.

It was only one year ago that Russia used chemical weapons in a brazen assassination attempt in the United Kingdom that ultimately resulted in the death of one British citizen, significant injuries and the endangerment of countless others. We saw the use of chemical weapons in Malaysia to assassinate Kim Jong-nam and chemical-weapons use by non-State actors, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, in both Iraq and Syria. Those actions were abhorrent, and the draft resolution rightly condemns and recognizes our collective view that such actions are reprehensible

and must end and that the perpetrators involved must be held to account.

We call upon all responsible nations to renew their solemn commitment to a world free of chemical weapons and not acquiesce to non-compliance by States parties to the CWC or ignore such concerns. Silence and inaction only further embolden those who seek to use chemical weapons, to the detriment of all humankind. As responsible nations, we must be unwavering in our resolve on such matters and have the courage of our convictions to banish the scourge of chemical weapons forever to the past.

Any effort to ignore those serious issues undermines the work that we have advanced to date, detracts from the extraordinary efforts undertaken by the OPCW and the United Nations and constitutes a grave challenge to the CWC. We must continue to collectively condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by any State or non-State actor and to hold all those who would use such weapons accountable. To that end, we commend the commitments made by the participating States of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and invite others to join.

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

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We can expect nothing less from the representative of Israel, whose regime has provided terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Al-Nusra Front, and their affiliated groups, with toxic chemical substances. In addition, those groups have been supplied with missiles carrying chemical warheads. Does the Committee not find it shameful that the representative of the Israeli regime makes such accusations when the entity he represents has used a number of chemical and biological weapons, along with white phosphorus and depleted uranium? The Israeli regime has used every kind of internationally prohibited weapon. It has threatened to use nuclear weapons.

All of those actions are documented in United Nations and international reports, including the Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48), of 2009. Was it not hypocritical for the Israeli representative to state

that his entity voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.10, while the entity he represents refuses to accede to any convention on chemical, biological, nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction? That is hypocrisy itself. The Israeli regime is the one that brought terrorism to our region.

Pertaining to the comments made by the representative of the Turkish regime, that regime has allowed terrorists to use Turkish territory to conduct training in the use of chemical substances. The Turkish regime has also allowed weapons, ammunition, materiel and toxic chemical materials to be transferred to the terrorists now present on the Syrian territory. In that regard, there is a new development. The Turkish regime is allowing the transfer of missiles equipped with chemical warheads following their preparation on Turkish territory or elsewhere. We have sent several letters to the Security Council, most recently two months ago, in which we noted the work of experts from the United States and Turkey who have recently supervised the distribution of 50 missiles equipped with chemical warheads.

The representative of the United States Administration spoke on behalf of a group of affiliated States, trying to evade his country's responsibility, and that of others on whose behalf he spoke, for providing terrorists with chemical weapons and training them in their use. The regimes of the United States, Britain and France are fully responsible for supplying terrorists with and training them in the use of toxic chemical substances and chemical weapons to be deployed on Syrian territory. Some of the States on behalf of which the United States representative spoke have dispatched chemical materials from their laboratories. Perhaps one day we will have enough time to elaborate in detail and name the specific individuals who are responsible for that.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Unlike you, Madam Chair, I cannot thank my American colleague for his statement, which was full of lies and cannot be interpreted as the statement of a responsible State that is fulfilling its responsibilities under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and other important international instruments on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

I note that to date no evidence has been submitted regarding the alleged involvement of Russia or its citizens in the incidents in Salisbury and Amesbury. We express our deep condolences to the citizens of the United Kingdom who experienced that tragedy. We were prepared to participate in the investigation of those incidents, in close cooperation with the British authorities. Regrettably, however, the British authorities rejected our proposals to closely cooperate to establish the truth. Moreover, during the discussions on those incidents, it came to light that the so-called dangerous chemical substances that belong to the category known as novichok have long been developed by Western States. Several statements have been issued in that regard, including at the highest level, not by Russian representatives but from countries where that type of research has been conducted for a long time.

With regard to Russia's implementation of its obligations under the CWC, the Russian Federation has fully, responsibly and absolutely transparently implemented and will continue to implement all of its obligations under the Convention, unlike the United States, which continues to not only maintain 2,000 tons

of the most dangerous chemical substances, which, if used, could destroy several countries, but also to issue licences and certificates for the development of such substances. I therefore request our United States colleagues to choose their words very carefully when delivering statements.

The Acting Chair: We have exhausted the time available to us this morning. There is one more request to exercise the right of reply, which will be heard tomorrow. The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow, 5 November, at 10 a.m. sharp in this conference room. The Committee will take up the remaining explanations of vote under cluster 2, to be followed by action on the draft resolutions and decisions under the clusters listed in informal paper No.2.

I wish to inform delegations that the amendments posted on e-deleGATE to the draft resolutions under cluster 3 were made not by the main sponsors of the proposals, but by another delegation. The Secretariat will circulate a revised informal paper No. 2 to reflect any further updates.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.