



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

First Committee

5th meeting

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New York

Official Records

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

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the rolling list of speakers for this phase of our work closed at 6 p.m. on Friday, 11 October, following the decision made at the resumption of the meeting on Tuesday, 8 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.2). I hope that all delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate were able to inscribe their names on the list before that deadline. Whenever two meetings devoted to the same agenda item are scheduled on the same day, delegations are kindly reminded that they should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day. Delegations are also reminded that the list of speakers for our thematic discussions will open tomorrow, Tuesday, 15 October.

Before turning to today's list of speakers, I urge all delegations taking the floor to keep in mind the suggested time limit for statements. I will continue to count on their cooperation in limiting statements to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 13 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. I encourage representatives who have longer statements to deliver an abridged version and provide the full statement to be posted on the PaperSmart web portal. I also encourage everyone to speak at a reasonable speed in order to allow for adequate interpretation.

Mr. Prongthura (Thailand): Thailand congratulates you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the First Committee. We are confident that you will guide us through a successful and meaningful seventy-fourth session. Our thanks also go to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her able team for their continued support in advancing disarmament issues.

Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Disarmament is a precondition for durable peace, security, development and human rights. As a staunch advocate of sustainable development, with a people-centric focus, and also as the current Chair of ASEAN, under the theme "Advancing partnership for sustainable development", Thailand will spare no effort in advancing and upholding our commitment to achieving sustainable peace, security and development, with disarmament as an important instrument in that endeavour, of course.

Thailand is guided by its steadfast belief in the mutually reinforcing nature of disarmament mechanisms and development approaches for creating peaceful, sustainable and prosperous societies. Nowhere is that guiding principle more apparent than in our disarmament efforts in the area of conventional weapons. We are fully aware of the danger that areas littered with mines pose to human lives and livelihoods, and as a committed State party to the Anti-Personnel

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Mine Ban Convention, we are determined to clear all landmines in Thailand by 2023. We can proudly declare that 86 per cent of our total contaminated area is now mine-free as of this year. Thailand also upholds the Arms Trade Treaty as a core multilateral instrument that promotes transparency and accountability for the use and transfer of arms, while also bearing in mind humanitarian principles. We are therefore committed to working for its ratification.

This year, we have witnessed heightened tensions that are clearly undermining our efforts and progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that constructive dialogue among all stakeholders is essential to keeping us on the right track. The upcoming 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be a significant opportunity for us all to rebuild trust and move forward on disarmament pledges. As a demonstration of our ongoing efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, we want to underscore the importance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which works to complement the nuclear disarmament efforts under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially the obligations under article VI of the NPT. We therefore congratulate all Member States that signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons during the high-level week last month, and we call on all others to do so without delay so as to bring the Treaty into force as soon as possible.

With regard to Iran's nuclear programme, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a landmark achievement that underscores the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy for building peace and security in the Middle East. We reiterate our support for the JCPOA and call on Iran to return to full compliance. We further call on all the parties concerned to work constructively together to find balanced solutions that can preserve the JCPOA.

Thailand welcomes the concerted efforts made by all parties to engage in dialogue with a view to making positive progress on the Korean peninsula. We hope that these encouraging efforts will continue in good faith and deliver tangible outcomes for a nuclear-weapon-free Korean peninsula.

Regarding other weapons of mass destruction, we reject any use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. We reaffirm our steadfast commitment

to the Chemical Weapons Convention and will therefore continue to work closely with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on all its aspects. Thailand remains committed to upholding the norm against the use of biological weapons, while also encouraging the peaceful applications of bioscience and technology for sustainable development. We believe that it is imperative to further strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a legally binding verification protocol.

While it is opening up new potential, the rapid and unchecked development of new technologies is also creating potential arenas for conflict, especially in outer space and in the area of information and communication technologies. In that regard, Thailand fully supports existing frameworks and welcomes new initiatives, which should of course be formulated in accordance with international law, aimed at ensuring that such technologies are not used for non-peaceful purposes but rather to support and nurture sustainable-development gains.

In conclusion, in a deteriorating international security environment that is testing our multilateral disarmament architecture, we must remain steadfast and hopeful. With disarmament, a world of sustainable and lasting peace and security is within our reach. Thailand urges all parties to reinvigorate and substantiate all our efforts to create a more secure and peaceful world for present and future generations.

Mrs. Wang (Singapore): I congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

We reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, which calls for urgent and collective action to secure our common future. Nuclear weapons have been used only twice, in 1945, yet nearly 14,000 nuclear warheads still exist today, and nuclear-weapon States continue to modernize their arsenals. Against the backdrop of today's fragmented and unstable security environment, where multilateralism is coming under increasing pressure, my delegation believes that there are three pressing issues that the First Committee must address in order to enable us to pursue our ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

First, the global community must continue to affirm and strengthen the international nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Recent developments have threatened international peace and security. The way forward on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is unclear following the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement and Iran's decision in July to cease implementing some of its commitments. Singapore urges all parties to fulfil their JCPOA obligations and calls on Iran to continue its full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and international partners. We hope that all the parties will continue to engage in dialogue to sustain internationally negotiated agreements. Following the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, we look forward to a successful renewal of the New START Treaty. On recent developments in Asia, Singapore urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by its international obligations and reiterates its support for the country's peaceful denuclearization in order to avoid undermining the recent progress made.

The global community must preserve and strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force. We commend Malaysia's efforts as Chair of the third NPT Preparatory Committee. Despite its lack of a consensus outcome document, States parties should build on its discussions with a view to achieving a successful 2020 Review Conference. We call on the international community to continue taking concrete steps to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force and to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We also look forward to a successful session of the Disarmament Commission next year. Together with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, those instruments provide the international community with multiple pathways to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Singapore supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which represent concrete steps under article VII of the NPT. We reaffirm our commitment to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and look forward to continued dialogue with nuclear-weapon States on their accession without reservations to the protocol of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. We also welcome all efforts to achieve genuine and lasting peace in a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East.

Secondly, Member States must continue discussions on the development of common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms in order to enable us to end illicit trade and to record stockpiles. As a committed signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty, Singapore encourages all States to report international transfers of arms so as to ensure greater accountability and the establishment of common international standards. On a related note, Singapore was pleased to have the opportunity to participate and contribute to the discussions earlier this year of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Thirdly, we believe that it is important for Member States to pursue the establishment of norms of responsible State behaviour in new arenas of conflict, such as cyberspace and outer space. Cyberattacks can undermine the promise of a common digital future. Singapore welcomes the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, and looks forward to their substantive discussions, building on the work done by previous such groups. Outer space is also at risk of an arms race. Singapore looks forward to exploring practical initiatives, such as an open and inclusive international framework, in order to ensure the security and sustainability of this global commons.

Singapore takes its international non-proliferation and disarmament obligations seriously. We have aligned our export regulations with international export-control regimes and are fully committed to implementing all the relevant Security Council resolutions, including with a view to preventing the illicit trafficking of weapons of mass destruction. Singapore is a co-leader of the work of the Financial Action Task Force's Policy Development Group in safeguarding the integrity of the global financial system from proliferation financing. We also participate actively in international counter-proliferation initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative's exercises.

National and regional initiatives must complement United Nations efforts to address interconnected and transboundary international security challenges. We must redouble our commitment to finding common ground and taking substantive action to secure the twin goals of complete nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation. Singapore is committed to playing a constructive and active role alongside all States to that end.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3) and would like to add the following additional comments in its national capacity.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, as well as their re-emergence in some theatres of operations, remains a major concern. First and foremost, the proven use of chemical weapons in Syria is unacceptable and constitutes an extremely serious threat. That is why it is essential that the draft resolution to be discussed again this year in the First Committee be firm and substantial. Strengthening the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons through the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team, which we welcome, was therefore crucial. The use of chemical weapons has broken a fundamental taboo and it is vital to implement sanctions in that regard. France has therefore launched the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, in which we have been joined by 39 partners.

With regard to Iran, the 2015 Vienna Agreement is a robust agreement that strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It remains in force, and with its European partners, France is fully committed to supporting its implementation, which must be rigorous and transparent in all of its provisions. My country is concerned about Iran's implementation of its most recent announcements. Iran must return to full respect for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and we will continue to work with our partners to achieve that. We also support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which must continue its inspections and fulfil its mandate in every way. Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which endorses the JCPOA, must be fully respected. Iran has continued to develop its national programme and increase the number of missile launches designed to carry nuclear weapons. It must also immediately end its illicit transfers of missiles and ballistic technologies to State and non-State actors in the region, as required by Security Council resolutions. With regard to North Korea, we are compelled to conclude that its nuclear programme remains operational, as the IAEA's reports indicate. Its ballistic programme is in full development,

as demonstrated by its repeated launches of ballistic missiles in recent months. No serious action has been taken to dismantle such weapons.

In the past few years disarmament has too often been approached separately, disconnected from the security environment. It was precisely that ignorance of the current context that led to the conclusion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons through the so-called humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament. For France, as for a large number of States in Europe and Asia especially, nuclear deterrence continues to play a role in preserving regional and international security and stability.

As Chair of this year's Meeting of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, France welcomes the quality of the work and hopes that momentum will continue in the run-up to the Convention's ninth Review Conference. Given the danger posed by the biological threat, we must work for cooperation among the States parties to the Convention, which is the objective of the French chairmanship of the 2019 Meeting.

In Europe, the dismantling of the security architecture inherited from the Cold War is very worrying. To take just one example, the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, combined with the expiration of the New START Treaty, in 2021, could take us back to a situation that we have not seen since the 1960s, with a total absence of any regulation of the United States-Russian nuclear competition. Today the collective approach seems to be gradually fading, despite stringent legislation. That is why France and Germany have launched the Alliance for Multilateralism, an informal association that already includes more than 50 countries that believe that a multilateral order based on international law is the only reliable guarantee of peace. France has also decided to support several actions on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, and we have particularly endorsed actions 9, 10 and 11 of the Agenda.

I would now like to turn to some major forthcoming events, the first of which is the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in May 2020. The United States and Russia, which still hold more than 90 per cent of all nuclear arsenals, must continue their efforts to reduce their stockpiles. That involves extending the New START Treaty in 2021 and negotiating a successor treaty. The negotiation in the Conference on

Disarmament of a fissile material cut-off treaty, based on the Shannon mandate, is essential. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains essential to preventing the development of new weapons. Finally, work on nuclear-disarmament verification, strategic risk reduction, negative security assurances and transparency are also important for building confidence among nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. We must respond firmly to nuclear proliferation crises, including by strengthening the IAEA and combating proliferation flows. We must also continue to promote the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions and with full respect for the environment. Lastly, we must continue to work to establish a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

In the area of conventional arms, we must do our utmost to ensure that the Arms Trade Treaty becomes truly global and that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons continues to be implemented. Finally, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should enable States to take action, especially in combating the diversion of such weapons to criminal and terrorist groups.

The civil and military uses of outer space and cyberspace offer important development opportunities but pose many security challenges. Today, space is at the heart of a strategic and industrial competition affecting both civil and military applications. It is more essential than ever to ensure the safety, security and long-term viability of space activities. France continues to promote increased engagement with a view to achieving standards for responsible behaviour in outer space, including by prohibiting the intentional creation of various types of long-lived orbital debris. Lastly, I want to point out that we must find lasting solutions to disarmament conventions' financing difficulties. We will also remain vigilant to ensure that the requirements of multilingualism continue to be respected in such forums.

In conclusion, the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session is once again beginning its work in a difficult context. We believe that further transregional dialogue is needed. It is incumbent on us to leave behind the logic of stigmatization and return to the demanding path of consensus.

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

Japan remains committed to working with the international community in order to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. We are living in a harsh and unstable security environment that is characterized by growing international tensions, a changing global balance of power, recurrent attacks by terrorists and violent extremists and emerging technologies that create new challenges, including in cyberspace and outer space. In the circumstances, and given that international security and disarmament are mutually reinforcing, both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States must promote concrete and realistic measures. One of the most important efforts in that regard is maintaining and strengthening the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is clear that the erosion of the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation order does not benefit any State. We should improve the international security environment and pursue the substantive advancement of nuclear disarmament under the NPT with the aim of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Next year we will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force in 1970. We encourage all Member States to bear in mind their commitments and obligations under all aspects of the NPT, including article VI, in order to help views converge and to find common ground for a successful outcome of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, enhancing transparency and mutual confidence through reporting and interactive dialogue, nuclear risk reduction, substantive discussions aimed at starting negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, various efforts to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible, practical contributions to ensuring nuclear-disarmament verification, and education on disarmament and non-proliferation are examples of actions that all Member States can undertake jointly.

What is more, such joint efforts will help to rebuild cooperation and mutual trust among Member States. During this session Japan will submit a new

draft resolution, entitled “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”, which focuses on the upcoming NPT Review Conference. It includes a list of six actions and stresses the need for sincere dialogue on medium- and long-term issues that are difficult to resolve immediately in the current security environment, such as the way that we treat nuclear policy and doctrines within nuclear-disarmament discussions. We hope that the draft resolution will garner wide support among Member States.

Mr. Horne (Australia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

Japan welcomed the Stockholm ministerial meeting on nuclear disarmament held in June, and the July plenary meeting on Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND). The Stockholm meeting helped to build momentum for nuclear disarmament through participation at the political level and the CEND meeting contributed to confidence-building through its interactive discussions among participants. We hope that the outcomes of those meetings will be shared with all Member States and promote further discussions, in other disarmament forums as well as those under the NPT, including the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Furthermore, the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament has met five times since 2017 and has discussed its four working guidelines for nuclear disarmament. We hope to utilize the report of its Chair, which will hopefully be released next week, to make concrete proposals at the NPT, the CD and other disarmament forums.

In the face of situations that hinder the progress of nuclear disarmament, Japan deeply regrets North Korea’s repeated launches of ballistic missiles, which are in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of North Korea’s nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programmes, related facilities and ballistic missiles of all ranges, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We also call on all Member States to fully implement those resolutions.

The deteriorating international security environment, which is characterized by global tensions, regional conflicts and other pressing challenges, underscores the importance of maintaining international norms that prohibit weapons of mass destruction such as biological and chemical weapons.

The use of chemical weapons in the world has become a burning issue in recent years, and Japan fully supports the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in identifying the perpetrators of their use. We are also committed to strengthening the regime of the Biological Weapons Convention and have made a significant contribution to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in order to facilitate seminars and workshops for that purpose. Japan remains committed to tackling threats related to weapons of mass destruction through our existing disarmament architecture.

Given the potential impact of accelerating scientific and technological developments on conventional weapons, we welcome the active discussions by the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and we will continue to contribute to those thorough and constructive discussions. Japan supports the priority given by the President of the sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty to promoting transparency and information-sharing in order to prevent diversion and continues to engage with States that are not party to the Treaty, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament is a useful initiative that paves the way for disarmament by laying out various options to address the issue. We believe it is an excellent initiative for promoting dialogue and enhancing trust-building. Together with the United Nations and Member States, Japan is ready to translate its implementation plan into concrete action.

In conclusion, I believe we need to focus on implementation, interaction and initiative through professional, proactive and pragmatic approaches, in order to be able to foster united action at this critical and important juncture.

Ms. Higgin (New Zealand): The New Zealand delegation would like to convey its best wishes to the Chair as he guides the First Committee this year in its annual stocktaking of developments in disarmament and international security. His task is not an easy one. He is presiding over our Committee at a time when as Secretary-General Guterres observed at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) earlier this year, we see that States are seeking security not in the proven collective value of diplomacy and dialogue but in the development and

accumulation of new weapons. In his farewell speech earlier this year, also at the CD, Mr. Michael Møller, outgoing Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, drew lessons from history in alerting us to the danger that whenever States seek security not in the collective value of diplomacy and dialogue but in the false protection of weapons, they are sleepwalking into disaster.

The current disarmament and global security scene is undoubtedly a difficult one. One of the few prospects for optimism in fact lies in the Secretary-General's own actions, in his efforts to promote dialogue and more positive security outcomes via the launch last year of his Agenda for Disarmament. As he has said, the Agenda was created to serve as a tool to support the work of Member States. Indeed, the responsibility lies with all of us, the Member States, to halt the arms race, restore value to diplomacy and dialogue and recommit to disarmament and the vision of the Charter of the United Nations. That is certainly the direction that the Secretary-General's Agenda points us in. In response to it, New Zealand has selected three disarmament-related items as our primary focus for specific follow-up action.

First, we have undertaken to renew our efforts in support of the Agenda's Action 6, which addresses the risk posed by the ongoing existence of nuclear weapons. Beyond the support we gave to negotiating and concluding the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, much of New Zealand's recent work on reducing the risks of the use of nuclear weapons has been centred on our membership of the De-Alerting Group, of which we are currently Coordinator. Since its establishment in 2007, the De-Alerting Group has worked to urge a lowered launch readiness for nuclear-weapon systems as a concrete step towards nuclear disarmament, but also as a risk-reduction measure. We agree with the Secretary-General's observation that de-alerting is one aspect of nuclear risk reduction on which we should be able to make progress. The De-Alerting Group will be pushing for that at next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Secondly, New Zealand will give strong support to the Agenda's Action 14, which is focused on avoiding the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. As a member for some years of the core group on explosive weapons in populated areas, we welcome the Agenda's support for action to redress both the immediate and

long-term patterns of harm done to civilians and civilian infrastructure by explosive weapons with wide-area effects. We are very grateful to the Government of Austria for its recent hosting of the Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare and welcome the agreement made at the Conference to move forward on a political declaration, an instrument that will help to focus attention on the importance of full compliance with international humanitarian law. We hope that our work in this area and the conclusion of the political declaration next year in Dublin will be able to have a measurable impact on this very real problem, which is so apparent in conflicts today.

New Zealand's third lead area relates to Action 20 and its focus on the violence and insecurity that small arms create in many parts of the globe. My country has been a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its adoption here at the United Nations in 2013. Our formal support to this item reflects our desire to continue building on New Zealand's commitment to the ATT and our ongoing outreach activities on it, as well as other aspects of small-arms issues, which have an important part to play in terms of the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, including in my own region of the Pacific.

New Zealand looks forward to working with all the States that have volunteered to work on those as well as on other items for action under the Agenda for Disarmament. We share the Secretary-General's hope that the Agenda will serve as a catalyst for new ideas and new ways of working together, so that diplomacy and dialogue can be fostered and disarmament restored to the centre of the international community's common efforts for peace and security.

Mr. Phansourivong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I would like to begin by congratulating the Chair and the other members of the Bureau of the First Committee on their election.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Nuclear weapons remain a matter of serious concern for international peace and security. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional detonations remains, which exposes humankind and the environment

to their catastrophic effects. We therefore believe that their total elimination is the only fundamental guarantee against their use or threat of use. The Lao People's Democratic Republic supports the creation of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, which have significantly contributed to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We therefore support the South-East Asian region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter. Given the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is essential that we undertake effective measures in good faith aimed at fully implementing article VI of the NPT in order to bridge the legal gap on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. My delegation supports the implementation of the Treaty's three pillars of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, because we firmly believe that they serve the best interests of the international community.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic continues to support the efforts of the international community to achieve the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. In September we therefore ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we hope that other Member States will do the same in order to facilitate the Treaty's entry into force as soon as possible, so that it can contribute to the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. My delegation also welcomed the General Assembly meeting held in September to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We should redouble our efforts to raise public awareness and promote education on the danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, so that future generations will not go down the path of acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We also want to underline the importance of ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which aims to promote nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, the lack of progress in that regard remains a concern. We hope that those States that have not done so will sign and ratify the CTBT.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes the convening of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and

telecommunications in the context of international security, providing a good opportunity for Member States to share views on this important issue, and especially to further develop rules, norms and principles on the responsible behaviour of States in this area in the context of international security.

For our part, as a small country with limited resources but firm political will, the Lao People's Democratic Republic supports international efforts to achieve disarmament and international security. We have therefore become a State party to a number of international instruments on disarmament and are committed to fulfilling our international obligations under the treaties to which we are party.

I would like to touch on the danger of cluster munitions, which have indiscriminate and dangerous long-term effects on people and development. Cluster munitions were the most heavily used weapon in my country during the war, and unexploded ordnance continues to kill and maim our people and hinder the country's development. It is not known how many years it will take to clear the areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance, because they are so large. We need huge resources to support that work. For that reason, as the Committee is aware, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been working nationally to implement its national sustainable development goal 18, entitled "Lives safe from unexploded ordnance". We therefore call on the international community to support our efforts to implement that goal and the other Sustainable Development Goals as well.

In conclusion, I urge Member States to develop strong political will and make concerted efforts to advance and realize our ultimate goals of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control through dialogue and negotiations, which will enable us to focus our resources on poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

We are meeting against an international backdrop that is characterized by serious and growing threats to international peace and security and a progressive erosion of multilateralism, the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and multilateral disarmament forums. The development of new nuclear-weapon systems and the modernization of

existing forces and arsenals, the strengthened role of those weapons in the military defence and security doctrines of some nuclear-weapon States, increases in military expenditures, the proliferation of sophisticated conventional weapons and unconventional wars, threats of military intervention and attempts to reimpose a unipolar order based on a disregard for international treaties, together with the multiplication of unilateral sanctions, all undermine the international order and threaten the peace and stability of all our peoples.

Achieving nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority in the field of disarmament. The mere existence of nuclear weapons threatens the survival of the human race. It is deplorable that 74 years after the criminal bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, approximately 13,865 of those lethal weapons continue to exist, with 3,750 of them deployed and 2,000 operationally alert. We are deeply concerned about the United States Nuclear Posture Review, which lowers the threshold for contemplating the use of nuclear weapons, including in response to so-called non-nuclear strategic threats, and supports the possibility of resuming explosive nuclear tests for the security and effectiveness of the country's nuclear arsenal. The United States, the only country to have used nuclear weapons, which it has done twice, the world leader in conducting nuclear tests and the country that is investing the most in such weapons, is starting a new arms race, while withdrawing from and breaching international agreements on disarmament and arms control such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for Iran. We firmly reject that stance, which runs counter to the legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and commitments to nuclear disarmament. We also firmly oppose security policies and military doctrines based on nuclear deterrence. We would like to remind the Committee of the words of Fidel Castro Ruz, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, when he told the General Assembly in 1979,

“Enough of the illusion that problems of the world can be solved by nuclear weapons. Bombs may kill the hungry, the sick and the ignorant; but bombs cannot kill hunger, disease and ignorance”.
(A/34/PV.31, para. 146)

The only effective way of avoiding the terrible impact of nuclear weapons is their verifiable, transparent, irreversible and total elimination. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States can show political will

and allow the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach substantive recommendations and advance nuclear disarmament. We support the convening in November of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, and we hope that results will be achieved at the upcoming NPT Review Conference. As the fifth State to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Cuba will continue to ensure its swift entry into force and implementation.

My country supports the prohibition and complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction as the only effective guarantee of the prevention of their use by any actor under any circumstances. We reaffirm our commitment to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Attempts to create mechanisms outside the scope of those Conventions or to modify the technical mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are unacceptable. Declared chemical-weapon stockpiles have not yet all been destroyed, with the United States being the only nuclear-weapon State that has not complied with that legal obligation. We will continue to support a legally binding protocol that can strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. It was only the steadfast opposition of the United States in 2001 that made it impossible to achieve that objective.

We reject the imposition of unilateral coercive measures and sanctions aimed at prohibiting or limiting the legitimate right of States to access and use nuclear energy, biological agents and chemical substances for peaceful purposes. The economic, commercial and financial blockade that the United States Government has imposed on Cuba for more than 60 years is the main obstacle to my country's international cooperation and economic and technological development in those areas.

The scourge of illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons affects most of the regions of the world. According to its own media, the United States, which produces and exports more firearms than any other country, has so far this year been the scene of 300 shootings that have caused more than 8,000 deaths, and has done nothing about it. We reiterate our commitment to implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the outcome documents of its Review Conferences, which

acknowledge the right of States to acquire and possess weapons for their legitimate defence and security needs.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is the ideal forum for negotiating a legally binding instrument that prohibits autonomous lethal weapons and regulates semi-autonomous weapons, including military attack drones. We welcome the successful commencement of work in the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. We reiterate our repudiation of the covert and illegal use of information and communications technologies to subvert States' legal and political order. We also condemn the militarization of cyberspace and outer space.

We will continue to demand respect for international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, as well as a commitment to multilateralism in disarmament negotiations, including the preservation and consolidation of the disarmament machinery.

Mr. Purev (Mongolia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair on his leadership of the First Committee and the other members of the Bureau on their election. We wish them every success in fulfilling their important functions and want to assure them of our full support and cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3). Building on that, I would like to add some comments in my national capacity.

Global military expenditure continues to increase at an alarming pace. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, total military spending is up 76 per cent from its post-Cold War low in 1998. Mongolia is fully committed to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We are also planning to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the near future. The NPT is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is our hope that the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty will hold productive deliberations and have fruitful results for our common efforts towards nuclear

disarmament and non-proliferation, and that it will be a landmark event marking the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force. The three pillars of the NPT — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology — are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. The International Atomic Energy Agency does outstanding work, as provided for in articles III and IV of the NPT, by both verifying compliance with nuclear non-proliferation undertakings and supporting the parties to the Treaty in fulfilling their inalienable right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The failure of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to engage in substantive work on the basis of an agreed programme of work continues to diminish its credibility and opens the door to questions about its relevance. We believe that the CD's shortcomings lie in the seemingly irreconcilable differences among its Member States. Those differences, while all too real and important, cannot be allowed to continue to hinder progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Though we are not encouraged by the CD's failure to deliver tangible results, we will continue to maintain a helpful approach to the issues that fall under its competence.

Both nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia's internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free status continue to contribute to our attainment of the objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Our internationally recognized status helps to enhance stability and confidence-building in the region. Mongolia therefore stands for a denuclearized Korean peninsula and welcomed the recent series of high-level summits between the main stakeholders. Mongolia is currently serving as Coordinator of the fourth Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, to be held in New York in conjunction with the NPT Review Conference in 2020.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Mongolia's determination to continue contributing to our common efforts towards global disarmament and international peace and security.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3),

and I would now like to make some further remarks in my national capacity.

This has been an important year for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, marking the centenary of multilateral disarmament diplomacy under the auspices first of the League of Nations and then the United Nations. It is also 40 years since two key elements of the multilateral disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, began their work, following the landmark decision of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. This year we also celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and look forward to an important Review Conference in Oslo next month. Next year, as we all know, we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The United Kingdom has played a central, constructive and active role in that multilateral architecture from the very beginning and continues to do so today. This year in particular, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, the United Kingdom introduced a draft decision (see CD/2166) that would have taken forward the important work of last year's subsidiary bodies and helped move the Conference on Disarmament closer to developing negotiating mandates on its four core agenda items. The draft decision had strong support from across the membership but was blocked by a small number of States. We will continue our efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work in 2020.

We will continue to work with any and all other interested States to find ways of strengthening the multilateral disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation machinery that we have so painstakingly built together over the past century, so that it can remain an essential part of the international rules-based system for future generations. As an important element of that, and consistent with its role as a champion of the women and peace and security agenda, the United Kingdom also remains committed to promoting women's meaningful representation in disarmament and arms-control processes at every stage, and particularly in leadership roles.

However, this architecture can only really fulfil its function if it is fully, effectively, transparently and verifiably implemented. Full compliance with all obligations is essential to building trust and confidence and to enabling further meaningful steps to be taken. Unfortunately, that central tenet of multilateral diplomacy is under attack. Russia's responsibility for the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty demonstrates its disregard for arms-control agreements and its increasingly dangerous and destabilizing activity around Europe. The missiles that Russia has secretly developed and deployed in violation of the INF Treaty are mobile and hard to detect. They can reach European cities with little or no warning, thereby lowering the threshold for nuclear use. Russia's repeated denials and attempts to distort the facts through a concerted disinformation campaign on this and other issues are a threat to diplomacy and one that we must stand firmly against.

The Syrian regime has used chemical weapons in direct contravention of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and that represents a clear threat to global peace and security. We cannot leave such direct assaults on international norms unchallenged. That is why the United Kingdom supports the work of the Investigation and Identification Team established by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to identify the perpetrators who use chemical weapons. That is an important step for ensuring accountability and deterring future attacks, thereby preventing further weakening of the norm. It builds on the decision reached in The Hague in June last year and demonstrates the international community's commitment to reinforcing chemical-weapon controls.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has illegally developed a nuclear-weapon programme and has proliferated arms globally. The United Kingdom welcomes the discussions between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but maintains the view that sanctions must continue to be strictly implemented until concrete steps toward complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization are taken. We are willing to lend our expertise to aid in the denuclearization process.

We continue to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and we call on Iran to fully implement its commitments. We are deeply concerned about Iran's reductions in its compliance and urge it to recommit to the deal. The system of International Atomic Energy

Agency inspections that underpins Iran's commitment to enhanced verification and inspections is one of the most extensive and robust in the history of international nuclear accords, and Iran must continue to facilitate all Agency access and information requests. We fully support the Agency's crucial independent technical monitoring and reporting activities. We also want to register our concern about Iran's wider missile programmes, which pose a threat to European security and are destabilizing for the region, and we call on Iran to adhere to the restrictions on missile development and proliferation in Security Council resolutions 2231 (2015) and 2216 (2015).

I would now like to say a few words about the United Kingdom's main priorities for the Committee's work in the coming weeks. First, we will continue to support the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation framework and to prepare for a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference in 2020. The United Kingdom reiterates its strong support for the NPT and for a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament. We will look to remind the international community that the NPT continues to be an effective and vital part of the international security architecture and to highlight the United Kingdom's own strong track record of promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as a responsible nuclear-weapon State.

Secondly, we will also play an active part in discussions on outer space. Across space systems, it is essential that we consider how communications, intent and behaviour can support a safe space environment. We encourage nations to work with us to develop a new concept that addresses the challenges in space as it is today rather than the outdated notions of 30 years ago. The United Kingdom will make more detailed statements on those and the other important issues on the Committee's agenda during the thematic debate.

The erosion of norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery represent a threat to every member of the international community, and every one of us has to step up to address it. It will take collective engagement to uphold the counter-proliferation and disarmament architecture. We must persevere in the face of today's challenges in order to safeguard global peace and security.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau and to assure them of my delegation's full cooperation. We are very pleased to have a representative of our region presiding over our work in the First Committee. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their presence and statements on Thursday (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

The international community is facing challenges and threats today that require effective and efficient commitments. We are facing a complex scenario that shows us how absolutely vital it is to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction that constitute an existential threat to all humankind. Those challenges require that we find solutions to them through dialogue and consensus-building.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the regimes on disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Argentina will preside over the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, in 2020, which is particularly significant, as it will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its universalization represents a decisive step towards maintaining the credibility of the non-proliferation system and a huge contribution to that fundamental objective.

Argentina belongs to a historically advanced region when it comes to disarmament and non-proliferation. The contribution to peace and security at the regional and global levels represented by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which is already 51 years old, is a genuine and effective one, not only because it has strengthened our countries' commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation but also because through its protocols, nuclear-weapon countries have committed to respecting the status of the region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Those commitments must be honoured and strengthened, and we call on all concerned to review their interpretive declarations, which shape the object and purpose of the Treaty.

Despite this, Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world that has never had the opportunity to lead the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA) in its more than 60 years of existence. The Agency requires a leader with the relevant background and very specialized knowledge. Argentina has put forward Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi as a candidate for the post of Director General of the IAEA. Ambassador Grossi is a career diplomat with more than 35 years of professional experience in the non-proliferation and disarmament. He has held highly relevant positions on the subject at the international level, having been Chief of Staff at the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Assistant Director General for Political Affairs. Ambassador Grossi will provide the technical expertise and diplomatic leadership necessary to ensure that the IAEA remains an indispensable and indisputable international institution in the nuclear field, while maintaining its strong reputation and preparing it for future challenges.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and in any circumstances is unacceptable and constitutes a flagrant violation of international obligations under the Convention on Chemical Weapons and international law, and anyone responsible for their use must be brought to justice. We must endeavour to act in that regard, while maintaining a unity of purpose and avoiding political divisions that could weaken the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Argentina reaffirms the fundamental importance of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and renews its commitment to continuing to actively and constructively cooperate in advancing the full implementation and universalization of the Convention. Within the framework of the BWC, Argentina has regularly submitted information on confidence-building measures in the understanding that this constitutes a useful mechanism for promoting transparency on the technological activities and developments carried out under the framework of the Convention. In that regard, we encourage all States that have not yet submitted such information to make efforts to do so.

Argentina has maintained its active role in complying with resolution 1540 (2004), working to constantly update its regulatory framework, participating in the major coordination mechanisms related to non-proliferation and technological and physical security and improving its ability to effectively implement the resolution's mandate. In August we submitted our fourth national report (S/AC.44/2019/9, annex) on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), in view of the next comprehensive review in 2021, for

which the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) is already preparing.

In June Argentina hosted the plenary meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in June. The meeting enabled participating countries and official observers to review the results and progress made over the past two years in the areas of nuclear detection, nuclear forensic analysis and response and mitigation, which will help to develop a strategic vision for moving forward in the coming years.

Small arms continue to be a key problem for peace and stability and the development of nations, since their uncontrolled trade can intensify armed conflict. Their impact is not measured only in the thousands of deaths and millions of daily injuries that they cause but also in how they disrupt people's access to health, markets, education and human rights. We must reiterate the importance of international mechanisms on this subject and the importance of exploring synergies among the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty.

As one of the Arms Trade Treaty's co-authors, Argentina has always attached great importance to the Arms Trade Treaty and has maintained its active role and continued commitment to it.

We will preside over the sixth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, to be convened in Geneva in 2020. Argentina also continues to promote confidence-building and transparency measures in various areas, and participated actively in the process of establishing the Register of Conventional Arms, as demonstrated by our chairmanship of the Group of Government Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, established pursuant to resolution 71/44.

In conclusion, I would like to commend our efforts within the Organization to promote greater dialogue, transparency and confidence regarding activities in outer space and cyberspace. We believe that besides the fact that they constitute a serious threat to international peace and security, the militarization and hostile use of space technology and telecommunications are obstacles to the economic, social and cultural progress of all humankind. We all committed to working for that progress through our adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development four years ago. I want

to once again emphasize that Argentina is now more than ever committed to the work of the Committee, and to express the hope that this can be a productive session. The Committee can count on my delegation's full cooperation.

Ms. Lim (Brunei Darussalam): At the outset, on behalf of Brunei Darussalam, we join other representatives in congratulating the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election, and we want to take this opportunity to reaffirm Brunei Darussalam's full support for and cooperation in the work of the First Committee. I will be delivering an abridged version of our statement, the full version of which will be uploaded on PaperSmart.

Brunei Darussalam aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

The current state of the global security environment has strained international efforts on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Against a backdrop of heightened competition and rhetoric, our security challenges are becoming ever more complex, outpacing our ability to address them individually. A recommitment to multilateralism is therefore essential. Brunei Darussalam continues to support the United Nations as the key forum for strengthening our collective resolve in maintaining and strengthening universal norms on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that the work of the First Committee continues to be an important means for countries to engage constructively in setting and preserving important norms and principles in full respect for the rule of law. Brunei Darussalam also attaches great importance to intensifying cooperation and strengthening partnerships in order to ensure a well-functioning international system. In a testament to our steadfast commitment to engagement and cooperation, Brunei Darussalam is a party to various international treaties and conventions that advocate for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we believe that it constitutes a vital step towards global nuclear disarmament and complements the core and foundational Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other important frameworks

that address the existing global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Looking forward to the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT next year, we once again urge the international community to work to establish common ground and move towards our universal goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is our hope that countries will continue their constructive engagement and strive for a consensus outcome document in 2020. With that, we thank Malaysia for its dedication and stewardship in chairing the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons this year. It will be equally important to ensure the continued implementation of the previously adopted outcome documents of the 1995, 2005 and 2010 Review Conferences, all of which outline comprehensive sets of measures for making progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We look forward to a successful review cycle of the NPT next year. We also see a clear underlying need for the involvement of all States and relevant stakeholders in the effective management of nuclear and other radioactive materials and acknowledge the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in that endeavour.

As the international community continues to work for complete nuclear disarmament, we should not let up on the ongoing efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. Brunei Darussalam would like to reiterate ASEAN's commitment to the preservation of our region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. In that respect, we echo the resolve of other ASEAN member States to reaffirm our commitment to working closely with nuclear-weapon States in order to achieve the Treaty's full and effective implementation. Moving forward, we must make progress in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. Just last year the General Assembly adopted decision 73/546, on convening the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. We hope that a nuclear-weapon-free zone can be achieved in the Middle East and that all the relevant parties will take concerted action to realize it.

The past few years have witnessed the continued erosion of the taboo against the use of chemical weapons. The re-emerging and unpunished use of

such weapons around the world has been damaging to international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The loss of innocent lives and the suffering of the victims are sombre reminders that more must be done to uphold the fundamental tenets of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). To that end, Brunei Darussalam reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the CWC. Nationally, Brunei Darussalam is working closely with the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to develop national measures and legislation, and two workshops have already been conducted with the participation of all national stakeholders. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the generous assistance of the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

In this volatile security environment, information and communications technology (ICT) presents one of the most critical modern challenges to global security. The increasingly sophisticated and rapidly evolving nature of cyberthreats renders international cooperation and consensus paramount. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security and the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, with a view to discussing the issue of security in the use of ICTs. We welcomed the first substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group, chaired by Switzerland in September, and look forward to the upcoming sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts aimed at enhancing international cooperation in order to forge global norms on cybersecurity. Going forward, we believe that both processes could be complementary as we aspire to promote a stable, secure and inclusive cyberspace.

Finally, Brunei Darussalam acknowledges that disarmament and non-proliferation matters and security challenges are complex tasks by their very nature. We would therefore like to reiterate the importance of continuing a dialogue in order to find common ground in this dynamic environment. For our part, we reaffirm our strong commitment to working with all Member States with the aim of reaching a successful outcome for the work of the Committee, not only to preserve and promote peace and security for all but also to reaffirm our support for multilateralism in general.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of my delegation, as well as personally, it is a pleasure for me to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on assuming the leadership of the First Committee this year. I am confident that their wisdom and long experience will contribute to the success of the Committee's work and lead to results that respond to the concerns of all Member States. I would also like to thank last year's Chair and Bureau.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

The complex security challenges and increasing threats of terrorism in the global environment are a serious threat to the entire international community and require all of us to work hard and demonstrate political will in order to strengthen international peace and security while preserving the noble purposes and lofty goals on which the United Nations was founded. Iraq reaffirms its call for the need to promote the universality of the major conventions and treaties on disarmament, including weapons of mass destruction, as they are the only guarantee we have for preventing the use or threat of use such weapons, whose potential consequences for both humankind and the environment are catastrophic.

The Government of Iraq reaffirms the importance of keeping nuclear disarmament as a top priority on the international agenda, in accordance with the outcome of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. All States must commit to pursuing negotiations aimed at achieving disarmament in all its aspects under strict international control. In that regard, the Government of Iraq reiterates its concern about the failure to adopt an outcome document at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We are also concerned about the failure to achieve consensus during the three Preparatory Committee meetings for the 2020 Review Conference, which is likely to damage the credibility and effectiveness of the Treaty. Iraq therefore renews its call to Member States to demonstrate greater flexibility and political will with a view to ensuring the success of the Review Conference next year.

The 1995 resolution on the Middle East is the fourth pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Failure to implement it will jeopardize the NPT regime and threaten the credibility and universality of the Treaty, while increasing instability in the region and other areas of the world. That imposes a collective responsibility on the international community generally, and the three sponsoring States of the 1995 resolution in particular, to work diligently to advance the international arrangements necessary for the success of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. Iraq believes that as an essential prerequisite, Israel must eliminate its nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear party and subject all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime in order to enable us to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981). Such steps are important precursors if we are to ease the tensions in the Middle East, which is destabilized when the capabilities of Israel's nuclear and military facilities go unchecked while those of every other State in the region are under IAEA control.

My delegation stresses how important it is that all countries of the region participate in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November and chaired by Jordan, in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546. That would represent a parallel path in support of other international efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and as endorsed by the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

Thanks to their long-term social, economic and environmental consequences, the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war goes beyond the thousands of people that these weapons kill and maim every year. We are all aware of what Iraq has experienced in being forced to confront the world's most dangerous terrorist challenges and organizations. However, Iraqi institutions are still working to overcome those challenges and implement emergency plans for its liberated areas in order to deal with its various priorities, such as mine clearance and registering victims of explosive remnants of war, as well as outreach to the communities affected

and to internally displaced persons, so as to ensure their safe return home. Iraq is grateful to all Member States and other stakeholders that have offered their support and assistance in these areas. We also want to emphasize the urgency of the need for the international community to continue supporting and assisting national institutions in Iraq in every possible way so that we can rid ourselves of these dangerously lethal weapons, which threaten humankind, the economy and the environment.

Iraq believes in the importance of a multilateral approach in many areas, including disarmament. We therefore reaffirm the important role played by the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral forum for negotiations in that regard. We renew our call to all States members of the Conference to be fully responsible and show the flexibility and political will needed to enable it to resume negotiations and put an end to the stalemate that has plagued it for nearly two decades. In that regard, Iraq also stresses the importance of the role of the Disarmament Commission as the multilateral consultative body of the United Nations in the area of disarmament. We deeply regret that it did not hold a session this year and emphasize the importance of ensuring that it can resume its work, given its important role in deliberating on and adopting recommendations for future negotiations on disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, we reiterate our hopes of seeing the First Committee achieve the desired results and respond to the concerns of Member States.

Mr. Sharma (India): The delegation of India would like to congratulate the Chair on his leadership of the First Committee at its seventy-fourth session and to assure him of its full support and cooperation.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

This year marks a significant milestone as we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We must consider whether we have achieved the goals set by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Most will agree that it has been a mixed record. The global security situation is in flux. There is concern about the demise of some landmark disarmament treaties and agreements, the lowering of the nuclear threshold and the inherent dangers in nuclear brinkmanship,

pursued by some countries as a cover for cross-border terrorism. The disarmament machinery has not lived up to our expectations, as evidenced by the deadlock in the CD for nearly two decades and the inability of the Disarmament Commission to hold its substantive session this year. However, there is hope and optimism, due to our underlying belief in the value of dialogue and cooperation, as has been highlighted by several speakers before me.

The CD failed in its efforts throughout the year to adopt a programme of work. That was the result of divisive tendencies and a lack of political will, and cannot be attributed to any shortcomings in the rules of procedure. The CD has successfully negotiated important instruments in the past with the same rules of procedure and it can certainly do so in the future. We must preserve the CD as the sole disarmament negotiating forum and get back to substantive work, as per its mandate. India stands ready to work with fellow members on all the core items on the CD's agenda. We remain committed to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament and have called for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons through a step-by-step process, as outlined in our working paper on nuclear disarmament (A/C.1/61/5, annex), submitted to the General Assembly in 2006, and later to the CD (CD/1816) in 2007. That remains as relevant and valid today as it was then. India would like to reiterate its call for undertaking the steps outlined in the working paper, including negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention in the CD.

As in previous years, India will be submitting four draft resolutions, on "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", "Reducing nuclear danger", "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" and "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament". As a responsible nuclear Power, India's nuclear doctrine continues to stress a policy of credible minimum deterrence, with a posture of no first use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Without diminishing the priority that we attach to disarmament, India supports the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of a fissile material cut-off treaty based on the mandate contained in CD/1299, which remains the most suitable basis for starting negotiations, as reinforced by the deliberations in the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that

could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and in the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group. In a related area of our work, India participated in the Group of Government Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, which has made a number of recommendations for further work.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is another important priority on the global agenda. Having participated in the recent Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, India would like to acknowledge the value of its work, even if it could not reach consensus on an outcome. It can serve as a useful basis for future discussions on negotiating legally binding instruments and transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities. We hope that substantive work on those issues will soon begin in the Conference on Disarmament.

The importance of the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention can hardly be overemphasized, especially in view of the tragic instances of the use of chemical weapons in various parts of the world in recent years. India attaches immense importance to the Convention and supports strengthening the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in order to enable it to fulfil its mandate. Similar reinforcement is required in the case of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), whose intersessional process needs to have the authority to take substantive decisions without waiting for the five-year Review Conference cycle. India attaches great importance to the BWC as the first disarmament instrument to ban an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. We remain committed to improving its effectiveness and strengthening its implementation and universalization.

With regard to the area of conventional weapons, we are pleased to note the successful completion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We look forward to further discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems to explore and agree on possible recommendations, based on the 11 principles that have enjoyed consensus support in the Group.

Developments in science and technology are taking place at unprecedented speed and the world is grappling with their potential impact in both the civilian and military arenas. Since 2017 India has had the honour of submitting a draft resolution on the subject to the First Committee that has always been adopted by consensus. India would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports to the General Assembly on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts. India had the honour of working with Germany, Qatar, Switzerland and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in organizing a focused one-day seminar in Geneva in August, as mandated in resolution 73/32.

As part of India's commitment to promoting education on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, starting this year we launched an annual disarmament and international security affairs fellowship for foreign diplomats. Inspired by its success and the wide appreciation of its content and outreach by participating countries, we have now decided to extend the invitation to more countries.

India believes that under the Chair's able stewardship during this session, the First Committee will be able to foster a greater understanding of the challenges we are facing in international security and enable us to find ways to respond effectively to them. We stand ready to work under his leadership for a successful session.

Mr. Davison (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to assure the Chair of my delegation's support during this year's First Committee session, which offers Member States a chance to review the international security and disarmament backdrop and to consider ways for advancing our programme for it over the coming year.

The current international security situation is making it difficult to gain ground on a number of disarmament issues. Fortunately, 2020 will provide us with opportunities to reaffirm our commitment to making progress on disarmament and arms control, including the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty, and Canada will work to achieve a positive outcome for the Review Conference. Without question, all Member States must respect their permanent obligations under

article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, transparency is a fundamental element of our disarmament efforts, and we encourage all Member States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to submit comprehensive and regular reports under the NPT.

We must also work to further improve the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture by ensuring that all annex 2 States ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. With that in mind, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands will present a draft decision on a fissile material cut-off treaty to the Committee for adoption. As we strive to move forward on new treaties, there are existing agreements that should be extended, particularly the New START Treaty. Our planet is better off with protective frameworks that enable us to control, manage and restrict nuclear weapons.

(*spoke in English*)

We welcome the fact that States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) have institutionalized in the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons the importance of identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons, especially given the recent and previously unthinkable breaches of the CWC, including by the Syrian regime. Underscoring our commitment to addressing concerns about other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), Canada is a champion or sponsor of six Actions under the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, including Actions 9 and 11, on chemical and biological weapons respectively.

In the area of conventional weapons, Canada is pleased to have become a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty on 17 September. We believe that strengthening the universal implementation of the Treaty and the other regimes on conventional weapons is key to what the Secretary-General has rightly called disarmament that saves lives. Unfortunately, our collective progress on saving lives has been imperilled by the financial difficulties faced by most of the disarmament conventions and treaties, and we urge all States parties to respect their financial obligations. As a champion of Action 36, on the full and equal participation of women in decision-making processes, we welcome Latvia's efforts, as President of this year's Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, to improve

the consideration of gender perspectives in the Treaty's operation and to strengthen the application of gender-based-violence screening criteria for arms exports. We also appreciate the draft Oslo action plan for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Review Conference, which seeks to ensure that gender is considered in the full implementation of the Convention. Applying a gender perspective across all disarmament issues remains fundamental for Canada, not only in terms of equal participation in disarmament processes but also in recognizing the gender-differentiated effects of weapons.

This year has been mixed in terms of developments related to outer-space security and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. A high point was the formulation by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of a consensus set of technical best-practices guidelines aimed at preserving the outer-space environment. The member States of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have committed to those guidelines, and their effective implementation should advance practical cooperation in the peaceful uses and exploration of outer space. With regard to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on further measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we regret that agreement was not achieved on an outcome document. Finally, one incident this year reminded us all that there is an urgent need to address threats to space objects and avoid actions that intentionally create debris, which poses challenges to the sustainability and stability of outer space. Canada supports a multilateral solution to address anti-satellite-weapon tests, thereby increasing confidence and transparency among outer-space actors.

Cyberspace and international security are being examined in separate processes that start this year, the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. Canada believes that peace and stability in cyberspace are grounded in the applicability of existing international law, respect for norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and the implementation of cyber confidence-building measures. In the Open-ended Working Group, Canada will encourage States to propose concrete measures to implement the norms and

confidence-building measures proposed by previous Groups of Governmental Experts.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Canada supports progress across the spectrum of conventional and WMD-disarmament issues. That is evidenced by our engagement on the Agenda for Disarmament, our continued advocacy for a fissile material cut-off treaty and the more than \$1.3 billion we have provided in project funding since 2002 to address WMD threats worldwide through Canada's weapons-threat-reduction programme. We stand ready to do more to advance disarmament together with other concerned States.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election to lead the work of the First Committee. I wish them every success in their task.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Since the establishment of the United Nations, we have recognized the importance of reducing military expenditure on nuclear weapons. Countries possessing such weapons have been urged to direct more economic and social assistance to developing and least developed countries in order to realize the goals adopted by United Nations summits and conferences. That is the only way to achieve security, stability and safety for all while ensuring a safe future for succeeding generations of humankind, as was made explicit in the Conference on Disarmament in 1987, when it was emphasized that while the world can either continue the arms race or move towards more stable and balanced social and economic development, it cannot do both.

It is very worrying and disappointing that international reports have confirmed that the pace of States' reduction of their holdings of strategic nuclear weapons and the materials used in manufacturing them has slowed since 2011. This does not serve the principles of transparency and trust-building among States, and it impedes the adoption of a legally binding agreement on the disposal of such weapons. Despite some progress in that regard, the road to reaching understandings that can lead to the adoption of legal instruments that could ultimately save humankind from the dangers of weapons of mass destruction seems long and arduous.

The provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are unquestionably important, but they have not been implemented fully and transparently. Unfortunately, the States parties to the NPT still disagree on the Treaty's goals and objectives. Moreover, nuclear-weapon States are committed neither to the Treaty or to acting in good faith during negotiations on nuclear disarmament, and according to reports they continue to upgrade their nuclear weapons. Not only does that not reduce ambitions for nuclear weapons, it motivates other countries to acquire them too. That is what led a majority of the States Members of the United Nations, together with non-governmental organizations, to launch a humanitarian initiative with a view to restarting the discussion of nuclear disarmament, while stressing its destructive effects for humankind and our entire planet. Those efforts culminated in the proposal for a nuclear weapons convention as the first multilateral, legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament, and we urge the nuclear-weapon States to subscribe to it, as it has the potential to bring security, stability and safety to all.

We are also extremely concerned about the development of new weapons and technologies such as drones, lethal autonomous robots and cyberweapons, which is continuing at an alarming pace and one that is well ahead of analyses of the threat they represent to international peace and security, especially when they can be accessed by illegal groups and organizations. It is therefore essential to pay greater attention to the issue so as to be able to respond effectively to the challenges and dangers such weapons create.

Our world is witnessing an increase in the numbers of conflicts that leave behind thousands of dead, wounded and displaced persons. These conflicts and their disastrous consequences are unfortunately often the result of harmful foreign interference driven by selfish interests that have no regard for the security and safety of the people or the sovereignty of the States concerned, or for non-interference in their internal affairs. The situation in my country is a case in point. That interference has taken various forms, including continuing supplies of weapons, in clear violation of many Security Council resolutions. That has further divided my country and hindered the possibility of a national consensus on ending the crisis and paving the way to building a democratic State that respects the rule of law, preserves human rights and can achieve security, stability and prosperity. We call on the Security Council

to assume its responsibility in that regard and put an end to this interference, which violates the Charter of the United Nations and its principles and values.

Small arms and light weapons are widely used in most armed conflicts, and while their accumulation may not in itself be a threat to international peace and security, their excessive accumulation and proliferation can help to increase political tensions and prolong violence. That warrants the activation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, especially when it comes to combating the dangerous problem of increasing numbers of such weapons ending up in the hands of terrorists and illegal armed groups. My country welcomed the adoption of the outcome document of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) in 2018, and rejects any attempts to impose commitments that are based on non-consensus agreements. We look forward to seeing tangible progress made at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in June 2020, on the issue of combating the illicit international transfers of weapons to unauthorized recipients, pursuant to the outcome of the third Review Conference.

Libya stresses the importance of strengthening international cooperation that can help to enhance information and communications technologies while promoting States' capacity to resist disruptive attacks. We emphasize the continuing pivotal role of the United Nations in developing a system of international norms pertaining to the security of information and communications. We must continue our cooperation within the United Nations on this issue, which has the potential to affect every vital facility in many countries and is increasingly being used for destructive activity that is detrimental to international security. We welcome the convening of meetings by the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, established pursuant to resolution 73/27, and hope to see objective recommendations on the responsible conduct of States in this vital area.

In conclusion, Libya reaffirms its full commitment to meeting all its obligations pursuant to international disarmament instruments for weapons of mass destruction. We stand ready to participate in international efforts at both bilateral and multilateral levels, because we believe that international cooperation and serious political will are the two essential elements

for the realization of our disarmament goals and the harnessing of our material capabilities, as well as the vast potential of scientific and technical development, in order to establish a safe and prosperous world for future generations. We hope that during this session we will be able to adopt practical recommendations aimed at contributing to international peace and security.

Mr. Baumann (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair on his election to lead the First Committee and to assure him of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Safeguarding and strengthening the rules-based international order are essential for global stability and prosperity. We are concerned about the fact that key instruments and norms in the areas of disarmament and arms control are being tested. In some cases they are even being called into question in a development that constitutes a regrettable setback and could lead to a new arms race. That trend both reflects and contributes to an erosion of the strategic environment. We need efforts on two fronts. On the one hand we must ensure respect for international law and existing norms, and on the other we must develop additional measures and norms to meet new challenges where necessary.

The attempts to put our nuclear-disarmament achievements in question are especially worrying. The termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is one such example, as is the uncertainty surrounding the extension of the New START Treaty beyond 2021 and the sustainability of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. In that regard, we call on the stakeholders concerned to do everything in their power to safeguard and consolidate those instruments. Moreover, in view of those and other developments, we believe it is essential to collectively reaffirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought.

The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be an important opportunity to strengthen that instrument. A productive Review Conference will help to ensure the durability of the Treaty and of the rules-based international order in the nuclear arena more generally. If the 2020 Review Conference is to achieve successful results, it will be essential to avoid all polarization and take pragmatic steps to implement the measures adopted at past Review Conferences under the three pillars of the Treaty. It is our shared responsibility to preserve what has already been

achieved. Backtracking will serve nobody's interests in the long run. It will be equally crucial to move forward on concrete proposals to meet the challenges posed by the worsening global strategic context, such as by mitigating risks regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

The prohibition of chemical weapons is also being put to the test. The use of such weapons in the Syrian conflict and other settings constitutes a serious violation of international law. We once again condemn any use of such weapons and call for those responsible to be brought to justice. That is why we supported the decision to establish a mechanism within the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to identify those responsible. We welcome the progress made in implementing that decision.

With regard to conventional weapons, the international community has successfully developed several normative frameworks that have had a real humanitarian impact and have helped to save lives. That is certainly the case with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Both instruments are approaching significant milestones. In November the fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention will outline the steps needed to advance towards a mine-free world by 2025 and fully achieve the Convention's visionary purpose. For its part, Switzerland intends to use its presidency of the CCM's second Review Conference to give it a new lease of life. Promoting the full implementation of the Convention's provisions by its States parties will be a priority, and it is equally important to promote its universalization and the norm of the non-use of cluster munitions.

However, significant challenges remain with regard to conventional weapons, which still have a devastating humanitarian impact. We are concerned about the fact that armed conflicts are increasingly fought in urban areas and about the impact that has on civilian populations. Meeting the challenge of implementing and fully complying with international humanitarian law in such situations must be a priority.

While we can rely on strong legal frameworks in some areas, norms have to be further clarified or developed in various others. While there are developments in science and technology with promising civilian and military applications, they also create new challenges for international security and the application of international humanitarian law. Such

technologies have the potential to affect the way that conflicts are fought and could even have an impact on strategic balance. We need to be able to rely on functioning and effective disarmament bodies that enable us to monitor such developments in order to ensure that the global governance framework remains pertinent and to consolidate it where necessary. We welcome the increased attention given to those issues and efforts to improve the involvement of key players, such as representatives of the scientific community, in our work.

Turning to the issue of cyberspace, we support the crucial role of the United Nations and multilateralism in the establishment of an open, free and secure cyberspace. We are pleased to be able to rely on a strengthened process for addressing this issue following the decisions taken by the Committee last year. It will be essential to ensure that the two processes that have been put in place enable progress to be made in the operationalization of the norms applicable to cyberspace, particularly international law, voluntary standards and confidence-building measures. It is equally crucial that those two processes work in synergy.

With regard to lethal autonomous weapon systems, the work undertaken within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has already clarified some key elements, particularly the fact that international humanitarian law applies fully to those weapons and that interaction between humans and machines is important. However, significant efforts are still needed to clarify aspects of the normative and operational framework for the use of such weapons.

Finally, we want to express our concern about the lack of progress in other matters. In the light of various military developments, that particularly concerns the norms applicable to outer space, which are still extremely inadequate. Action in other areas has also stalled. It is therefore vital that the Committee provide the impetus necessary to respond to the challenges this poses to international security.

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): I would like to start by congratulating the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their appointments. They can count on our full cooperation.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), and I would like to add some complementary remarks in my national capacity.

We firmly believe in effective multilateral cooperation that is based on internationally agreed rules and a willingness to reach consensus. The current deterioration of the international security environment and its deleterious effects on the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture are deeply worrying. We must reverse that trend. We particularly welcome the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament as an effort to renew the centrality of non-proliferation and disarmament.

Portugal remains fully committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In our view, an inclusive step-by-step process to reduce nuclear weapons, while taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, is still the best approach to ensure progress. We are concerned about the growing signs of a new arms race. We particularly regret the failure to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and stress the importance of extending the New START Treaty beyond 2021 and negotiating further nuclear-arsenal reductions.

Next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been an undeniable success, fostering as it has nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Portugal intends to continue to play a constructive role in the 2020 Review Conference, with the goal of strengthening the Treaty's implementation and making it fit for purpose.

Portugal continues to formally support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and we urge for its implementation by all parties. In particular, we call on Iran to fully comply with the agreement. Beyond that, the threat of nuclear proliferation remains a serious cause for concern. The complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is essential. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to full compliance with the NPT, including the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Until then, the relevant Security Council resolutions should be fully implemented. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be a priority. We welcome Zimbabwe's recent ratification of the Treaty and its signing by Tuvalu. It is also high time to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty. Concrete

progress can also be achieved on nuclear-disarmament verification, nuclear security and measures for nuclear safety, transparency and risk reduction.

Portugal is a firm supporter of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and has every confidence in the technical capabilities and professionalism of its Technical Secretariat. The confirmed cases of chemical attacks in various parts of the world are totally unacceptable and those responsible must be held accountable. The OPCW's role in upholding the global norm against chemical weapons is fundamental. New challenges demand new instruments, such as the attribution mechanism and its Investigation and Identification Team.

Portugal wants to once again express its regret that the Conference on Disarmament, which is not sufficiently representative, remains closed to the admission of new States. That issue must be urgently addressed. With regard to the Disarmament Commission, we regret that it was not possible to convene this year's substantive session. For the current cycle of our deliberations, we must work together to overcome our differences and enable the Commission to fulfil its mandate. In addition, the full and equal participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament is essential. Portugal strongly believes that incorporating gender perspectives will help to revitalize the disarmament machinery.

It is essential to regulate the legal trade in conventional arms and ammunitions, particularly small arms and light weapons, and to fight their illegal trafficking. We commend the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and stress the relevance that we attach to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The recent fifth Conference of States Parties to the ATT, under the relevant theme of gender and gender-based violence, has helped to enhance the Treaty's implementation and universalization efforts. Portugal encourages all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is an example of success on the disarmament front. Our expectation is that the forthcoming fourth Review Conference in Oslo will contribute significantly to achieving the goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines by 2025, as well as the universalization and enhanced implementation of the Convention.

With regard to new and emerging threats related to lethal autonomous weapon systems, cyberspace and the militarization of outer space, we should encourage the implementation of norms on responsible State behaviour, transparency and respect for international law, human rights and international humanitarian law. Portugal welcomes the outcome of this year's session of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. The First Committee has also established two different mechanisms for cybersecurity with similar mandates — the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in the context of international security and a new Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. Those two processes must work in complementarity and close coordination in order to avoid unnecessary duplication.

In conclusion, promoting multilateral solutions for worldwide challenges to disarmament and non-proliferation must be the way forward. My country intends to play a constructive role in the work of the Committee, contributing to building trust and narrowing our differences in order to achieve the progress we need on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

Mr. Almansouri (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair on his election to lead the First Committee this year, and to wish him every success in steering the work of the Committee. I would also like to sincerely thank his predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Romania, for his efforts to steer the work of the First Committee during the previous session. I should not omit to express our pleasure that the Permanent Representative of Lebanon is a Vice-Chair of the Committee, and I wish her and all the other members of the Bureau every success.

The State of Kuwait aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

My country reaffirms its full readiness to cooperate with the international community with a view to arriving at consensus frameworks aimed at achieving disarmament in its various forms. We urge all Member States to cooperate and commit to all

conventions and treaties pertaining to this important and sensitive issue. The reality of the international situation has become a cause for concern in recent years owing to the failure on the part of some actors to abide by those conventions and treaties and to fulfil their commitments as required. We have seen recently that some nuclear-weapon States continue to develop and upgrade their nuclear arsenals, upholding a policy of nuclear deterrence that they incorporate into their military doctrines. That should compel us during this session to seriously discuss all such developments and adopt clear mechanisms to address them, which will undoubtedly help to strengthen international security, stability and peace.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. Notwithstanding the failure to realize its desired objectives, we must emphasize its credibility and safeguard its effectiveness as we witness certain developments on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty. We want to emphasize the importance of working together in order to reach consensus during the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We hope that we can all participate in the Conference, whose success we all should believe in. Positive results would strengthen the role of the Treaty in achieving its goal, the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we reaffirm the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and abiding by the decisions of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences on establishing such a zone in the region. We note in that context the importance of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November under the presidency of Jordan, pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546. We urge all invited parties to participate in the Conference with a view to negotiating a relevant binding treaty that will contribute to enhancing peace, security and stability at the regional and international levels.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, my country participated in the eleventh conference to facilitate the Treaty's entry into force. We are proud to have participated in it as Vice-President for the second consecutive year and hope to realize its goal of ensuring the Treaty's entry into force.

Kuwait is committed to using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We emphasize the legitimate right of States to use and promote nuclear technology without restrictions with a view to improving societies' progress and development. My country works tirelessly to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through its national bodies and institutions such as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of the Sciences. At the sixty-third session of the IAEA's General Conference, Kuwait was elected to the Board of Governors for the period from 2019 to 2020, exemplifying our steadfast belief in the importance of multilateralism. In fact, it is the fifth time that we have been elected to the Board since joining the IAEA in 1964.

The widespread use of armed drones for carrying out attacks on national facilities for destructive and murderous purposes is a source of deep concern that warrants immediate attention. We welcome the Secretary-General's call for arriving at common criteria for establishing appropriate mechanisms for the transfer, acquisition and use of armed drones in order to ensure accountability, transparency and oversight in their use. We stress the need to establish an adequate legal framework to clarify what is allowed and what is not with regard to drones, in order not only to ensure civilians' safety but also to strengthen regional and international security, peace and stability. In that regard, my country firmly condemns the attacks on oil and other vital facilities in Saudi Arabia, with which we stand in full solidarity in facing the dangers that threaten not only regional security and stability, but also energy sources and the entire global economy.

In conclusion, we hope that this session will affirm our belief in the need to engage in continued constructive dialogue that can lead to stability, thereby helping to reduce risks and build confidence. We must all assume our responsibilities and intensify our political will in order to support and promote the disarmament regime until we can achieve our ultimate objective of maintaining international peace and security. We must work together with a view to realizing achievements that can preserve future generations and guarantee security and peace throughout the world.

Mr. Laba (Botswana): Botswana would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election to guide the First Committee at its current session, and to assure them of our

delegation's full support and cooperation throughout the deliberations of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

Botswana aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Botswana reaffirms its commitment to its obligations under the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security and, to that end, to peacefully taking effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace.

The global security situation is deteriorating due to the threats posed by a new arms race. The international security environment is witnessing increasing arms expenditure by Member States, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and small arms, emerging technologies that create challenges to cybersecurity and sophisticated methods for delivering munitions and warheads, resulting in new global security challenges. Botswana therefore calls on the international community to take on its shared responsibility and work together to tackle those threats to international security.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are intended to secure a more peaceful and safer world and are therefore essential to achieving sustainable development. There are numerous links between military expenditures, arms trading, violent conflict and reduced resources for socioeconomic development. States that spend excessive financial, technological and human resources on their military are redirecting them from socioeconomic and environmental policy initiatives. The production process of weapons and their use prevent sustainable ecological development and preservation, create unequal access to resources and hinder poverty-reduction initiatives.

Botswana remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons around the globe, which often worsen conflict, with adverse humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. As part of our commitment to disarmament and international peace and security, and as a move towards a peaceful world order, Botswana recently became a State party to the

Arms Trade Treaty, which is a tool for reducing the unregulated arms trade. We urge Member States to go beyond their administrative obligations in regulating the arms trade by discussing how to implement the Treaty more effectively.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons poses grave implications for human survival, international socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations. Nuclear weapons have been used in warfare against people. All such incidents claimed millions of lives. Since the dawn of the atomic age, various nuclear weapons have been detonated during tests on numerous occasions. That has had devastating long-term consequences for human health and the environment. The use of nuclear weapons therefore violates international humanitarian, environmental and human rights law.

On 7 July 2017, 122 States voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a matter of international concern. Botswana has also signed the Treaty, which is a landmark disarmament agreement that outlaws the most destructive instruments of war ever created by humankind. It is an instrument aimed at prohibiting, stigmatizing and eliminating nuclear weapons. It clearly condemns and prohibits the development, production, use and threatened use of nuclear weapons, as well any assistance in and encouragement of such activities. Botswana calls on all States that have not signed the Treaty to do so without delay. We underscore its significant role in strengthening the global norms and practices against any country's use, proliferation or possession of nuclear weapons. We condemn as illegal any activity prohibited by the Treaty, such as threats to use nuclear weapons, the testing of nuclear weapons and the development and modernization of nuclear arsenals.

Studies have shown that at any given intergovernmental meeting on disarmament, approximately one quarter of participants are likely to be women. Yet women often suffer disproportionate or differential harm from the development and use of weapons and their trade. Botswana therefore believes that we should ensure gender and other forms of diversity in disarmament discussions and negotiations.

The proliferation of weapons has become a serious security challenge that demands synergy, strong institutions and State partnerships if we are to work

for a peaceful and secure world for human and social progress. Let us join forces, in trust and transparency, in order to safeguard the security benefits that our existing treaties bring us.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to congratulate the Chair on his election to lead the First Committee. I am confident that his able leadership will ensure that the Committee achieves success in its work.

Reality today shows that the world is moving towards a nuclear-arms race rather than nuclear disarmament. Recent developments, such as the emergence of a new nuclear-arms race, the abrogation of disarmament treaties, a growing build-up in military alliances and frequent military exercises, are fuelling concern in many countries and endangering strategic stability. In August we saw the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which for 30 years prohibited the United States and Russia, the biggest nuclear-weapon States in the world, from using their tactical nuclear weapons. We can no longer prevent operational nuclear weapons from being used in real wars. Fierce competition and confrontation among the major Powers to expand their military leverage and spheres of influence and gain strategic supremacy are raging throughout Asia, including in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

This year, the United States test-fired Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles, Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles. It also openly conducted a test simulating the interception of foreign intercontinental ballistic rockets. The reckless misconduct of Japan also evokes unrest and caution among neighbouring countries through its desire to become a major military Power, with an annual increase in its military expenditure that now surpasses the self-defence capability stipulated in its peaceful Constitution. This year, joint military exercises that we presumed had been suspended were resumed, and the latest military hardware, including F-35A stealth fighter jets, were introduced one after another on the Korean peninsula. Such blunt and hostile moves run counter to an atmosphere of dialogue and reconciliation. Undisguised interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign States and military threats against them jeopardize peace and security, which are prerequisites for development and prosperity. The development of this unstable situation, which threatens

international security, is mainly attributable to the high-handedness of a specific Power that entrenches its values in a doctrine that says that might is right. Its own interests are its absolute priority and it has no regard for international law and order. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will not tolerate any attempt to bring about a new Cold War or provoke a global nuclear-arms race, as that constitutes a challenge to the desire of humankind to achieve a peaceful world.

We want to take this opportunity to resolutely denounce and reject the serious acts of provocation against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea such as statements made by the countries of the European Union, including the United Kingdom, France and Germany, calling at the instigation of the United States for the convening of a closed Security Council meeting and criticizing our self-defence measures of 8 October. Nor will we ever tolerate the fact that the representatives of some Western countries, including Sweden and Australia, use forums such as the First Committee to criticize our right to self-defence, under the pretext of unjustifiable and inhumane Security Council sanctions resolutions that we neither recognize nor accept.

The prevailing international situation proves that strong national power is the fundamental guarantee of countries' independent development and peaceful prosperity. States that work to progress on their own, thanks to their own strengths, will advance firmly on their chosen path, even when hardship and difficulty strike. In upholding its principled position on contributing to peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the world, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will make sincere efforts to engage in active communication and dialogue with the international community.

Mr. Incarnato (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Given the current international context, it is urgent that we act with determination in the fields of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation in order to preserve the results achieved so far and further advance relevant processes. Special efforts should be made, and particular care taken, not to embark on a path towards a new arms race, given the heightened tensions. Instead, we need a collective and renewed commitment to preserving international institutions and instruments

while guaranteeing their proper functioning. In that regard, Italy reiterates its support for the United Nations disarmament machinery. Effective multilateralism and a rules-based international system are the only paths to success.

Italy reaffirms its firm commitment to sharing the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. Our efforts to effectively advance nuclear disarmament are underpinned by our deep concern about the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with its three mutually reinforcing pillars, provides the only realistic legal framework in that regard. Improvements can be achieved only through a progressive approach based on with article VI of the NPT. The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will provide an opportunity to assess the substantial progress achieved so far and to identify ways to uphold the Treaty in the current difficult environment. The nuclear-weapon States have fundamental responsibilities. We particularly encourage the United States and Russia to seek further reductions in their arsenals and to engage in a constructive dialogue on extending the New START Treaty post-2021 and on other arms-control arrangements. Ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as soon as possible is a major priority. Italy urges all States that have not yet done so, and the remaining eight annex 2 States in particular, to sign and ratify it without further delay. In the meantime, we call on all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear-test explosions.

The immediate commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons is also of crucial importance. Until such a treaty is concluded, all the relevant States should abide by a moratorium in that regard. Moreover, the CD could also constitute a framework for formulating recommendations dealing with all aspects of negative security assurances, without excluding the possibility of a legally binding instrument. Italy also values all initiatives undertaken in the field of nuclear-disarmament verification as important tools for building trust and confidence. Finally, we reiterate our support for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely agreed on by all the States of the region.

Italy believes that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains a key element in international efforts aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation architecture. We urge Iran to return to full compliance without delay and to provide the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with full and timely cooperation with respect to all its safeguard-related commitments. We are ready to support initiatives aimed at de-escalating the present tension and restoring the JCPOA's integrity. We commended the high-level diplomatic efforts that contributed to easing tensions on the Korean peninsula last year. However, we are now deeply concerned about the recent launches of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, and we therefore call on Pyongyang to engage in credible negotiations, return to the NPT, sign and ratify the CTBT and resume its collaboration with the IAEA. Meanwhile, the international sanctions regime should remain in place.

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances. It is imperative to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria. We welcome the commencement of work by the Investigation and Identification Team established to that end within the OPCW Secretariat. We also attach great importance to the Biological Weapons Convention and recognize the importance of strengthening the international architecture for biological weapons in a context that is characterized by fast-paced developments. Italy is deeply concerned about the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. In that respect, we strongly support the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

On the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, we look forward to participating in the Review Conference in Oslo, in line with our commitment to a world free of mines. Italy believes that international cooperation and victim assistance are key components of a comprehensive approach to mine action. We are equally

concerned about the extremely serious humanitarian impact of explosive weapons in populated areas. In that respect, we greatly appreciated the recent Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare, and we support the process aimed at strengthening collective commitment on this issue. Furthermore, looking at the protection of civilians and bearing in mind the data on armed violence, we believe in the importance of countering the illicit arms trade. For that reason, we call for the universalization and full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Italy also strongly and actively supports the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexed protocols. We welcome the agreement on 11 guiding principles as a substantive outcome of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. It is important to ensure that international humanitarian law applies to all weapon systems, which must always be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force.

Italy strongly believes that technological developments and scientific progress are crucial to the welfare of humankind and must be seen as an instrument for promoting peace and sustainable growth while preventing any negative use. With that perspective, we are firmly committed to the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the space environment, and we believe that a comprehensive international regulatory environment should be put in place. Italy remains fully committed to preventing an arms race in outer space and preserving it from becoming an area of conflict, which are essential conditions to strengthening strategic stability. We actively participated in the Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and it was unfortunate that it could not reach consensus on a final report. Nevertheless, it helped to widen and deepen the debate.

We believe that it is important to develop initiatives that increase mutual trust, and we therefore want to highlight the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures. In that regard, we consider information and communications technology and the Internet to be one of the greatest human achievements of all time.

Across all of those issues, Italy believes that greater interaction with civil society can make a key

contribution to our work. Italy also promotes policies and approaches that enable the full empowerment of women and take due account of the gendered effects of armed violence. The full version of my statement will be made available online.

Mr. Valtýsson (Iceland): I would like to join others in congratulating the Chair on his assumption of the leadership of the First Committee and in wishing him and all the members of the Committee every success during this session.

Iceland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), and I would also like to highlight a few key issues from our national perspective.

We are meeting at a critical juncture at which some of the key arms-control and disarmament agreements that have been the bedrock of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts since the end of the Cold War are being tested by non-compliance and new security challenges. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty has run its course due to Russia's non-compliance, chemical weapons are still being used and illicit small arms are readily available in all major conflict areas.

The international security situation could indeed be more conducive to disarmament, but our key priority must be to recommit to the arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation agenda of the United Nations and use our time to build trust and increase transparency where they are most needed. We should learn from past mistakes in order to avoid the wasteful arms races of the past. That is particularly relevant in the nuclear domain, where some of the key instruments that brought us peace and stability are up for review, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the New START Treaty. In the coming months, our priority must be to ensure that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be successful. The NPT has been effective in reducing the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, while safeguarding the benefits of nuclear technology for civilian use. The New START Treaty must be extended, as it plays a crucial role in global security, limiting the number of strategic nuclear weapons while providing important sets of confidence-building measures that benefit us all. We encourage Russia and the United States to reach an agreement as soon as possible.

We should not be discouraged from supporting other mechanisms. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is one of the most widely supported international agreements, although key signatories to it are still lacking. Its verification system is an important source of trust and transparency. Beginning negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty would be another important factor in underpinning non-proliferation arrangements. Our common goal should be a world without nuclear weapons. The total elimination of nuclear weapons should be based on a mutual, balanced, verifiable and irreversible step-by-step approach. We should also ensure that the use of chemical weapons becomes a thing of the distant past, not part of regular news. We need to support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in investigating attacks in order to hold perpetrators responsible. Furthermore, conventional arms, and not least small arms and light weapons, have been described as the true weapons of mass destruction, since they kill more than half a million people every year. We should make full use of the Arms Trade Treaty to stop the illegal trade in such weapons, which seem to be readily available in all major conflict areas. Moreover, the Treaty's unique capacity to address gender-based violence should be urgently implemented.

Information technology continues to transform our everyday lives and has greatly benefited our societies. However, it is also making us more vulnerable to the irresponsible behaviour of State and non-State actors, which ranges from direct attacks to indirect surveillance and propaganda. We must firmly communicate that international laws and norms apply to State behaviour in cyberspace. The Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security should focus on building awareness of existing international frameworks and norms and exploring how we can best build capacity and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms in the cyber domain.

We must re-energize the disarmament agenda with more resources and creative thinking. We also need to take concrete steps to make sure that women play an active and equal role in that effort, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as we prepare for the twentieth anniversary of that important resolution in 2020. Let me end by wishing us all a productive and constructive session.

Ms. Nilsson (Sweden): I would like to congratulate the Chair on his election to lead this year's session of the First Committee and to assure him of the full support of the Swedish delegation.

Sweden associates itself with the general statements delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) and by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3). I will make my remarks in a national capacity.

The deteriorating global security environment and its implications for global disarmament and non-proliferation have been a recurring theme in this forum in recent years, for good reason. The developments following last year's session of the First Committee can only reinforce the assessment that disarmament diplomacy is on a dangerous trajectory. New nuclear capabilities, including some apparently designed for military use, are being developed, which removes us further from our collective goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The risk of another nuclear arms race and the actual use of nuclear weapons, intentionally or otherwise, can no longer be ignored, along with the indisputable fact that a single nuclear explosion would cause disastrous humanitarian consequences.

In seeking to revive disarmament diplomacy we should make full use of the strong engagement by the Secretary-General, whose Agenda for Disarmament is a call to action for the United Nations system that should inspire us all. Having signed on as a champion for dialogue and gender, Sweden is looking forward to working with the United Nations in delivering on this important project. Six months from now, the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will gather for its 2020 Review Conference. Earlier this year, Sweden launched an initiative aimed at mobilizing political momentum for an ambitious yet realistic outcome. Sixteen non-nuclear-weapon States, representing different geographic and security policy perspectives, gathered in Stockholm to convey a political message on the need for disarmament progress. In close dialogue with nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, our group will seek to make concrete contributions to that end.

From a Swedish point of view, the elements of a possible common-ground package should include a reaffirmation of the position of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and of the continued validity

of previous commitments made within the NPT framework. There can be no backtracking. They should also include a contemporary version of the Reagan-Gorbachev dictum that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, a package of measures covering all three pillars of the Treaty that include progress in the implementation of outstanding commitments related to article VI, and, finally, an enhanced framework for systematic follow-up in the years beyond 2020. In that context, improved secretarial support for the Treaty's disarmament dimension deserves to be considered.

A particular challenge will be to identify actionable measures related to article VI that are viable in the current security environment and can contribute to reducing nuclear risks while at the same time creating scope for bigger disarmament steps further down the road. The Stepping Stones approach was introduced with that in mind — the issue of how to design a strategy that makes the implementation of outstanding disarmament commitments possible. There are several areas that offer rich opportunities for concrete measures. They include reducing the role of nuclear weapons in policies and doctrines, including by strengthening negative security assurances; reviving habits of cooperation, building on the fruitful interaction among nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States on disarmament verification; seeking ways to enhance transparency on arsenals and fissile-material stocks and creating measures designed to reduce the risk of intentional or unintentional nuclear use.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) constitutes a crucial part of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and its entry into force remains at the top of our to-do list. Sweden's strong political and technical support for the CTBT is steadfast, and we urge all remaining annex 2 States to take concrete steps towards its ratification.

With its confidence-building interaction between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, disarmament verification stands out as one of the success stories of recent years. Sweden is proud to be engaged in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, which continue to deliver concrete insights into future verification requirements. We strongly encourage more nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States to engage in that regard.

Sweden participated actively in the 2017 negotiations that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. At the time we voiced our concerns about certain shortcomings in the draft. In July of this year, the Government announced that Sweden will refrain from signing or seeking to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in its current form, largely due to those same shortcomings. We will, however, seek to become an observer State once the Treaty enters into force.

Sweden deeply regrets the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which contributed immensely to European and global security for over 30 years and whose demise was fundamentally triggered by Russian non-compliance. However, one important ray of light remains — the New START Treaty, which, as far as we can tell, continues to be fully implemented. We call on the United States and Russia to come to an early agreement on a five-year extension of the New START Treaty, which is a crucial element of strategic stability and a key scene-setter for the NPT Review Conference. It would also provide an appropriate platform for negotiating a successor treaty. Dismantling the one remaining safety net before a new one is erected could seriously jeopardize global security.

As we follow key regional proliferation dossiers, we are constantly reminded of the indispensable role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in global non-proliferation. Sweden is proud to serve as Chair of its Board of Governors for 2019 and 2020. We must give the Agency the political and financial support it needs, as well as adequate inspection tools, including by ensuring that the additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement is universally applied. The Agency is more than a nuclear watchdog. It delivers on its motto of "Atoms for peace and development."

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile programmes remain a major threat to the global non-proliferation regime. We welcome the diplomatic developments that have occurred since early in 2018, a momentum that must be maintained. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should formalize its commitments aimed at denuclearization in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, including by signing and ratifying the CTBT.

Sweden and the EU remain steadfast supporters of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Its disintegration would be seriously damaging to the global non-proliferation regime. Iran's recent breaches of nuclear-related limits under the JCPOA are serious setbacks in that regard. Meanwhile, we deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the reimposition of sanctions. We urge Iran to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA in the implementation of its NPT Safeguards Agreement.

Next year will be crucial for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The NPT Review Conference offers a chance to unlock disarmament diplomacy that must be seized. If we are to succeed, nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike must now fully engage in a spirit of compromise.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election and to wish them every success in their tasks. We want to assure them and the other delegations participating in the First Committee of the State of Qatar's cooperation in ensuring the success of the Committee's work.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

The expansion and increasing numbers of internal and regional armed conflicts are a serious challenge to States' security and contribute to their destabilization, which is damaging to international and regional security. On top of that, the proliferation and availability of weapons and their use by warring groups pose the risk of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups and transnational human trafficking networks. There is a dire need for concerted international efforts to address those serious challenges and to intensify our work to prevent and peacefully settle conflicts in accordance with international law.

The international disarmament conventions have laid the foundations for achieving our objectives. We must remember that the use of constructive dialogue in resolving disputes is the only way to enhance trust and reduce the proliferation, use and development of weapons so as to ultimately stabilize countries and societies. Qatar emphasizes its support for international efforts to collectively prevent crises and resolve them through peaceful means in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations. Human security is a top priority for the international community and

a goal that deserves collective action. There can be no doubt that its achievement depends on eradicating global tensions, which demands that all international stakeholders engage in dialogue on all issues that pose severe threats to international peace and security. As the Conference on Disarmament is the only negotiating forum for discussing disarmament issues, it is crucial to ensure that it can adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that is conducive to realizing the aspirations of the international community in that regard.

Developments and tensions related to the proliferation of nuclear weapons concern all countries and have repercussions for international peace and security. My delegation is therefore deeply concerned about the lack of progress in ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and the failure to uphold the commitments of the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the steps adopted at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, together with the failure of the 2015 Review Conference. We stress the great importance that we attach to the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be convened in November under the presidency of our sister nation of Jordan in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546. We look forward to achieving the Conference's desired goal, which can enhance peace and security at the regional and international levels.

In the light of the continuing rapid advances in the field of information and communications technology and the inadequacy of international legislation on this vital area, enhancing cybersecurity and electronic security constitutes a complicated challenge to the international community. The misuse of cyberspace threatens individuals and States and is becoming a source of disagreement and conflict. It is therefore extremely important to regulate it in everyone's interests. Qatar was recently subjected to a cyberattack in which the Qatar News Agency was hacked. That triggered an international crisis whose dangerous repercussions for international peace and security were clear to all of us. The increasing regularity of such threats is a negative development for international relations. The State of Qatar has therefore intensified its efforts in the field of cybersecurity by reviewing and updating its relevant national legislation. We have also

exchanged expertise and knowledge while participating in United Nations activities, including the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, established pursuant to resolution 73/27, which is tasked with regulating States' responsible behaviour in the area of cybersecurity. The State of Qatar is committed to international cooperation in addressing common challenges. In that regard, we have announced our readiness to host an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss the issue of regulating cybersecurity in accordance with international law.

Qatar takes a firm position on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, based on its strong belief that achieving international peace and security is the shared responsibility of all States. We believe that multilateralism is the only way to address issues of disarmament and non-proliferation as well as international security, in addition to ridding humankind of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar renews its commitment to strengthening our partnerships and cooperation within the framework of the United Nations in order to advance international efforts to achieve international peace and security.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): I join others in congratulating the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election. My delegation will cooperate fully with the Bureau in the conduct of the Committee's work.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Malaysia remains 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 recent termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the possibility that the New START Treaty of 2010 will not be extended beyond its expiration in 2021 and the difficulties in nuclear-disarmament discourse are compounding the current challenges. Those continuing drawbacks breed instability and are creating an environment that is detrimental to international peace and security.

The world is seeing the start of a new arms race, with the development and testing of ground-based intermediate-range missiles following the termination of the INF Treaty, and announcements by its former States parties about the further development of such weapons. We need constructive dialogue between and among all States. We all have a responsibility to ensure that the disarmament and arms-control architecture is preserved and nuclear disarmament advanced. Better conceptualization is needed, with a focus on the paradigm of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons as a more effective way to contribute to better discourse and understanding. Attaining a nuclear-weapon-free world has been the long-standing desire of the international community since the creation of the General Assembly in 1946.

Next year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be an appropriate forum for us to recommit to the global agenda of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, while promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, Malaysia supports the Secretary-General's call to Member States to reconcile divergent positions, with a view to advancing nuclear disarmament and preserving the disarmament and arms-control architecture. Malaysia also believes that it is pertinent that we enhance public awareness and education on the threat posed to humankind by nuclear weapons. As such, Malaysia welcomes the commemoration and promotion of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. In that spirit, we will continue to work with other like-minded countries to pursue follow-up actions on General Assembly resolution 73/64 on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to and unwavering support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We are working to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible and thereby contribute to its early entry into force. Malaysia urges all States to have the same open and focused approach to the Treaty and become parties to it as a manifestation of our commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is fundamental to systematic progress

towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Malaysia calls on all States, particularly the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

We reiterate that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an integral part of nuclear disarmament and the promotion of regional peace and stability. In that regard, we will continue to work with other ASEAN member States to actively pursue the signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone by the nuclear-weapon States, in line with the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025. We also support the November convening of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. We urge all States of the region to actively participate in the Conference in order to realize the establishment of such a zone.

Closer to home, Malaysia is deeply concerned about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's reported launch on 2 October of a weapons-grade projectile, a development that is counterproductive to confidence-building measures and the security of the Korean peninsula. Malaysia hopes to see a resumption of dialogue aimed at achieving reconciliation and the realization of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Malaysia fully supports the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and encourages developed countries to promote international cooperation through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in that area. We also call for the removal of all discriminatory restrictions that are contrary to the spirit of the CWC. We support the international community's efforts to promote universal adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and compliance with its provisions. In line with article IV of the Convention, Malaysia is working on adopting a national biological weapons bill, which would further strengthen our implementation of the BWC.

The world is dealing with cyberthreats that are rapidly evolving and increasingly sophisticated. We recognize that the challenges of attribution in the cyber domain are complex. On that note, Malaysia would like to highlight the importance of developing a universal attribution mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations that is recognized by all Member States. In creating that mechanism, due diligence is certainly one

of the important elements that should be included to prevent any wrongful attribution.

Malaysia remains committed to ratifying and acceding to international treaties governing the use of outer space. In that regard, we have endorsed our 2030 national space policy and commenced the process of drafting national outer-space legislation. We look forward to collaborating with other Member States as we put our national outer-space regulatory framework in place.

We remain deeply concerned about the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. Malaysia urges for the full, balanced and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in order to prevent their illicit spread. We believe that more efforts should be undertaken to address the issue of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and we will be supporting efforts in that regard, including through the formulation of a political declaration, as called for by the Secretary-General.

The threats from all types of weapons are growing due to technological capability and global connectivity. No single nation can deal with the catastrophic consequences of those potential threats on its own. Given the current political and security environment that we are facing, it is pertinent that we revisit the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in order to advance the global disarmament agenda. Any action that ignores the letter and spirit of the Charter and disregards the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, will adversely affect serious and genuine efforts in the field of disarmament. In that regard, Malaysia underlines the vital importance of multilaterally agreed solutions in addressing disarmament and international security issues.

The Acting Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this meeting.

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

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): The Russian Federation will hold informal consultations

today at 3 p.m. in Conference Room A. I would also like to make three further announcements.

First, as the Chair mentioned this morning, the list of speakers for the thematic discussion will open tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. With regard to the announcement that the Chair made this morning on exercising the right of reply, we would like to ask delegations wishing to exercise the right of reply to kindly inform the Secretariat by 5 p.m. this afternoon so that adequate time can be allocated to that segment.

Secondly, as members are aware, the United Nations is facing a serious financial liquidity crisis. We therefore have to finish our meetings promptly at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Depending on the number of speakers wishing to exercise the right of reply, the time allocated to that segment will therefore be adjusted as necessary, and the Chair will make the necessary announcements in that regard.

Finally, the Secretariat would like to draw members' attention to the proposed deadline for A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.1. The deadline for the submission

of proposals is proposed for this Thursday, 17 October, at noon. That date, as members are aware, is established by taking into account the number of draft resolutions and decisions before the First Committee and the manner in which action on proposals is structured and scheduled in the Committee. Bearing in mind the serious liquidity crisis facing the Organization and recognizing the situation as it relates to A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.1, the Secretariat would like to inform members that we cannot guarantee the timely issuance of draft proposals submitted after the proposed deadline of noon on 17 October. We would therefore encourage delegations to respect the proposed deadline for the submission of proposals.

The Acting Chair: The next meeting of the First Committee will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 4. We will continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. I appeal to all delegations to be punctual in order to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.