



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

First Committee

6th meeting

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Official Records

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

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Programme of work

The Chair: Before I open the floor for statements in the general debate, delegations are reminded that the list of speakers for the thematic discussion segment, which will start next week, will be open tomorrow morning.

I call on the representative of Ukraine on a point of order.

Mr. Leschenko (Ukraine): I would first like to commend you, Mr. Chair, for your professional leadership of this forum as well as your efforts to avoid the situation we witnessed at the United Nations Disarmament Commission earlier this year. We fully respect your wish to find a common solution that would be acceptable to all the delegations in this room. However, given the continued uncertainty regarding the programme of work and the timetable of the First Committee, we would like to ask you to resume consideration in this meeting of the issue of the adoption of the draft provisional programme of work and timetable of the First Committee for 2019, contained in document A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.1, and the draft indicative timetable for the structured discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items and the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions, contained in document A/C.1/74/CRP.2/Rev.1.

The Chair: There is a request for the Committee to resume its consideration of the draft provisional programme of work and timetable of the First

Committee for 2019 and the draft indicative timetable for structured discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items, as contained, respectively, in documents A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.1 and A/C.1/74/CRP.2/Rev.1.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Molyugin (Russian Federation): I would like to ask you, Sir, as Chair, to provide us with an overview of what we are doing right now in practical terms, that is, taking into account the decision to hold the general debate as is, and of how we should proceed from this point.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard from the Ukrainian delegation that it would like us to resume consideration of the adoption of the First Committee's draft provisional programme of work. However, the Russian Federation has requested clarification on the action we have taken so far, which I assume refers to the efforts that the Committee has made in the wake of the statements by the Russian Federation and other delegations concerning their representatives' absence at this session. I would like to inform members that the Bureau has continued those efforts, not only through our informational consultations with the Secretariat, the President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country but also with the members of the Committee regarding the continuation of the programme of work.

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It is our understanding from the information we have received that there will be a meeting tomorrow of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country for which the President of the General Assembly and the Secretariat are formulating appropriate actions in this context. It is important to note that the Chair has made great efforts to address this situation, but I hope that the Committee will appreciate that this specific issue of visas is outside its scope of competence.

In Tuesday's meeting (see A/C.1/74/PV.2), the Committee adopted by consensus the part of the programme of work concerning the general debate. At the same time, the Committee made it clear that we will monitor the action taken on the requests of various delegations. The Ukrainian delegation has just requested that the Committee reconsider the adoption of the remainder of the draft provisional programme of work. That is the current situation.

I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I unfortunately got here a bit late and did not hear the exact request made by our Ukrainian colleagues. However, going on what you said, Mr. Chair, my understanding is that the delegation of Ukraine has asked that we resume the consideration of the draft programme of work.

If that is the case, like my colleague who spoke on behalf of the Russian Federation just now, I want to ask you, Mr. Chair, to explain in detail what that means from a procedural point of view. As we see it, in order to return to the consideration of the draft programme of work, we would have to go through a complex process, discuss those matters and waste a good half of this afternoon's meeting, if not the whole thing, in order to resume the consideration of procedural and organizational issues, including that of the draft programme of work.

We would first have to walk back our decision of 8 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.2) to return to organizational matters after the conclusion of the general debate, a proposal that was adopted by consensus. First of all, any counterproposal would mean stopping our general debate. As I understand it, in order to get to the stage of considering the draft programme of work, we would first have to take a decision suspending the general debate. Then, as was noted the 8 October decision, we would have to return to considering the

issue of national delegations' access to United Nations Headquarters in New York, and only after that would we be able to once again return to considering the draft programme of work. That seems to be the order in the rules of procedure. If the delegation of Ukraine is ready to take responsibility for suspending the general debate, in which some 75 States have yet to speak, then let us consider the issue. But I want to emphasize once again that from a procedural point of view this is a very tricky issue and we have to be very clear in defining it.

I think that you, Mr. Chair, together with the Bureau and the Secretariat, will have to clearly define the procedure for moving forward. Either we continue the general debate that we have already begun or we follow the path proposed by our Ukrainian colleagues. In that case, we have to be clear about the procedure to be followed in order for us all to return to considering the issue of the draft programme of work. However, I would like to reiterate that from the point of view of the Russian delegation, this procedural process will be very complicated. We would first have to interrupt the general debate through a collective decision and then once again discuss the issues that we, the Russian Federation, and a number of other countries raised prior to the general debate about the unhindered access of national delegations to United Nations Headquarters—and only after that would we be able to return to the issue of adopting the remaining part of the draft programme of work, which will entail additional discussions of our approaches to it, among other things.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Given this rapidly developing state of affairs, I would like to request a 10-minute suspension of the meeting in order to get a sense of what is going on.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Cuba.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is deeply concerned about the request we have just heard to suspend the session, as such an action would imply ending the general debate even while there are 75 delegations that have yet to exercise their right to speak. We are concerned that such a suspension would prolong the work of the First Committee excessively, with the concomitant budgetary and financial implications for the Organization, especially at this critical time. Bearing in mind the agreement reached by the Committee and the decision adopted by consensus

on 8 October to continue with the general debate (see A/C.1/74/PV.2), the delegation of Cuba therefore proposes that the Committee continue its work.

The Chair: Before we continue, I want to acknowledge the delegations that are requesting the floor. We will suspend the meeting for a few minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 3.20 p.m. and resumed at 3.35 p.m.

The Chair: I have listened carefully to the request of the representative of Ukraine. However, I would like some clarification. I would first like to know if the representative of Ukraine is requesting a suspension of the Committee's general debate, and secondly if he is requesting that the Committee consider the adoption of the draft programme of work.

I call on the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Leschenko (Ukraine): We are not requesting a suspension but an adjournment of the debate for a short period of time in order to discuss the adoption of the draft programme of work, which we would like to consider and adopt right now.

The Chair: I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America on a point of order.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I would like to request a 30-minute suspension so that we can consult further on this issue. We are in your hands, Mr. Chair, but that is the request of my delegation.

The Chair: I now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on the issue.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I do not think the proposal of the Ukrainian representative is entirely correct. He cannot propose both adjourning the general debate and resuming the consideration of the draft programme of work at the same time, because a very specific consensus decision was taken on 8 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.2) to continue the general debate and then return to other matters of an organizational nature, the first of which is access for Member States' delegations to United Nations Headquarters, and the second the consideration of the draft programme of work. Only by overriding and voting against the earlier consensus decision would we be able to interrupt the general debate. But even if that were the case, the next item for consideration would be the issue of access to Headquarters, not the draft programme of work. I therefore appeal to my colleagues

from the Ukrainian delegation to be more precise in the formulation of their request. If they simply want to adjourn the debate that we have already adopted a decision to hold, that is one thing. If they want to go back to the consideration of the draft programme of work, then we have to follow the entire procedure from start to finish.

If I understand it correctly, there is another thing, which is that if we now vote on some question, in accordance with rule 116 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly four delegations can speak on it, two for and two against. We have now spent 40 minutes on this when we could have heard five delegations speak in the general debate. The delegation of the United States is asking for a break of 30 more minutes, after which there would be two statements for and two against the Ukrainian proposal and then another discussion, and we would lose the entire day of general debate. I therefore once again suggest that we take advantage of the proposal by my United States colleague Ambassador Robert Wood to take a break so that we can resume the normal work of the general debate.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): The delegation of Egypt has made it abundantly clear that we fully support the adoption of the draft programme of work in a timely manner, preferably on a basis of consensus. However, we also want to honour and respect the consensus that was reached with regard to proceeding with the general debate while consultations continue on the issue of visa impediments with the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. Our preference is now to continue implementing what the Committee has agreed on, on the understanding provided by the Chair and several other delegations that this will not prevent the Committee from adopting its draft programme of work in a timely manner. Having said that, and while I reiterate my delegation's support for maintaining the consensus that we have achieved so far, my understanding is that a point of order was raised. I think that one of the best ways to deal with that is with a ruling by the Chair after consultation with the Bureau and the Secretariat. Then we will see how the Chair's ruling will be handled.

We agree with those who have expressed the view that we would be better off using the Committee's very precious and tight time to proceed with the general debate until the ongoing consultations are concluded. Meanwhile, we once again stress that this does not mean that we are not supporting the adoption of the

draft programme of work, preferably by consensus, in a timely manner.

Mr. Song Li (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My statement will be very short. We support the view expressed by the representative of Egypt and earlier speakers that we should cherish the valuable time allotted to the general debate so that we can get on with our work. In the meantime, the consultations on the draft programme of work should continue, especially a meeting with the Committee on Relations with the Host Country is scheduled for tomorrow afternoon. I hope all these efforts will help us to try to find a proper and fair solution to the problems related to the programme of work while we proceed smoothly with our general debate. I believe in making full use of the time this afternoon and the rest of the days we have left to continue the general debate, which should be the overall wish of all delegations present.

Mr. Leschenko (Ukraine): I would like to ask you for a 10-minute break to discuss this issue with you personally, Mr. Chair, if that is possible.

Mr. Mohd Nasir (Malaysia): My delegation has been following this discussion very closely, and we have also consulted our colleagues here today. Like the representative of Egypt in the points he raised, we understand that last week the Committee agreed to proceed with the general debate in its entirety until completion before revisiting the procedural aspects of the Committee (see A/C.1/74/PV.2). Earlier this afternoon we were surprised by the request for a point of order, which we fully respect. On that note, we would like to ask you, Mr. Chair, if it will be possible for you to make a clear ruling on abiding by the understanding and agreement that we had last week before venturing into points of order and the rules of procedure and any potential voting on them. It is not in our interests to go down that path. It will be very difficult for my delegation and others here today to be ready for every possible type of scenario on a near-daily basis. On that note, Mr. Chair, would it be possible for you to make a ruling so that we can abide by the agreement that we had last week to wait until the completion of the general debate before turning to this matter? My delegation was able to deliver our statement before the lunch break (see A/C.1/74/PV.5), and I cannot imagine having to wait anxiously to find out when it might be our turn to speak. On that note, Sir, we are guided by your wisdom.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): Our delegation has also been following this issue very closely and in principle we are ready to do all we can to adopt the draft programme of work, preferably by consensus. At the same time, and in that spirit, we would like to underline that we want to keep the consensus that we reached on 8 October with regard to continuing with the general debate (see A/C.1/74/PV.2). That certainly does not mean that we will not permit any changes, but we would like to inquire as to what is the urgency or the strong reason behind the new situation that requires such a challenge to our consensus. It is something that we will have to report back to our capital. In line with the views of our colleagues from Malaysia and Egypt, we would like to seek your guidance, Mr. Chair, on enabling us to move forward with our general debate, considering that there are many more countries that have not delivered their statements. I think it will be a good thing if we can respect our consensus.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The First Committee's programme of work has always been adopted by consensus. Last week, on 8 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.2), the Committee agreed by consensus on the document we have before us today, A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.1. We had a consensus. It was very clear that we were going to start the general debate and consider the other matters later, one after another, so as to preserve this valuable time. To be brief, we support resuming the general debate so that we can listen to our colleagues' statements and also have time to deliver our own.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I too would like to add my voice to those that spoke in favour of continuing with the general debate, because we also believe that we should be consistent in all our decisions, and breaking our consensus does not support the credibility or consistency of those decisions. I would like to point out that the decision on adopting the draft programme of work was made based on an understanding and compromise by which we would adopt one part for the general debate while leaving another part for the draft programme of work, and that immediately on the conclusion of the general debate we could resume the discussion on the draft programme of work. Without that compromise, the decision could not have been taken.

I therefore believe that we should continue with the general debate. In my view, such proposals for either adjourning or suspending our meeting, even for 10

minutes, are a real disruption of my delegation's work. My delegation was supposed to deliver a statement in this meeting, but it has now been postponed and we have had to reschedule our programme for tomorrow. My appeal to all our colleagues is therefore to allow us to continue with our compromise decision. We will certainly discuss the rest of the draft programme of work afterwards.

The Chair: There has been a request to suspend the meeting and a request to adjourn the debate. In accordance with rule 119 of the rules of procedure, the suspension of the meeting takes precedence, and I will therefore suspend it now in order to hold consultations.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4 p.m.

The Chair: I have consulted with delegations, and I thank them for their flexibility in allowing the Committee to continue its general debate while this matter is resolved on the sidelines. We will therefore continue with the general debate.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mrs. Mills (Jamaica): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, and your Bureau on your election to lead the work of the First Committee for the seventy-fourth session. You are assured of Jamaica's full support. Our thanks also go to the Chair and Bureau of the seventy-third session for their tireless efforts to steadily guide the work of the Committee.

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

We face unprecedented threats to international peace and security that risk diminishing the multilateral disarmament landscape. One of the most visible manifestations of these growing threats is in the area of arms control. The uncertainty surrounding the future of the New START Treaty remains a source of anxiety, as without it there will be no legally binding limits on the world's two largest nuclear arsenals for the first time since 1972. The termination of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which was an important factor in ending the Cold War, is also a

cause for concern. We echo the Secretary-General's call for preserving these important treaties. Failure to do so would set the stage for the beginning of a new, more dangerous type of global military competition.

The situation is made more tenuous by the fact that global military expenditure is on the rise, as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has reported. Military spending worldwide totalled \$1.8 trillion in 2018. That represents the highest level since 1988, the first year for which regular global data is available. SIPRI also notes that such spending is now 76 per cent higher than the post-Cold War low in 1998. As an international community, we must insist that every effort be made to ease tensions and avoid a race to the bottom. That applies to the unravelling of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and civil warfare in other parts of the world. What we must work for is achieving pragmatic results, including a rapprochement on the Korean peninsula, in order to ensure that real progress towards sustainable, lasting peace can be realized.

We continue to be concerned about the fact that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains elusive, but we still hold out hope for that vital agreement's eventual entry into force. I would like to put on record our satisfaction with the steady progress that is being made in countries' signing and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Jamaica is working on the internal legal and administrative processes that will pave the way for us to join those that have already ratified it.

My delegation is concerned about the issues that are plaguing the effective functioning of the disarmament machinery. The inability of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to formally convene its second session earlier this year is worrisome. It risks creating a new trend and complicating the difficulties that the Commission is already experiencing in reaching consensus on the substantive issues on its agenda. It is our hope that the Commission will be able to continue its work in earnest in 2020 and that similar problems will not arise again in future. We also share the frustration of other delegations about the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to make the kind of progress needed. We hope that we can move beyond the subsidiary bodies established last year to a more comprehensive programme of work that will enable the Conference to fully assume its

responsibility as the international community's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will also be a significant event in 2020. My delegation expects that the consensus that eluded us at the 2015 Review Conference will not carry over to 2020 and that we will be able to adopt robust recommendations that uphold the principles that have governed nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for the past 50 years. We look forward to seeing the Conference pave the way for a world without the threat of nuclear weapons.

The illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be halted. Jamaica remains concerned about the illicit diversion of such weapons and the impact they continue to have on ordinary civilians. We will speak in greater detail on the issue under the relevant agenda item, but we underscore the urgent need for cooperation at all levels to combat this scourge.

Jamaica supports international efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Like other Member States, we continue to strengthen national measures designed to ensure that such weapons, their means of delivery and the materials and technologies related to their manufacture do not fall into the hands of criminals. We continue to work within the framework of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and with bilateral and regional partners to ensure that we fully adhere to the tenets of the resolution. In that respect, Jamaica values the work being undertaken under the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) regional programme for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), which supports efforts to prevent the trade in and use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and related materials. We appreciate the engagement of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) in supporting initiatives to implement strategic trade legislation and regulations and build our capacity to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation welcomes the ongoing work aimed at addressing developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. We are pleased that in addition to the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, there is also an opportunity for the wider membership

to contribute to the discussions, facilitated by the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, as mandated under General Assembly resolution 73/27, which has already begun its consultations and with which CARICOM has been engaging. The efforts aimed at preventing the weaponization of outer space and promoting the long-term sustainability of outer-space activities are equally important. In that regard, the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures will remain critical.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee, and the Bureau members on their assumption of their positions. The delegation of the Netherlands stands ready to support your work.

In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Today we live in an increasingly multipolar world where new technologies are emerging, creating many complexities and posing a risk to global security. We need non-proliferation and disarmament more than ever. Sadly, we continue to see serious threats to the multilateral architecture. This year we have already witnessed the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a huge multilateral non-proliferation success, is under high pressure. The Chemical Weapons Convention is under strain as chemical weapons are being used by both State and non-State actors, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes continues to be a key challenge for the global non-proliferation regime. These challenges can be successfully resolved only if we use the most important and effective tool at our disposal, that is, multilateral cooperation. As His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands noted in his remarks to the General Assembly this year,

"We should cherish the multilateral system and its international agreements and rules as a precious achievement.... [W]e need each other more than ever." (*A/74/PV.4, p.15*)

The Netherlands will therefore continue to promote multilateralism as the key principal system

for addressing today's challenges and promoting international security. Our efforts will be constructive and forward-looking and will build on the fundamentals of the rules-based system. In that regard, the Netherlands supports the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and continues to support the role of the United Nations in addressing these issues.

First, in terms of multilateral cooperation, we must make every possible effort to jointly uphold the existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. The Netherlands therefore continues to be firmly committed to strengthening and implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We will contribute actively to ensuring a successful outcome for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons via our vice-presidency of the Conference and chairmanship of the Third Committee. The Netherlands also urges for an immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty next year. We fully support efforts to follow up on the successful conclusion this year of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, and we hope that the First Committee can stay united on the issue and continue those important multilateral efforts.

Secondly, this year the INF Treaty was unable to survive the non-implementation by one of its two parties of its obligations under the Treaty. That has serious implications for stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic region, and together with its allies and partners, the Netherlands will take balanced and coordinated defensive measures in response. We remain committed to dialogue and effective arms control. In another development, Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which consolidated the JCPOA, has come under increasing pressure. Iran's nuclear programme must remain under strict international controls, for which the JCPOA is the agreed instrument. We call on all the parties involved to fully implement resolution 2231 (2015), including its elements on ballistic-missile-related activities.

The international community must actively support the diplomatic efforts to address the proliferation challenges posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We cannot accept a nuclear Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The most recent ballistic-missile test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is another clear violation of the relevant

Security Council resolutions and suggests that it is further advancing its capabilities. The international community must maintain pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through the full and effective implementation of sanctions by all States Members of the United Nations. We also all agree together that we must uphold the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. If we want the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to retain and strengthen its crucial role, we must not let political moves get in the way.

Thirdly, new technologies come with great opportunities. Cyberspace, artificial intelligence and biotechnology come with many societal and economic benefits. However, those technologies can create security challenges. Malicious cyberoperations disrupting our societies represent a real and credible threat. We also reject the development of fully autonomous weapon systems that are not under meaningful human control, and we need collective engagement to address those developments. The Netherlands believes that can be done effectively by ensuring strong adherence to existing and agreed-on norms, rules and principles. We therefore support the current multilateral efforts to tackle cybersecurity threats both through 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. We welcomed the constructive discussions during the September meeting of the Open-ended Working Group. We need a pragmatic and inclusive approach that enables the Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts to complement and reinforce each other.

Multilateralism is once again key with regard to lethal autonomous weapon systems, and we commend the important work of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems and welcome the outcomes of this year's sessions. However, there is still much to be done, and we therefore trust that we will see the Group's mandate renewed in November. The same is true for countering biosecurity threats. The Netherlands is committed to the strengthening and implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, including through confidence-building measures and peer review.

Fourthly, the vast number of casualties caused by conventional weapons should remind us of the need for collective action. The extensive use of improvised anti-personnel mines, particularly in urban areas, and the illicit cross-border flows of small arms and light weapons in conflict zones are a painful but clear demonstration of that. The Netherlands therefore remains fully committed to the various conventions and treaties that seek to achieve progress in that area. The Netherlands will actively contribute to the Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and we support the universalization and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Only through our work on the Convention can we uphold the norm on the non-use of such munitions. We also underline the importance of the implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In that regard, we regret one State's recently announced intention to withdraw its signature of the ATT, and we call on all Member States to join the Treaty as our only legally binding international instrument regulating the trade in conventional arms.

Lastly, we should work on improving and modernizing our disarmament machinery. It is a sad truth that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the very forum that produced our vital multilateral disarmament treaties, has been unable to start negotiations on, for example, a fissile material cut-off treaty. We must be creative if we are to move forward. The Netherlands has therefore introduced a working paper on the organization of our work in the CD whose principle is going back to basics. We hope that will give impetus to substantial work in the CD next year. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that our most important conventions in the realm of disarmament and non-proliferation function effectively. We urge all States parties to meet their financial obligations to those conventions in full and on time. I will end here. The full version of my statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau, on your appointment as Chair of the First Committee at its 2019 session, and to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States, Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Egypt,

on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

I would like to begin by expressing our condolences to the family, friends and loved ones of Mr. Yukiya Amano, the late Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who served the international community diligently and executed his duties with the highest level of professionalism and dedication.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we are reminded that in order to maintain the continued validity of that important legal instrument, we must uphold and preserve the NPT. And the best way to do that is to implement it. The implementation of article VI of the NPT is a legal obligation binding on all States. Yet implementation of the Treaty's nuclear-disarmament obligations remains unsatisfactory. Regrettably, existing commitments have not been fulfilled and are being called into question by the words and actions of certain States. It is now more urgent than ever to strengthen the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its cornerstone. It was based on that view that as a strong proponent of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we ratified it on 25 February, making us the twenty-second State to do so. We believe it represents one of the most important developments in the area of nuclear disarmament since 1945, and we are committed to working tirelessly to achieve its entry into force as soon as possible.

This year marks the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba. The African Commission on Nuclear Energy, with its headquarters in South Africa, is now fully operational for the purposes of ensuring compliance with the obligations under the Treaty. South Africa would like to emphasize the important contribution that the nuclear-weapon-free zones make to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In that regard, we welcome the conference on nuclear-weapon-free zones to be convened next May on the margins of the 2020 NPT Review Conference, as well as 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. We call

on all the countries of the region to participate actively and in good faith in order to ensure that the Conference will be a success. South Africa stresses that resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and in other agreements made at subsequent NPT Review Conferences remains valid until it is fully implemented.

With regard to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), we reiterate our regret at the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement and the reimposition of the national sanctions that had been lifted or waived pursuant to it. We nevertheless call on all the remaining parties to the JCPOA to continue their efforts to sustain it, in the interests of regional and international peace and security.

South Africa is honoured to have been part of two important processes related to the work of the Committee, 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. While we welcome the voluntary norms established for responsible State behaviour, there is no substitute for legally binding norms. However, for that to happen, we understand that trust must be restored.

In conclusion, while we deal with a number of sensitive and complex issues during this session, it is our hope that our discussions and decisions will strengthen the sense of solidarity and trust among Member States. In that regard, my delegation stands ready to contribute constructively in order to ensure the successful conclusion of our deliberations during the next four weeks.

Mr. Câmara (Brazil): I would first like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election, Mr. Chair.

Brazil associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

In the past two decades, and even more so in the past few years, the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime has been steadily moving towards a state of dangerous dysfunction. That trend has intensified further since the Committee's previous session. Commitments to nuclear disarmament adopted

under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have been called into question. Chemical weapons, a category of arms that has been subjected to perhaps the most stringent prohibition regime ever created, have begun to be used again. Important agreements inherited from the end of the Cold War are being abandoned — as has happened to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty — or left in a legal limbo, as is the case with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The so-called disarmament machinery established by the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which deals with so many important contributions to international peace and security, is grinding to a halt. We must resist the current lack of serious commitment to disarmament calls and refuse to accept the situation as the new normal. We need bold and courageous leadership, particularly on the part of the major Powers, which are in a crucial position to take steps to break the current pattern of competition and mistrust. Failure to do so will put us at an unfathomable risk.

Our main priority must be to protect and reinforce the foundations of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime and its cornerstone, the NPT, in particular. The NPT member States must seize the opportunity offered by the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reaffirm and reinforce the fundamental bargain that the Treaty rests on, which is non-nuclear-weapon States' commitment to refraining from seeking to acquire such weapons, combined with a commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States to negotiating nuclear disarmament in good faith. While over its nearly 50 years of existence the NPT has enjoyed moderate success in helping to mitigate a resurgence in the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it has failed to deliver the ultimate objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In fact, it is often used as a thinly veiled justification for the indefinite maintenance of existing arsenals. That is why the adoption in 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represented an evolutionary leap for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It was developed not only to be fully compatible with the NPT but also to uphold and reinforce each of its three pillars. The fast pace of signatures and ratifications of the Treaty has surpassed expectations, and it now has two thirds of the number of States parties necessary for its entry into force.

The CTBT is a crucial instrument for achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and yet two decades after its adoption, eight annex 2 States are still blocking its entry into force by failing to ratify it. We therefore call on all States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT, especially the annex 2 countries, to do so with a sense of urgency. Countries possessing nuclear arsenals should make this a special priority and lead by example.

Brazil is a proud member of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a permanently inhabited area. The strengthening of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the creation of new ones on a basis of an agreement freely arrived at by all States of the regions concerned, will be a crucial step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We also take pride in having developed, together with Argentina, an innovative and highly successful model for the implementation of nuclear safeguards, through our establishment of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). This year we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the quadripartite agreement between Argentina, Brazil, ABACC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition to going well beyond the assurances provided by regular comprehensive safeguards agreements, the ABACC model has proved itself as an effective platform for building and maintaining trust and fostering cooperation. In that regard, we are pleased that the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs decided to include a visit to ABACC headquarters in its United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, the first time that the Programme will carry out activities in the southern hemisphere. We hope that the visit will contribute to promoting awareness about the ABACC model, which can be used as an inspiration for resolving nuclear tensions in other regions.

Going forward, unblocking the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is one of the key challenges that we are currently facing. The protracted impasse cannot be accepted as normalcy. Against that backdrop, Brazil has made two proposals with the potential to revitalize the work of the CD. The first is a framework agreement model of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, while the second is a proposal to establish within the CD a

group of scientific and technical experts on nuclear-disarmament verification.

Brazil vehemently condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances. We are concerned about the continued reports of the use of chemical weapons, particularly in the conflict in Syria. Regarding the Biological Weapons Convention, we have just passed the midpoint of the road to the ninth Review Conference, to be held in 2021. We should be gearing up to put together a negotiation package for the Review Conference with a view to strengthening the Convention's institutional framework, specifically through the creation of a legally binding instrument with a verification regime.

As the Secretary-General highlighted in his Agenda for Disarmament, we must tackle the challenge of disarmament for future generations. Given their transformative and revolutionary effects, emerging technologies and their potential impact on international security should be subjected to appropriate regulation before that impact is felt in full force. We cannot afford to wait for a catastrophe to motivate and focus our efforts. Despite last year's divisive and contentious negotiations, where the issue of information and communications technology in international security is concerned we hope that the two bodies established for the continuation of discussion on the matter will be able to work harmoniously with a view to re-establishing a much-needed consensus. As a country whose expert was chosen to chair the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, Brazil is ready to contribute to that effort.

We attach great importance to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and have been contributing actively to international discussion in that regard, having chaired the CD's subsidiary body 3 in 2018, the latest Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and the sixty-second session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

We have before us a choice. We can choose to continue with business as usual and collectively pretend that the abnormal behaviour that we have been witnessing is acceptable, or we can choose a different way.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

We are witnessing a new arms race. New technologies dramatically reduce reaction times and lead to increasing automation. Increasing levels of autonomy are beginning to have effects on a broad range of weaponry. At the same time, countries are increasing or upgrading their strategic-weapon stockpiles and ending long-established agreements. Yet in spite of that we see much of the disarmament architecture blocked by procedural issues, as well as a lack of progress on existing commitments to disarming. We must therefore redouble our efforts and return to the agreement we reached at the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which is to seek security in disarmament.

Regarding new technologies, we are very concerned about the increasing proliferation, velocity and range of missiles and rockets. New hypersonic missiles reduce reaction times drastically and have highly destabilizing effects. Austria is actively engaged in that area as the Executive Secretariat of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which now counts 140 members. We call on all remaining countries to join that very useful transparency and confidence-building instrument.

The weaponization of artificial intelligence poses fundamental challenges to international law, and international humanitarian law in particular. Against a backdrop of rapid technological progress, it is a matter of urgency that we draw the line between the acceptable and the unacceptable. It is an ethical and legal imperative that humans must remain in control of selecting and engaging targets. In the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems, we have a unique opportunity and a moral obligation to act and to act swiftly. Inaction would undermine our current legal framework, which is based on humans, not machines. Austria therefore supports the immediate commencement of negotiations on a legally binding commitment to ensuring human control over life-and-death decisions.

More countries and companies than ever are actively seeking to engage in outer space. Any weaponization of space would have highly negative consequences. Despite that, we see an increasing readiness to consider outer space as an arena for warfare. Austria believes that Governments must establish global mechanisms to

ensure that space resources are used solely for peaceful purposes. That requires a joint effort and an effective multilateral approach above all.

The urbanization of warfare entails increasing challenges for civilians, particularly when explosive weapons with wide-area effects are used in populated areas. We must address those worrying developments. The Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare, held earlier this month, in which 133 States participated, was an important step in that direction. It demonstrated the widespread support for formulating a political declaration that recognizes the problem and proposes clear actions to address it. Austria would be delighted to start working with our partners on such a political declaration.

In the area of nuclear weapons, the standstill in nuclear disarmament has unfortunately given way to reversals. We particularly regret that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, one of the pillars of the disarmament and arms-control architecture, is no longer in force. We call on the Russian Federation and the United States to find an arrangement that ensures that intermediate-range missiles are not deployed. This is a vital issue, and not only in terms of European security. We also call on both sides to begin discussions without delay on a successor agreement extending the New START Treaty.

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

We have been calling for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty for 23 years. It is high time for the annex 2 States to finally walk the talk by joining the Treaty. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear-weapon programme has demonstrated how crucial the work of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its international monitoring system is. It should therefore also play a key role in ensuring the denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as soon as possible. We also hope that a solution can be found to retain the historic Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

At the same time, there is concrete progress. A clear majority of the Member States that see their security threatened by nuclear weapons have adopted the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, meaning that 122 States have unequivocally affirmed that they see a nuclear-weapon-free world as a prerequisite

for a more secure world for all. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear explosion must be prevented. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is indispensable to fulfilling the ambition of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. Like it or not, it is now an established part of the nuclear-disarmament architecture. As Austria's Foreign Minister said two weeks ago here at the United Nations (see A/74/PV.8), with every additional signature and ratification, States are sending a powerful message that having a say on nuclear weapons is not the exclusive prerogative of States that possess them. I therefore call on all States to join the 79 signatories and 32 States parties that have already done so by signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In conclusion, the world will not wait for us to catch up. We must get ahead of current developments, and we must do more to ensure that existing agreements are kept and commitments fulfilled. Let us work together in that spirit.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate the Chair and offer him the full support of the delegation of Mali.

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

This meeting is taking place at a time when disarmament remains a widespread concern for Member States. In that context, Mali believes that multilateralism continues to be a vital prerequisite for disarmament, and we therefore support the various mechanisms dedicated to it. Mali's commitment to disarmament is also reflected in its strong support for the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and the African Union's related initiative, Silencing the Guns by 2020.

Despite the challenges we face in the area of disarmament, my delegation believes that the dynamism of multilateral diplomacy has been marked by some significant steps, as evidenced by the holding in August of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. In addition, Mali believes that outer space is part of

the common heritage of humankind and advocates using it for exclusively peaceful purposes. And given the high stakes surrounding the issue of cyberspace and the resulting challenges, my delegation believes that the two processes under way in this field should be complementary.

My delegation has high hopes for the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held next year. The fact is that small arms and light weapons cause more casualties than any other weapon. Their illicit flow poses a true challenge to international peace and security. Its consequences undermine our countries' development efforts, particularly those in the Sahel region, which is why Mali, which is a major victim of the impact of this illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, calls for the responsible implementation of the relevant international instruments. That includes ensuring that such weapons are not transferred to unauthorized entities and facilitating the rapid and reliable tracing of small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition, in addition to regular measures for assistance and international cooperation. That is, in fact, the entire purpose of the draft resolution that Mali submits each year on behalf of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them". In that regard, Mali calls for building consensus around the draft resolution and increasing the numbers of its sponsors.

Ms. Flores Irachez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to congratulate the Chair on his election to guide the work of this important Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau, and to assure him of my delegation's commitment to achieving the best possible results in our discussions.

Honduras joins other Member States by aligning itself with the statement delivered by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the States members of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

At this seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, it is essential that we recall Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that our purposes are

“To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.”

To the best of its ability, Honduras has always supported action aimed at strengthening the nuclear-disarmament regime and with the goal of uniting our efforts to maintain international peace and security. We have consistently reaffirmed our commitment to reducing nuclear weapons by adopting declarations, resolutions and legally binding instruments such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We are opposed to efforts to improve existing nuclear weapons or develop new types of such weapons, which are inconsistent with commitments to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We reiterate the importance of eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies.

At the beginning of this year, in line with the provisions of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and our efforts to emphasize the importance of preventing and ending illicit trafficking in conventional weapons and ensuring that they are not diverted to the illicit market or to unauthorized end-users and uses, Honduras's National Congress enacted a new law on the control of firearms, ammunition, explosives and related materials. It aims to control and regulate the import, export, registration, transit, transport, transfer, distribution, marketing, brokering, use, storage, licit or illicit manufacture and trade, modification, repair and reloading of firearms, ammunition, explosives and related materials. It will also control and regulate the ownership, possession and carrying of such weapons.

In the past few years Honduras has acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, welcomed the International Tracing Instrument and ratified the Arms Trade Treaty and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related

Materials. We know that much remains to be done and that despite our efforts, the risk of an arms race is increasing. Military expenditures also continue to increase, which limits the resources available for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Many conflicts around the world remain unresolved, but we must continue to focus on finding solutions to these challenges. We want to express our interest in the exploration of outer space for peaceful and scientific, social and economic development purposes in the interests of humankind. We underscore the importance of adhering to the Chemical Weapons Convention and all the treaties that are aimed at achieving a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

Honduras is grateful for all the support it has received in terms of international cooperation and assistance, since as we all know, that is essential, particularly with regard to technology transfers, the exchange of experiences and the training of competent officials. Developing countries have limited resources and institutional structures that are inadequate to combating the challenges they face. However, Honduras is firmly and enduringly committed to disarmament and international security and will continue to support the efforts of the international community to achieve those ends.

Ms. Quintero Correa (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will deliver an abridged version of my statement. I would like to congratulate the Chair on assuming the leadership of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and assure them of my delegation's support for their work.

The work of the First Committee is unquestionably vital to the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly when the challenges facing us can exacerbate existing conflicts or cause new ones to emerge. In that regard, I would like to quote President Iván Duque Márquez of Colombia, who said during his address at the general debate that

“we must unite in order to develop and strengthen multilateral responses involving governance that allow us to come together, recognize problems and develop road maps to move forward in resolving them.” (*A/74/PV.5, p. 30*)

For that reason, Colombia is firmly committed to an international order that is based on multilateralism, solidarity and autonomy. For us that commitment

represents a great responsibility to make progress in our efforts to achieve consensus and effective agreements and mobilize the real political will needed to implement them.

Preventing and combating the diversion and traffic of small arms and light weapons is a key objective for Colombia. Firearms trafficking is closely linked to other criminal activities such as drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime and other acts perpetrated by illegal armed groups, which are increasingly participating in drug trafficking in order to improve their purchasing power for buying weapons and explosives on the international black market. Their various criminal activities share the same transport infrastructure and strategic corridors, facilitating access to cheap firearms for terrorist groups and organized and common criminals alike. The size of this problem shows how national realities combine with regional and global flows and variables, which is why Colombia is seeking to coordinate international cooperative actions aimed at controlling and combating the illicit trade both in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, parts and components.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, my country stresses the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is a fundamental tool for promoting the transparency, cooperation and responsible action of States that are tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This year, Colombia, together with Japan and South Africa as co-sponsors, will introduce the draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, which is aimed at maintaining a dialogue on the challenges posed by the manufacture and design processes and illicit trafficking of such weapons. It will also seek to highlight the collective efforts at the international, regional and national levels aimed at strengthening international cooperation and establishing mechanisms that allow for easy exchanges of information and complement existing systems such as INTERPOL.

Disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are constitutional mandates and foreign-policy principles for Colombia. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Colombia promotes its implementation and compliance with its three fundamental pillars

as catalysts for the achievement of peace, security and world prosperity. In view of the international nuclear situation, and given that the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be held next year, my country urges all countries, both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, to work together to universalize the Treaty, which remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and to overcome any politicizing factors that might affect their deliberations. As part of its compliance with the NPT, Colombia abides by its Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We recognize the IAEA as the competent authority in the area of nuclear verification and therefore consider it extremely significant that for the first time in the Agency's history a Latin American may be appointed as its Director General.

Colombia is proud to be a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created in Latin America and the Caribbean the first densely populated area free of nuclear weapons, and we therefore support initiatives aimed at establishing other such areas as contributions to international peace and security. As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), my country also underscores the CWC's relevance and condemns the use of chemical weapons by any actor under any circumstances. We view the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as the proper forum for the discussion of issues relating to incidents with this type of weapon and reiterate that States parties should support its strengthening and legitimacy. Similarly, as a State party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), we recognize the BWC's historic significance for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction as the first multilateral treaty prohibiting an entire category of such weapons. That is why we support agreement at the Convention's forthcoming meetings of States parties and Review Conference on viable measures to ensure the financial sustainability of its implementation scheme.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is a valuable tool that complements the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Fifteen years after its adoption, all countries have a duty to ensure that its implementation responds effectively to the evolution of the challenges posed by the risk that non-State actors may gain access to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

Before concluding, on behalf of my delegation I would like to reiterate our position on the importance of stepping up the momentum and enhancing the effectiveness of multilateral forums in general and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in particular, in order to ensure the CD's place as the venue for international negotiations on matters within its purview. The lack of progress we have seen in the Conference on Disarmament for more than two decades means that we do not have the regulations and legal framework that we need, given the dizzyingly rapid development of artificial intelligence and other technologies that are being used in designing and developing new weapons. While there may be a consensus on the crucial importance of the norms of international humanitarian law and international law, the regulatory vacuum leaves civilian populations more vulnerable and makes it harder to determine responsibility. Finally, my delegation expresses its hope that the First Committee will achieve successful outcomes at this session in the form of consensus resolutions and decisions on the challenges I have just mentioned, which strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Mr. Amayo (Kenya): First, I am pleased to see my sister from Burkina Faso presiding over this meeting. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chair on his assumption of the leadership of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and assure them of the support and cooperation of my delegation. I look forward to productive deliberations under this year's leadership.

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

We attach great importance to matters of international peace and security and believe that none of the global challenges we face can be solved by any nation alone, whether large or small. Multilateral cooperation at the subregional, regional and international levels is therefore imperative. Kenya is deeply concerned about the widening chasm separating commitments and action in the field of disarmament and arms control. The increasing production of weapons, including nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their enormously destructive firepower are a major threat to a peaceful and secure world. My delegation

reaffirms its long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and a world free of nuclear weapons, and we remain unwavering in calling for a total ban on such weapons.

The advancement of information and communications technologies has presented enormous political, economic and social opportunities. If we are to continue to enjoy those transforming benefits, it is important that we maintain an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. Threats to cybersecurity have a direct impact on the safety, well-being and human rights of all. It is therefore essential to make every effort possible to stop terrorists from appropriating cyberspace and using it to plan terror attacks, recruit and radicalize our young people, launder money and commit other international crimes. In that regard, we welcome the increased attention devoted to cyber matters at the United Nations. At its seventy-third session the General Assembly adopted two timely resolutions (resolutions 73/27 and 73/32) on developments in the field of information and communications in the context of international security, with a view to reaffirming the efficacy of international law and promoting responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. Kenya remains fully committed to the promotion of international norms in cyberspace within the United Nations framework for the advancement of a free, secure, stable and interoperable global cyber ecosystem.

My delegation notes with concern that the illicit transfer and trafficking of small arms and light weapons continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The effects of the widespread availability and misuse of small arms often contribute to unnecessary conflicts, especially in Africa, and have resulted in millions being displaced from their homes as refugees or internally displaced persons. Terrorism, wildlife poaching, piracy, cattle rustling and other serious criminal activities that threaten international peace and security are further consequences of the proliferation and easy availability of small arms.

Kenya has taken important measures to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. They include strengthening our policy and legislative frameworks in order to address loopholes in the law and ensure proper national stockpile management of small arms and light weapons. In addition, and with support from international

partners, including the United Nations, Kenya hosts the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which remains at the forefront of regional efforts to mitigate the risk posed by the proliferation of such weapons. The United Nations should do more to collectively address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons by ensuring that best practices, information-sharing and the most effective tools are applied in order to conclusively address the problem.

In conclusion, Kenya looks forward to engaging further and more comprehensively on important issues during the thematic debates. I would like to thank all Member States for the goodwill they have expressed regarding Kenya's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period from 2021 to 2122, and as we collectively pursue a common multilateral path towards international peace and security.

The Acting Chair: Before proceeding further, I wish to inform the Committee that at 5.15 p.m. today I intend to hear delegations wishing to exercise the right of reply. While there are only six countries on the list, the Committee will recall that any delegation may speak twice. Should we exhaust the list of speakers in right of reply before 6 p.m., with the consent of the Committee, I will propose that we resume the general debate in order to take advantage of the services while they are available. This way of proceeding is an extraordinary one but I hope that the Committee will agree to such an approach, given how far we are behind schedule.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself 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).

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is anchored in our Constitution. The father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dreamed of working to achieve the reduction of tensions, the limitation of armaments and the promotion of peaceful coexistence in every part of the world. Inspired by those principles, we have never hesitated in taking on greater responsibilities under all the major multilateral disarmament treaties. Last year we welcomed the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament for its people-centred approach and specific action points. We see merit in holding consultations among Member States on mainstreaming the Agenda in the work of the First Committee. We are also keen to advance certain aspects of the Agenda's

focus on disarmament for future generations. We urge all the parties in the various flashpoints around the world to return to the time-tested peace track of dialogue and diplomacy, transcending their narrow divisions and brinkmanship manoeuvres involving escalating political rhetoric and the possible threat of military action or use of nuclear weapons. We particularly urge all concerned to forge ahead with their ongoing efforts to achieve lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

International peace and security can ultimately be guaranteed only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In 2017, with a view to attaining that overarching objective, we signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we ratified it last month. We are encouraged to see the steady progress in its ratification and look forward to further strengthening its architecture. We are constructively engaged with all in making a success of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We hope that the Conference will be able to produce an outcome that further strengthens the NPT regime. We welcome the convening in New York next month of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction and hope that it will have a positive impact on the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

There should be no impediment to the inalienable right of every State to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, that right comes with certain responsibilities. In constructing the Rooppur nuclear-power plant, Bangladesh's first, we are following the highest international standards.

We must redouble our efforts to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and commence negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We stress the importance of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with a view to giving the disarmament machinery greater impetus. We also reiterate our support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and underscore the importance of upholding the credibility and integrity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). As an elected member of

the OPCW Executive Council, we recently contributed \$15,000 in support of the construction project for the OPCW's new Centre for Chemistry and Technology.

With today's rapid progress in new technologies, including in the realms of artificial intelligence and biotechnology, the threat of terrorists and other non-State actors obtaining weapons of mass destruction is more real than ever. We should therefore consider further mainstreaming these issues in our discussions in the First Committee. Bangladesh is very interested in developing internationally agreed solutions to the pressing challenges in the cybersecurity field, and we stress how important it is that the United Nations continue its norm-setting role for cyberspace. We welcome the opportunities for developing countries to voice their concerns and priorities during the ongoing work of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. We also value the work of the previous and current Groups of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security.

With the launch of the Bangabandhu-1 satellite, Bangladesh now has an enhanced stake in preventing an arms race in outer space. While trust- and confidence-building measures can be useful for preventing the weaponization of outer space, there is no denying the importance of concluding an international legally binding instrument on this issue.

As a nation in development transition, Bangladesh advocates channelling the massive resources deployed for arms build-ups towards the deserving priorities of sustainable development, which we have so far unfortunately failed to do. We must work to reverse that trend and redouble our efforts to further strengthen the entire disarmament and arms-control regime in order to ensure a safer and better world for future generations.

Ms. Quiel Murcia (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is the first time the Republic of Panama has taken the floor during this session, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Llorentty Solíz and the members of the Bureau supporting him on their election to lead the work of the First Committee. We are confident in his leadership and pledge our support to him in his discharge of his duties.

Panama associates itself with the statement made by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the

member States of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Panama is conscious of the challenges and threats facing international peace and security today, and we are therefore firmly committed to strengthening the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regime for weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, I want to underscore the importance of continuing to strengthen efforts to promote the universal applicability of the multilateral instruments that are essential for dealing with the major threats that the world is currently facing. Our countries must not stand idly by as the international arms-control architecture is potentially undermined at the same time that we are seeing increasing numbers of terrorist acts, the rise of non-State actors and uncontrolled trade in small arms.

As a signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the first regional instrument creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Panama reaffirms its aspirations for a safe and peaceful world free of weapons of mass destruction and the threats they represent. We also welcome the work of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which constitutes a global benchmark. Consistent with its vision for disarmament, Panama was one of the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and now that we have formally ratified it, we hope that it will soon enter into force, in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law, so that we can ensure the necessary guarantees required for international peace and security. In that regard, Panama reiterates its condemnation of the practice of conducting nuclear tests in defiance and open violation of Security Council resolutions, because they threaten international stability and therefore global security.

Panama also hopes that with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the detection of nuclear tests and exchange of scientific data and information among Member States will enable it to fulfil its tasks and objectives. My country contributes to those efforts through its Radionuclide RN50 station, making us part of the international monitoring system, with its 321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories.

Panama continues to attach great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, especially with regard to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We therefore welcome the holding in 2020 of

the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and we are sure that its Argentine presidency will do an exceptional job. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and as a country that believes in the effectiveness of international cooperation, at the beginning of this year Panama conducted a mutual evaluation exercise with the Dominican Republic, including a legal and public policy review, which facilitated the exchange of experiences and good practices regarding measures taken pursuant to the resolution on the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the importance of maintaining a multidimensional approach to security that emphasizes human rights and sustainable development, an equation that in our view is essential to strengthening multilateral solutions relating to the disarmament and international security agenda.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

I shall now call on delegations that have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Song Li (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In a meeting of the First Committee last week (see A/C.1/74/PV.4), the delegations of China and the United States had back-and-forth right-of-reply exchanges to which many delegations here today were also privy. It is China's firm belief that multilateral arms-control and disarmament mechanisms, including the First Committee, should be a venue and platform for advocating multilateralism and expanding international cooperation rather than for propagating anachronistic, jaundiced ideological biases or making groundless accusations reminiscent of the Cold War. If certain countries continue to name and shame my country in future meetings, I can assure the Committee that my delegation and I will fight back. In the meantime, we reserve the right to respond to the baseless accusations against China that the United States made during its second right of reply on Friday.

As today marks the start of another week of First Committee meetings, we are willing to leave more time for countries that need it to elaborate on their positions in the general debate. We look forward to working closely with the Chair and other delegations in the next

few weeks in order to promote the Committee's smooth and successful work.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United States and Britain, which, as we all know, are depositary countries of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), foiled the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in cooperation with Canada, because they insisted on protecting Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and covering up the fact that it has not acceded to the NPT. That is considered a flagrant violation of every provision of the Treaty and is a demonstration in practice of the hypocrisy of those countries' nuclear policies. Many Western countries, especially France, continue to protect, develop and strengthen the Israeli nuclear programme and shield it from international accountability measures, which has encouraged Israel to challenge the international community while developing its nuclear, chemical and biological arsenal as well as refusing to accede to any related treaties.

Britain is one of the European countries that exports terrorists and terrorism in large numbers, especially to my country, and it is conducting a smear campaign against my country in the United Nations and beyond. While it is no longer a great country in its foreign relations — indeed, it is a mere sidekick — it has supported terrorism and terrorists in my country since the beginning of the crisis there. It has provided terrorists with various forms of assistance, including weapons, ammunition, equipment and intelligence, in addition to media coverage. As such, it has violated Security Council resolutions, especially those on combating terrorism. Its foreign policy is an integral part of the problems that have plagued the entire world for many years in places such as the apartheid regime, Cyprus and Hong Kong.

My country has expressed deep concern about the threats and provocations by a group of Western countries, particularly the United States, Britain and France, which represent a tripartite aggression against Syria. At the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, they adopted a decision that has enabled them to politicize the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and use it to wage aggressions against independent sovereign States on the pretext that they are using chemical weapons. That June 2018 decision runs counter to the provisions

of the Treaty and is a dangerous precedent for the international system in that a technical organization, dealing with scientific and technical issues, was given the authority and mandate to conduct criminal and legal investigations that do not come under its remit, with a view to determining responsibility in cases of the use of chemical weapons. That is a clear violation of the jurisdiction of the international body involved in this issue, and as we all know, the decision is completely illegitimate, especially since it was adopted in the presence of less than half of the States parties to the Convention.

My country condemns France's campaign of misinformation, lies and fabricated allegations against my country as part of its full participation in the aggression against Syria, especially in the light of its close links with armed terrorist groups in Syria, at the forefront of which are the Al-Nusra Front and Da'esh, as well as other terrorist groups affiliated with them. France has provided armed terrorist groups in Syria with intelligence, arms and ammunition, including toxic chemicals.

On previous occasions I have asked the representatives of France to read the book by Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot entitled *The Road to Damascus*, which stressed that in August 2013 Laurent Fabius, France's former Minister for Foreign Affairs, was involved in the use of chemical weapons in eastern Ghouta, near Damascus. What I want to know is whether the French authorities investigated this issue. The representative of France and others tried to promote the report of the OPCW's Fact-finding Mission regarding an alleged incident in Douma. As usual, however, they intentionally forgot the technical report by Ian Henderson, who stressed that that incident did not occur. He personally visited the site of the alleged incident and countered their claims with scientific evidence. However, that important report was never included in the Fact-finding Mission's report, which instead bowed to the calls of certain Western countries and issued a report that was rife with mistakes. I urge my colleagues who have not yet read the report to examine it and learn the truth about the alleged incident in Douma and the consistent manipulation of documents in the reports of the Fact-finding Mission.

Mr. Beerwerth (Germany): I am exercising my right of reply on behalf of the 29 NATO member countries with regard to a statement made last week by the representative of the Russian Federation (see

A/C.1/74/PV.4). The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force. It remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and plays a central role in the maintenance of international peace, security and stability.

NATO allies are strongly committed to the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in all its aspects, including nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. NATO's nuclear arrangements have always been fully consistent with the NPT, and the core principle of NATO's posture is that the nuclear-weapon States of the alliance maintain absolute control and custody over their nuclear weapons. Articles I and II of the NPT do not prohibit nuclear basing or planning arrangements that include relevant infrastructure or joint training. NATO nuclear arrangements have been in place within NATO since before the NPT entered into force in 1970. At that time, basing arrangements were made clear to negotiating delegations and were made public.

The alliance reaffirms its resolve to seek a safer world for all and take further practical steps and effective measures to create an environment for further nuclear-disarmament negotiations and meet the ultimate goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons in full accordance with all provisions of the NPT, including article VI, in an ever more effective and verifiable way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has requested the right of reply with regard to various statements, particularly the statement by the delegation of the United Kingdom (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

The Russian delegation is and continues to be committed to its nuclear-disarmament obligations. We share the overall goal of the international community, which is to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. By staying firmly committed to that course of action, the Russian Federation has contributed to and will continue to contribute to the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

For more than 30 years the Russian Federation adhered strictly to its obligations under the

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which served as a reliable instrument in support of security in Europe. We categorically reject the unfounded and unproven accusations that we violated the INF Treaty and were responsible for its demise. Unlike the other key party to the Treaty, which has done nothing but wage a propaganda campaign against Russia for the past five years, my country took genuine steps to address the concerns and claims that were expressed. Let me point out that Russia took unprecedented transparency measures, including a demonstration and a detailed briefing on the missile that had raised concerns with regard to the INF Treaty. Unfortunately, most of the countries that have made anti-Russian statements here in the First Committee have ignored Russia's goodwill gesture, consciously rejecting the opportunity to ask questions about the issues worrying them and instead preferring to promote unproven accusations.

Moreover, those statements completely ignore Russia's concerns regarding specific violations of the Treaty by its other party. We repeatedly provided substantive evidence for those violations, but our appeals and concerns have remained unanswered. We are also disappointed that the statements said absolutely nothing about the violations that we have been talking about since the late 1990s. Let me point out that it was not Russia but the other State that in February of this year announced its suspension and subsequently its withdrawal from the Treaty. The Russian Federation did no such thing. No State has the right either formally or on any other basis to blame the Russian Federation for dismantling this important international instrument. I once again underscore that the Russian Federation made every possible effort to preserve the Treaty, including by taking unprecedented transparency measures, pursuing numerous contacts with States that expressed their concerns and by addressing the international community.

In that regard, I would like to remind the Committee that it was the Russian Federation that last year submitted a draft resolution in support of the INF Treaty to the First Committee that after rejection there was also submitted directly to the General Assembly (A/73/L.70). All of that speaks to the fact that Russia was seriously interested in preserving the Treaty, made desperate efforts to uphold it and demonstrated to the international community its openness and willingness to discuss any issue related to its implementation.

Mr. Jang Il Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation rejects the statements by the representatives of France, the United Kingdom, Sweden and various other Western countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.5) as yet another provocation against our Republic. It is quite preposterous that they find fault with our self-defence measures while remaining silent about the test firing of the Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missile conducted by their big boss, the United States. They should first examine their own contradictory behaviour rather than admonish others.

My delegation also denounces the brutal and inhumane sanctions imposed on my country and people. Sanctions do not work on us. Make no mistake, the sanctions are not the answer or solution to any problems. Our country has been subjected to sanctions imposed on us by hostile forces for more than 70 years. Our people are firmly determined to overcome all of the challenges that the sanctions create, using their strength derived from self-development and self-reliance. Similarly, it will be possible to hold substantive discussions on denuclearization only when the threats and stumbling blocks that destabilize the security of our system and obstruct our development have been clearly and unequivocally removed.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is not an issue that Japan should meddle in. First and foremost, Japan should end the legacy of its past, which is stained with major crimes against humanity, including massacres, forced trafficking and sexual slavery inflicted by the military, as well as astronomical damages inflicted on our people. It is also important that Japan address the concerns and doubts of the international community with regard to the extension of its sanctions regime and military exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as its retrogressive revision of its Constitution, and particularly its stockpiling of large amounts of plutonium capable of producing more than 7,000 nuclear weapons.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply, but I will be very brief. Earlier today (see A/C.1/74/PV.5) the representative of Cuba claimed that the United States is not in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. I want to state clearly that my delegation categorically and emphatically rejects that charge. With regard to the comments by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I just want

to say that President Trump has held out the prospect of a much brighter future for North Korea should it make the strategic decision to denuclearize. We therefore call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come back to the negotiating table in order to move forward on Chairman Kim's commitment to denuclearization made at the Singapore summit in 2018.

With regard to the remarks by the representative of Syria, they represent another day of lies from the Syrian regime. No matter how many times Syria speaks here in the First Committee, it will not change the fact that the regime has committed some horrific crimes against its own people for which the international community will hold it to account.

My final point is on Russia and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The so-called demonstration of that missile did not in any way address its range, which was the key issue involved. My Government held more than 35 meetings with Russia on that issue in the past several years. We made every effort to save the Treaty. Unfortunately, it was Russia that caused its demise. That is unfortunate, but it is a fact.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): I apologize for taking up the Committee's time, but I promise to be brief. I could not let the wild fabrications and conspiracy theories that were floated by the representative of the Syrian regime go unanswered. I have to say that they are not in keeping with the dignity of this forum or the seriousness of the issues that we are discussing. In my statement (see A/C.1/74/PV.5), the Committee will remember that I said that the Syrian regime had used chemical weapons, in direct contravention of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The comments just made by the representative of Syria were hardly a reply to that fairly clear statement of fact, and if he has a coherent response to that, I would like to hear it. If not, I am not going to dignify his further rantings with further answers.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor to respond to the comments made by the representative of Syria. To be honest, I hesitated to exercise our right of reply in response to such outrageous, unfounded and frankly rather ridiculous remarks. When we hear those sorts of comments, we hesitate to enter into a debate, but I must say that the representative of Syria has presented me with an opportunity to refer to the actual facts of the matter.

And when it comes to the issue of chemical attacks, the facts are stark. For years now the Syrian regime has been systematically and repeatedly violating all of its international obligations. That is a fact. The list of those violations is long and shocking, and we all know what they are.

First, there are Syria's violations of all its international obligations with regard to chemical weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which Syria has been party since 2013. Syria is violating the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the very foundations of international humanitarian law. It is violating the relevant Council resolutions and thereby its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, and its use of chemical weapons against civilians constitutes a war crime according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Those are the facts.

To come back to the facts and the origin of the problem, in 2013 and 2014 Syria announced that it had destroyed its chemical weapon stockpiles and facilities, in line with article III of the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, that applied only to the sites that Syria declared, and in 2014 doubts about the veracity and completeness of Syria's initial declarations led the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to establish a dedicated team for evaluating those declarations. The team has been working ever since and has shown that there were seven types of chemical weapons that Syria did not declare. Syria agreed to recognize the existence of two such weapons, thereby confirming the inaccuracy of its initial declarations. In 2016, the OPCW's Executive Council stated that the States parties to the Convention did not have the information necessary to conclude that the Syrian programme had been destroyed. Those are facts.

With regard to the June 2018 decision of the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, it was adopted by the required two-thirds majority of States parties, with 82 member States voting in favour and 24 against. It was adopted in full compliance with the provisions of the Convention, to which almost all of us here are party. It does not infringe on the prerogatives of the Security Council. It assigns the task of identifying those who used chemical weapons in Syria and provides that the OPCW Technical Secretariat regularly inform the Secretary-General of its findings, after which it is up to the Secretary-General to decide what action to take. I am shocked, and my delegation and my country

are shocked, that every time it is demonstrated that chemical weapons have been used in Syria, certain States are still unwilling to investigate the origins of their use.

Lastly, in view of the fact that the Syrian representative mentioned it, yes, we did indeed conduct strikes in Syria. They were in response to the chemical-weapon attack carried out by the Syrian regime in Douma on 7 April 2018. Our strikes were limited and proportionate, targeting only the regime's hidden chemical arsenal. The targets were agreed with our British and American allies. What happened resulted from the consequences of the red line that the President of France had defined on 29 May 2017. When the Syrian regime ordered the attack of 7 April 2018, it knew exactly what it was getting into. We acted in accordance with our word and our responsibility and in a controlled and transparent fashion in order to avoid any escalation with the actors on the ground.

I would like to end here, but I just want to say that while I imagine that the Syrian representative will take the floor again, for my part I will refrain from speaking again on the issue, because I think I have said all there is to say.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to respond to the comments by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in his right of reply. First, Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation since the end of the Second World War and has made numerous contributions to peace and prosperity in the world in areas such as development and peacekeeping operations. As a responsible member of the international community, we will continue those contributions. With regard to our defence capability and planning, we will focus on Japan's defence in the future. We will also ensure the transparency of our defence-related programming and expenditures through our adherence to strict civilian control of the military. With regard to the plutonium issue, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has concluded that all nuclear materials in Japan, including plutonium, continue to be used for peaceful activities under the IAEA's stringent safeguards. Japan has no problems in the area of non-proliferation.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba has asked for the floor to exercise its right of reply with regard to the statement at this morning's meeting by the United States delegation

(see A/C.1/74/PV.5). We would like to reiterate the words of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Cuba during that meeting regarding the fact that the United States is the only State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention that has not complied with its legal obligation to finalize the total elimination of all of its categories of chemical weapons, as required under the Convention. In addition, we note that the delegation of the United States is hindering the full implementation of article XI of the Convention by creating limits and restrictions that hamper the full ability of countries, especially developing countries, to exchange the materials, equipment and technologies needed for biological and chemical activities for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): With regard to the allegations by the representative of the British regime (see A/C.1/74/PV.5), we want to once again affirm that hypocrisy and lies are hallmarks of Britain's foreign policy. The horror of British colonization brought disasters, destruction, vandalism and terrorism to our region and plundered its riches. Its blind support for the Israeli entity has only exacerbated the crises in our region, and its policies there are a poison to which there is no antidote. In early April 2018, the British intelligence services put pressure on the terrorist organization that they themselves had created, the so-called White Helmets, in order to stage the chemical incident in Douma. I just want to say that we are aware of the contacts that the British representative's intelligence services had with that terrorist organization and the pressure they put on it in order to fabricate the Douma incident.

I feel compelled to remind the representative of France that the regime he represents has failed to uphold rules under international law, humanitarian law and international conventions. Perhaps France has forgotten its nuclear explosions in Polynesia and in the Algerian desert, where Algerian citizens were targeted and tied to poles. I would like to say to the representative of the French regime that the United States' testimony is questionable and that France's policies have been a fundamental element in these crises, especially in my country, which is why France cannot act as both prosecutor and judge at the same time. Is it not shameful for the Committee that the representative of the French regime speaks so insultingly when his regime is one of the permanent Members of the Security Council? He referred to his country's use of force, but that is not the

use of force, it is an act of aggression against a sovereign State in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Such claims demand that we revisit the status of some of the permanent members of the Council — that is, the United States, France and Britain, the aggressor countries.

We have provided the Security Council and the Secretary General with very credible information showing that French experts in chemical materials have participated in efforts to help terrorists prepare chemical products in Syria, and if the French representative would like me to, I can provide him with photographs of them.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I want to once again use my right of reply to respond to the statement by my United States colleague. I want to emphasize that for 10 years or more the United States blocked the work of the mechanism that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty provided for addressing concerns about the implementation of obligations under the Treaty. A decision was taken to hold a meeting about the mechanism only in 2016. Unfortunately, the other meetings between Russian and United States experts produced no results because the United States categorically refused to discuss Russia's concern about the implementation by the United States of its obligations.

Ultimately, it was not the number of those meetings that mattered but the quality of the dialogue and its results. I should point out that during the previous seven years the United States had been systematically undermining the Treaty with the single goal of attaining the possibility of building up the type of weapons in question, that is, intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. That has been confirmed by recent events. Just two weeks after the Treaty ceased to function, the United States tested a ground-based cruise missile at a range that would have been prohibited under the Treaty, using a Mark 41 Vertical Launching System, whose use was also prohibited under the Treaty, as we had been telling the United States since at least 2010. In addition, even before withdrawing from the Treaty the United States mentioned the possibility of placing such weapons in the Asia-Pacific region. I think those facts eloquently confirm who destroyed the Treaty and why.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for having to take the floor once again. Again, in response to the Cuban representative's remarks, I want

to categorically and emphatically reject her charges. As we have said before, the United States is on target to destroy the last remnants of its stockpile by 2023. We have been very transparent about it, and that is because we are a democracy, something that the Cuban people are unfortunately unable to experience.

With regard to the issue of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, we have been having these discussions with the Russian Federation for well over six years, since we first brought those concerns to Russia. It took Russia just about three and a half years to acknowledge the actual existence of its missile. Needless to say, it was unwilling to acknowledge the missile's range. The United States is not in a position to field a ground-launched INF system because, frankly, we complied with our Treaty obligations. We did not produce or flight-test any INF-range missile while the Treaty was in force. However, we are taking steps to address the threat posed by the ever-larger missile forces deployed by our strategic competitors, Russia and China. That is the prudent thing to do. So when my Russian colleague says that it is the United States that was in violation of the INF, it is just ridiculous. A majority of the international community knows that, and we expended a lot of effort to try to save the Treaty. As I said, it is unfortunate that Russia decided to abandon the INF Treaty, but we had seen signs of that for a number of years. Again, I feel for my Russian colleague because the international community has been quite critical of Russia's efforts to get out of the Treaty, but the facts are the facts and the verdict is there. Russia violated the Treaty and we had no choice but to leave it.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation fully and firmly rejects the United States delegation's remarks. We reiterate that the United States should have completed the destruction of its chemical-weapon stockpile by 2012 and that the deadline for the destruction of all categories of chemical weapons was extended twice. By not doing so, the United States has violated the Chemical Weapons Convention. In addition, it has deliberately and systematically violated the implementation of article XI of the Convention, which establishes the legitimate right of all States to access and use chemical materials for peaceful purposes, as set out in the Convention.

Regarding the statement that Cubans do not know what democracy is, we want to reiterate that the United States has no moral authority to give the Cuban people

lessons in democracy. The United States is the only country in the world that has used the atom bomb twice and the only country in the world to deliberately use chemical weapons against the heroic people of Viet Nam. We reiterate that the United States has systematically violated the Chemical Weapons Convention, including its articles I and XI.

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

First Committee will be held tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. in this conference room. We will continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items, and 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 6 p.m.