



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

## First Committee

8<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 16 October 2019, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

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

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

### Organization of work

**The Chair:** There are a few matters I would like to raise before proceeding with the general debate. I would first like to inform delegations that 42 speakers remain on the list for the general debate. Members will recall that at its 2nd meeting, on 8 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.2), the Committee decided to proceed with the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it from 10 October to 16 October. If we are to accommodate the remaining 42 speakers on the list, the Committee will have to take a decision today to extend the general debate until Friday, 18 October. That proposal is made bearing in mind the time needed to exhaust the list of speakers and enable delegations to exercise their right of reply, as well as the fact that services provided to meetings have been discontinued after 6 p.m., owing to the liquidity crisis that the United Nations is dealing with. The additional two meetings will ensure that all those inscribed on the list of speakers will be able to make their presentations to the Committee for the current session.

Should the Committee decide to extend the general debate, once the general debate is over it is my intention to ask the Committee to consider documents A/C.1/74/CRP.1/Rev.1 and A/C.1/74/CRP.2/Rev.1 and take a final decision on how to manage the remaining time allocated for the Committee's work. More immediately, however, the Committee also needs to address the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and draft decisions under all agenda items.

In an announcement earlier this week, the Secretariat announced that the deadline was for tomorrow, Thursday, 17 October, at noon, in order to ensure the timely issuance of draft proposals for action in the Committee, especially in the context of the current serious liquidity crisis. With regard to that, we were requested to ask the Secretariat if we could extend the deadline until 4 p.m. and we have been informed that that has been approved.

I would also like to recall that at our organizational meeting on Thursday, 3 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.1), I outlined the proposed arrangements for the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, based on nominations from regional groups. It is my understanding that there is a consensus on those proposals in the Committee. While the Committee will formally consider its programme of work and timetable at a later stage, I would like to consult the Committee with respect to invitations being sent to the Chairs of the regional groups for the month of October in order to take their nominations while the general debate is taking place in the Committee.

It has also been brought to my attention that the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament has arrived in New York for his scheduled presentation and will depart New York over the weekend. Should the Committee agree to extend the general debate to Friday, 18 October, I will propose that we allocate an informal slot of 30 minutes on Friday to hear his presentation.

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I will now ask the Committee to take a decision on my proposals, one by one. May I take it that it is the wish of the Committee to extend its general debate to Friday, 18 October, in order to exhaust its list of speakers, and that after the debate, at least half an hour will be dedicated to a formal presentation by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament and an exchange with him in an informal setting?

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I apologize for taking the floor. Your proposals are important to the Russian Federation, Mr. Chair, and we are willing to support them, but we would like to request some minor clarifications so that we know exactly which proposals we are supporting. I have several questions, which I will ask now, if you do not mind.

First, has a date been set for the event with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials?

Secondly, Mr. Chair, you said that at the end of the general debate we will return to considering the programme of work. But as far as I remember, on 8 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.2) we agreed that before we took up consideration of the programme of work again, we would still once again have to revisit the issue related to national delegations' unhindered access to United Nations Headquarters. If we are referring specifically to those arrangements, then we are prepared to support it. If, however, this is about ignoring our decision of 8 October and ending discussion of the issue of delegations' unhindered access to Headquarters, we will unfortunately be unable to support it.

Thirdly, did we understand correctly that we will discuss the organizational issues on Monday? Those are the three questions I wanted to raise.

**The Chair:** Let me clarify a few things. First, with regard to the high-level panel, we will have a date for it once we adopt the rest of the programme of work, since it is related to the thematic discussions.

With regard to the third question, on organizational issues, we agreed that once the general debate is over, we will discuss the remaining issues. We expect to conclude the general debate and the interactive dialogue with the Group of Governmental Experts on the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament on Friday. I do not know if we will have enough time on

Friday to consider those issues, but my guess is that we will do that on Monday. As I said, we have more than 40 speakers remaining for the general debate. The position of the Bureau and the Chair is that we will continue as we agreed to in the meeting (see A/C.1/74/PV.2) in which we discussed the programme of work, and in which we agreed that we would continue with the general debate. Once we conclude the general debate, we will continue with the remaining issues.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): So right now we are simply agreeing that we will hold the high-level segment without specific dates? Secondly, I still need a clear answer either from the Bureau or from you, Mr. Chair, to the question of whether the Russian Federation and other interested delegations will have an opportunity to again discuss the issue of unhindered access to United Nations Headquarters, as we agreed on 8 October.

**The Chair:** When we discuss organizational matters, it is the right of any member State to raise any issue.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for your clarification. I think that given the way you just explained it, we can support your proposal to continue the general debate through Friday and to return to organizational issues on Monday, including the issue of unhindered access to United Nations Headquarters, and to extend the official introduction of draft resolutions to 3 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, 17 October.

**Mr. Salovaara** (Finland): You have my delegation's full support, Mr. Chair, and we are certain that you will continue leading the work of the Committee as impeccably as you have done so far.

With regard to the issue of prolonging the general debate, I simply want to ask if we should not agree that the general debate will continue as long as there are speakers on the list. Why have an artificial deadline of Friday, if there will still be some speakers on Monday? Why not continue the general debate until the list of speakers has been exhausted?

**The Chair:** We intend to proceed as quickly as possible and to finish on Friday. Even if we conclude on Friday, we will still have time constraints next week, so we have to make every effort to end on Friday, and I think it will help us to have a clear deadline for our work. On Friday we will also have the participation of civil

society and the Group of Governmental Experts on the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. We therefore have to proceed as quickly as possible, which is why we are being so strict about time limits. We will have further proposals to decide on before the start of the thematic segment. As we discussed with the Bureau, it is better to have a clear timetable so that we will know how to proceed. I appreciate the suggestion by the representative of Finland, but I think that the Chair's proposal stands.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. Chair, we can support the proposal for adopting the elements of the programme of work you mentioned, with the understanding that the delegation of Iran's outstanding problem with visas and access to United Nations Headquarters has still not been resolved. Although those issues were addressed in our meeting with the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, we are still waiting to see flexibility in the host country's position with regard to issuing visas and removing the restrictions it has illegally imposed on my delegation.

**The Chair:** May I take it that it is the wish of the Committee to extend its general debate to Friday, 18 October, in order to exhaust its list of speakers, and that after the debate and after we have heard from the representatives of civil society, to also dedicate at least half an hour to a formal presentation by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament and an exchange with him in an informal setting?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** May I take it that it is the wish of the Committee to establish 4 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, 17 October, as the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and draft decisions under all agenda items in order to ensure the timely issuance of draft proposals for action in the Committee?

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation): I apologize for interrupting you, Mr. Chair, but previously you said 3 p.m. and just now you said 4 p.m. What is the deadline?

**The Chair:** With all due respect, I believe that I said 4 p.m. on both occasions. May I take it that it is the wish of the Committee to establish tomorrow, Thursday, 17 October, at 4 p.m., as the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and draft decisions under all agenda items in order to ensure the timely issuance of draft proposals for action in the Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** May I take it that it is the wish of the Committee to ask the Chairs of the regional groups for the month of October to make their nominations for the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, pending a final decision of the Committee on its programme of work and timetable?

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation): As I understand it, the First Committee is supposed to discuss this issue at the end of the session. Am I right or not? Perhaps a representative of the Secretariat or the Bureau can tell me.

*(spoke in Russian)*

I beg your pardon. I was speaking in English. I will speak in Russian. As I understand it, such issues are usually discussed at the end of the session of the Committee. We have a special section for organizational and administrative matters and they are usually considered at the end of the session. We therefore cannot support your proposal for nominations for various positions at this time.

**The Chair:** I apologize. Perhaps I was not clear enough. The proposal is not about the next session, it is for the high-level panel to be held during this session. We agreed that we would circulate invitations to the Chairs of the regional groups in order for them to nominate their representatives for the high-level panel. We have had plenty of discussions on the matter previously and we now need to take a decision on it so that the Chair and the Bureau can send invitations to the regional groups so that we can hold the high-level panel in the next few days.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the clarification. We can now support your proposal.

**The Chair:** May I take it that it is the wish of the Committee to ask the Chairs of the regional groups for the month of October to make their nominations for the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, pending a final decision of the Committee on its programme of work and timetable?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** Lastly, I would like to consult the Committee on the statement to be made in the general debate by the President of the Council of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. I understand that he has to leave New York tomorrow and I would like to propose that we allow him to participate as the last speaker in the debate today. May I take it that the Committee accepts the proposal?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** I thank all delegations for their goodwill in enabling us to proceed with the work of the Committee.

Before proceeding to the general debate, I would like to inform the Committee that all meetings that were previously scheduled based on the premise “if services are available” — that is, those scheduled for this morning, the afternoon of Thursday, 24 October, and the afternoon of Monday, 4 November, will not take place due to the Organization’s liquidity crisis. Furthermore, following consultations between the Bureaus of the First and Fourth Committees, the joint panel discussion on possible challenges to space security and sustainability will be moved from the morning of Wednesday, 30 October, to the morning of Thursday, 31 October.

#### **Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)**

#### **General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items**

**The Chair:** We will now continue with the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it, and in that regard I would like to remind all delegations taking the floor once again to kindly limit their interventions to eight minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

**Mrs. Pejanović Đurišić (Montenegro):** As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of our full support.

I would also like to add that Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3). I would now like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The risks presented by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their potential impact on international peace and security are greater than they have been for many years. In that context, we must approach next year’s Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons with a sense of urgency. As the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) represents the cornerstone of international action for disarmament and non-proliferation, we must ensure its universalization and enhance its full implementation. We also call on States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), thereby guaranteeing its swift entry into force. While bearing in mind that the Treaty’s primary objective concerns nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, we are encouraged by the fact that the CTBT’s benefits have been very useful in providing all State signatories with real-time data concerning major earthquakes, tsunamis and nuclear accidents, as well as other civil and scientific applications.

It will also be critical to start immediate negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Only that way, with the involvement of key stakeholders, can we achieve the necessary progress and ensure a sustainable solution that represents and fully encompasses our common interests.

Montenegro fully supports arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, which represent a crucial element of international peace, security and stability. I want to emphasize how important it is that countries’ activities are in full compliance with international obligations and treaties in this area so as to prevent the further deterioration of the international arms control regime. We welcome the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative of the United States, which is aimed at exploring ways to make the global security environment more conducive to further progress towards nuclear disarmament. We also underscore the importance of full respect for Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and of permanently ensuring that Iran’s nuclear programme remains peaceful, in line with its international obligations and commitments to refraining from seeking, developing or acquiring nuclear weapons.

In that context, we also emphasize the importance of full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition, we fully support the goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible

denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and welcome all efforts in that regard. We encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and to return to the NPT and the IAEA safeguards and sign and ratify the CTBT.

My Government has undertaken activities to develop a comprehensive national framework in the domain of nuclear safety and security. It is also constantly developing its institutional capacities for addressing chemical, biological and radiological risks and threats. We have put in place a strategy and an action plan for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In addition, we adopted a national action plan for protection against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats and risks for the period from 2016 to 2020, as well as an action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). By doing so, Montenegro has established an effective strategic basis for countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as for a response in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear accidents.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Montenegro condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone and under any circumstances. We strongly believe that ensuring accountability and ending impunity for using chemical weapons is crucial to preserving the integrity of established norms. We also consider that the potential threats posed by the misuse of biological agents and toxins make the Biological Weapons Convention more relevant than ever, and we attach great importance to promoting compliance with it, while viewing confidence-building measures as a valuable instrument for helping to generate transparency in that regard.

Taking into account the security, humanitarian and socioeconomic impact that conventional weapons have today, we should continue our joint efforts to achieve greater adherence to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols and to maintain the goal of its universalization as a high priority.

My country is dedicated to ensuring the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We have now adopted a new national strategy and an action plan to combat the illegal possession, trafficking and

misuse of small arms and light weapons and ammunition for the period from 2019 to 2025 that will serve as guidelines for achieving sustainable national solutions to the problem of the illegal possession, trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Montenegro also strongly supports efforts towards the full implementation and universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and we are committed to clearing the areas of our territory that are contaminated with cluster munitions by August 2020.

Montenegro remains committed to promoting, improving and safeguarding the regime and values established by the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), while recognizing its role in preserving peace and security and preventing human suffering. We welcome the enhanced focus on better understanding the impact of armed violence in the context of the ATT, and we support efforts to ensure a better gender balance for representation in future activities within its framework. Regulating the arms trade and combating the illicit flow of arms prevents violence against civilians, particularly women and children, and is a very important step in strengthening respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law. We want to particularly highlight the significance of the role of civil society in such efforts.

We are concerned about the scope and severity of the malicious use of information and communications technology, which could pose a significant threat to international peace and security. In that regard, we support the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security and of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, particularly regarding ensuring responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We underline the importance of the applicability of existing international law in cyberspace, the implementation of the norms of responsible State behaviour, the further development and implementation of confidence-building measures and further international cooperation and sustained capacity-building. We are of the view that continued regular dialogue with the broad participation of all stakeholders is crucial. We therefore welcome the interactive discussion held recently during the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group.

As we witness the ongoing international and regional tensions and the deterioration of the global

security environment, I would like to conclude by reiterating the importance of upholding the rules-based multilateral system, as well as preserving and enhancing the general arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes. In doing so, we must renew dialogue and rebuild mutual trust in order to restore global security.

**Mr. Elisaia** (Samoa): I would like to convey Samoa's warmest congratulations and full support for your leadership of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, Mr. Chair, and to extend our best wishes to the Bureau as you steer the work of our Committee through its survey of the year's developments in multilateral disarmament and international security.

The President of the General Assembly and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, in their statements during the general debate (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), noted the rise in military spending and the need to recommit to a working multilateralism framework, which is a message that resonates well with Samoa. During the opening of the current session of the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.3), the Secretary-General also highlighted the profound hope and faith that people place in the United Nations, with genuine and real expectations that should compel Member States to work cooperatively and collaboratively to revitalize the multilateral system so that global security becomes a reality and not a mere illusion.

The Pacific region continues to bear the scars of its real-life experiences of nuclear testing that united our countries and expedited the entry into force in 1986 of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, whose presence acts as a deterrent in helping to safeguard our biodiversity and ocean, which represent the Pacific region's main resource for livelihoods, from radioactive contamination caused by the dumping of nuclear waste at sea. Secretary-General Guterres' visit to the Pacific in May was timely. He raised concerns about the state of the nuclear-waste storage facilities in the region, a concern that Pacific leaders have shared for years, as expressed in the communiqués of the Pacific Forum. With the intensity and frequency of natural disasters fuelled by climate change, those storage facilities are on the brink of breaking apart, posing significant long-term negative threats to the health of the Pacific people and their environment, especially the oceans. Our leaders have been encouraging the nuclear Powers to

address the ongoing effects of nuclear testing, including on human rights, the environment and health.

By their very existence, and regardless of the principal reasons or fundamental justifications given for them, nuclear weapons pose needless and uncalled-for threats, especially to non-nuclear-weapon island States such as mine. Global security challenges cannot be used selectively as a convenient cover for continued reliance on nuclear weapons, thereby neglecting everyone's shared responsibility to seek a more peaceful international society. As a small Pacific island State, Samoa cannot protect itself from the threat of either nuclear weapons or conventional small arms and light weapons, or from the new and emerging threats to peace and security. Indeed, no nation can, regardless of its size or wealth. Our only shield is the rule of law and the existence of international treaties and the vital protection they afford all States. Samoa values the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee in finding solutions to some of the issues that have had difficulty in advancing and gaining traction in the international sphere, with peace being held hostage to threats of an all-out nuclear war or States and societies collapsing from the instability that small arms and light weapons can create. We are committed to cooperating and coordinating with other nuclear-weapon-free zones, States, international organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations in order to promote concrete actions that can move us closer to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. But we can only do so much.

Next year we will hold the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the foundation for realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. Samoa's commitment to ensuring the viability and success of the NPT is underscored by our membership in a number of international agreements that have the abolition of nuclear weapons at their core. We are a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and in 2018 we also ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Regrettably, with even the best intentions and goodwill of the majority of the member States, the CTBT will continue to be dormant and worthless and its entry into force held hostage by the few that have yet to ratify it in order to bring it into force.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2014 is a clear demonstration of the United Nations community's decisive response to the negative impact of the illicit arms trade in all its manifestations. Samoa also welcomes the outcome of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the ATT, particularly in its development and adoption of a list of practical recommendations on gender equality, such as understanding the gender impact of armed violence and advancing the implementation of its authorization criteria relating to gender-based violence. Samoa is developing a national plan for the implementation of the ATT in order to address this problem, and has benefited from the regional Women, Peace and Security Summit held in Samoa in August, in cooperation with the Government of New Zealand, to highlight the links between the ATT, the women and peace and security agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This year, with support from the Voluntary Trust Fund and in partnership with the Centre for Armed Violence Reduction, Samoa has started to streamline its data collection and reporting on weapons to build Samoan officials' capacity in the area and strengthen inter-agency coordination in order to contribute to effective national implementation of the ATT. Lastly, in October 2018 Samoa conducted its third gun amnesty in the past three years, enabling people to hand in firearms without fear of prosecution in order to reduce the unlawful possession of illegal weapons and prevent unwanted accidents.

Samoa firmly believes that the only guarantee that humankind has against the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons is through their non-possession and total elimination. Faith in the rule of law, coupled with realistic steps towards regulating the flow of arms, can lead to a more stable and peaceful world, providing the necessary platform for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**The Chair:** I would like to pay tribute to my sister Ms. Maleeha Lodhi, the Ambassador of Pakistan. This will be her last statement in the Committee, as she is leaving New York quite soon. I would like to thank her for her contributions to the Organization. We have all learned a great deal from her.

**Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan):** I thank you, Mr. Chair, for your warm words and friendship, and for your leadership of the Committee. We are always pleased to see you in the Chair.

The international security environment has become even more fraught and fragile since the Committee last met. We are in the midst of a profound transition and a phase of uncertainty, in which strategic stability, both at the global and regional levels, is under great stress. At the global level, the challenge to multilateralism and a rules-based international order is reflected in renunciations of existing treaties and rejections of previously agreed arrangements. That is happening against a backdrop of renewed East-West tensions and the emergence of more intense competition in Asia and indeed across the world. Progress on disarmament is being halted, even reversed. The quantity and quality of armaments continue to rise, as does the development of more lethal and sophisticated weapons. There is increasing and widespread disillusionment with the lack of activity in the United Nations disarmament machinery, primarily due to the absence of progress on nuclear disarmament. The approach of pursuing only cost-free, additional non-proliferation measures is no longer working. Potential arms-control, non-proliferation or disarmament measures that do not meet the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all remain stillborn. There is also a lack of leadership and a commitment to pursuing nuclear disarmament on an equitable basis, within the context of a re-energized collective security system.

Those global trends are also pronounced in the region where my country is situated, South Asia, where one State unabashedly seeks to establish its dominance and hegemony, fuelling insecurity among its neighbours. It is pursuing a massive build-up of its nuclear and conventional military forces and acquiring destabilizing capabilities. They include the nuclearization of the Indian Ocean, the deployment of anti-ballistic missiles, the testing of anti-satellite weapons and a constant increase in the range, sophistication and diversification of delivery systems and platforms of all kinds.

Worse, that country also uses irresponsible public rhetoric to raise the spectre of war. It refuses to engage in bilateral dialogue and rejects proposals aimed at confidence-building and nuclear and missile restraint. My country's proposal for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia remains on the table but has long been spurned by our neighbour, whose hegemonic pretensions, coupled with a history of aggression against its neighbours, presents a clear and present danger to regional stability and to Pakistan's security, especially as the bulk of that offensive capability is deployed

against my country. The world saw a demonstration of that belligerent military posture earlier this year, when in the wake of the Pulwama incident in occupied Jammu and Kashmir that country resorted to aggression against Pakistan under completely false pretences. The recent unilateral action by India to further consolidate its illegal occupation of the internationally recognized disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions, has engendered further volatility in South Asia, posing a grave risk to regional and global peace and stability. The supply of advanced military hardware and sensitive technologies from abroad directly aids that country's relentless accumulation of arms and aggressive policies. Many supplier nations have sacrificed long-standing principles in order to grant exemptions from non-proliferation norms, citing strategic and economic interests, with little regard for regional or international peace and security.

My country, Pakistan, desires peace and strategic stability in order to focus on the welfare of its own people and the country's socioeconomic development. Our conduct continues to be defined by restraint, responsibility and the avoidance of an arms race. But we cannot remain oblivious to the evolving security dynamics in our immediate neighbourhood. Pakistan remains open to any initiative on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament that is equitable and that results in equal and undiminished security for all States. We seek the resolution of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without resolving the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, agreeing on reciprocal measures for nuclear and missile restraint or instituting a balance between conventional forces.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Pakistan's commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world that is achieved in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner. Pakistan wants to contribute to the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime as a constructive partner on an equal footing. Pakistan meets the international standards for gaining access to civil nuclear technology for meeting its growing energy needs in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner. Through a series of actions in diverse areas, we have demonstrated our credentials for joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). We expect an expansion of the

NSG's membership, based on non-discriminatory and objective benchmarks.

Finally, let me say that in my statement I wanted to share our broad overview of the prevailing security situation, globally and in our own region. Of course, during the forthcoming thematic debates we will address the specific issues on the Committee's agenda in greater detail. My full statement, which has further details, will also be circulated for our members.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

A longer version of this statement will be on PaperSmart. At the beginning, I would like to say what a pleasure it is to see you at the helm of this important Committee, Mr. Chair. We need an able and experienced Chair and we know we have that in you. You know that you have the unfailing support of my delegation as we do our work here.

As a member of the Committee charged with issues of disarmament and international security, we in Ireland believe that our work here has never been more important or possibly more difficult. The fact is that the architecture developed over decades to support the goals of disarmament and to enhance security is under very significant strain. Civilians are experiencing significant harm in conflict zones, particularly in urban areas. Since the Committee last met, we have seen the withdrawal of the two key States parties from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The modernization of nuclear arsenals risks triggering a new arms race. Threats to peace and stability in cyberspace are also growing, with malicious cyberactivity increasingly affecting critical infrastructure, the international economy and our global security.

At this year's high-level week, world leaders voiced their support for ensuring peace and security, tackling climate change, delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and protecting human rights. The issues we will be dealing with in the Committee are directly relevant to whether we will fail or succeed on those critical global objectives. Disarmament is a driver of security, and failure to make progress on the issues entrusted to us can be harmful — indeed, catastrophic — to our peoples and our planet. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament provides

a valuable framework, linking disarmament to those broader objectives we all share.

The First Committee gives us an opportunity. While the multilateral method is far from perfect, in Ireland we see it as offering the only real hope for cooperative, constructive engagement and for maintaining international peace and security. We know that considering only narrow self-interest is not a sustainable approach. I also want to emphasize the value that we in Ireland attach to a diversity of voices, both the full and equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making and the inclusion of the varied, sometimes challenging, voices of civil society, including young people.

Earlier this year, we were delighted to welcome Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to Dublin. She spoke to us of ensuring a safer and more secure world and setting out a new vision for arms control. Her call for our urgent action will inspire our engagement here in the First Committee. Next year we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The context is challenging. Nonetheless, Ireland remains determined to work for the Treaty and for a successful outcome. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the full complementarity of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and I am pleased that legislation is currently being debated in our own national Parliament in order to allow us to ratify the Treaty imminently. I strongly encourage all member States to sign and ratify it, and we look forward to its entry into force as soon as possible.

We will continue to hear much about the difficult international security environment. For Ireland, like so many others, including our partners in the NAC, we do not see that as a pretext for shirking obligations or deferring progress on disarmament. Concrete progress on disarmament creates an enabling environment, enhances security and facilitates progress. I would like to remind the Committee of the special responsibility of the States with the two largest nuclear arsenals and to call on them in particular to prioritize the extension of the New START Treaty and the negotiation of a successor instrument.

While international tensions cannot be an excuse for pausing disarmament, they clearly serve as a reminder of the urgent need to address some of the most pressing risks. De-alerting is an evident opportunity

and priority here, as is the urgent entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Moratoriums on testing, while welcome, simply cannot replace that important legally binding instrument. The pace of change with which we work is a challenge in itself. The development of new technologies, new advances and new knowledge presents opportunities but also poses concerns for both the proliferation regimes and for global stability and security.

My country is concerned about the emerging risks presented by the development of hypersonic missiles, and we support the Secretary-General's call for a moratorium on testing. We in Ireland are also heavily engaged in work within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on addressing the considerable ethical, moral legal dilemmas posed by the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems. I believe that such weapons should always remain under meaningful human control and that only human accountability can ensure full compliance with international humanitarian law.

Promoting a secure cyberspace requires a global response with multilateral and multi-stakeholder engagement. Ireland strongly welcomes the positive start last month to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and looks forward to multi-stakeholder engagement in the intersessional meeting.

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

Ireland also recalls the central importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and supports the work being undertaken in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to attribute responsibility for the use of chemical weapons. Any breach of the prohibition on chemical weapons represents a serious challenge for all. Impunity cannot be accepted, and for that reason we see attribution as a key factor for enabling accountability and continuing the important work of the Technical Secretariat.

In a year when we are celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, we are deeply concerned about the impact on civilians of the urbanization of conflict. We believe that dealing with the issue of the effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas should be a priority, and I welcomed the important Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare hosted by Austria earlier this month. Ireland

looks forward to working and consulting with States on taking forward work on a political declaration, which we hope can be adopted next year. I urge all States to engage constructively with it.

Gender equality is a main priority for Ireland and a major priority for us in disarmament, and we are particularly proud to co-chair the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group. I am very pleased that the Arms Trade Treaty this year adopted a priority focus on gender, and I believe the discussions in that forum brought great progress.

In conclusion, I would like to underline one more time that the Committee has a unique opportunity to reinvigorate global peace and security. Against a backdrop of complex international challenges, we simply must assume our responsibility to strenuously resist backward movement.

**Mr. Saint Hilaire** (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate the Chair on your election to lead the First Committee. I am encouraged by the efforts he has made so far to ensure the success of our work. I would also like to congratulate the secretariat and all members of the Bureau and to assure them of my delegation's full support.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Suriname on behalf of the 14 countries of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), and I would like to add a few brief remarks in my national capacity.

My delegation would like to reiterate my country's firm attachment to the purposes and principles that together we, the peoples of the United Nations, set out in the Charter of the United Nations. More than 75 years later, those purposes and principles remain relevant. It is no coincidence that international peace and security are the very first things mentioned in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is no coincidence that the First Committee discusses disarmament and international security issues. That should be what inspires us above all. We in the First Committee therefore have the major responsibility of helping to formulate recommendations that are practical and consistent with the purposes and principles of our Organization.

That said, I would like to affirm the firm commitment of the Republic of Haiti to a world free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. That is vital if we want to be effective in protecting our

world from the scourge of war. My country's position on the main challenges to international peace and security has always been very clear. We want peace and security for all. Regrettably, today's international and security environment appears fragile and inspires very little confidence. Today we need huge effort and self-sacrifice more than ever, particularly from the States Members of the Organization that possess or shamelessly aspire to possess nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. We support all of the mechanisms in place and all initiatives that have been launched to liberate our world from such lethal instruments. In that regard, we strongly encourage the painstaking and careful quest for consensus among States, especially on issues related to human security. We attach special importance to ethical and humanitarian considerations, without glossing over the objective issues linked to the security of States.

We reiterate our unconditional support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which reflects genuine efforts that should lead to a world free of nuclear weapons. We intend to participate actively in the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It should be underscored that Latin America and the Caribbean has charted and maintained a course where nuclear-weapon-free zones are concerned. We have been very pleased to see other regions follow suit, thanks to the consensus on the issue among member States.

We attach special importance to all issues that are discussed in our work, such as security in outer space, the spread of small arms and light weapons, the problem of chemical and biological weapons, arms control, the arms trade and anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices. In addition, we are increasingly interested in other current and emerging international security-related issues, such as advances in information and communications technology.

In conclusion, I want to underscore that issues related to disarmament and international security require patient discussion, mutual understanding, specific confidence-building measures and active cooperation among all Member States. Peace and security are inextricably linked to the other pillars of the work of the United Nations. There can be no doubt that we can make greater practical and humane use of human resources and the massive resources devoted to the manufacture, acquisition, maintenance and modernization of weapons. That is the only way that we

can join together under the umbrella of multilateralism to lift up our universal Organization to a level that meets the inspiring ideals of its founding fathers.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would first like to wholeheartedly congratulate the Ambassador of Bolivia on his election to chair the Committee and to assure him of our full support and cooperation. I am confident that with his skill and experience, the Committee will conclude its work successfully. I also congratulate the other Bureau members on their election.

I associate myself 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).

Since the Committee last met, the security situation has deteriorated alarmingly. The trend towards reducing nuclear weapons has clearly been reversed. The authority of the relevant instruments has diminished. Regional security trends are alarming, outer space is on the verge of being weaponized, the malign use of information and communications technology is a serious challenge to our security and disarmament forums have either been politicized or remain stagnant. A glance at the root causes of those trends shows that irresponsible policies, as well as a lack of genuine political will on the part of certain States, are at the heart of the problem. Unfortunately, a new nuclear arms race has reversed the trend of reducing the number of nuclear weapons, and the current race to modernize nuclear arms holdings has made the situation even more worrying. The development of low-yield nuclear warheads, which increases the likelihood of their use, reveals the vast scope, dangerous nature and severity of those trends. The United States Nuclear Posture Review provides for modernizing nuclear weapons as well as developing more of them. It also allows for the possibility of conducting nuclear tests and using nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear-weapon States that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Such policies are irresponsible, immoral and unlawful and do not comply with the United States' own legal obligations.

Another alarming trend is the diminishing authority of the relevant key multilateral and bilateral instruments. The latest example is the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in the wake of the withdrawal of the United States. If that

country continues its current irresponsible policies, the New START Treaty will suffer the same fate.

We should also mention the illegal withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which has left that key achievement of multilateral diplomacy in critical condition. The United States is not only in continued violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the JCPOA, it has also been brazenly threatening others with punishment if they do not violate the resolution too and has ignored the international community's urgent calls to it to exercise maximum restraint and return to the JCPOA. Not only is it putting the greatest possible pressure on us, it has unleashed a campaign of economic terrorism against Iran, in a demonstration of the ways that irresponsible American policies are undermining multilateralism. The international community must prevent that destructive, unilateral approach.

Iran will continue its compliance with the JCPOA, as successive reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have verified to date. Nevertheless, Iran cannot, should not and will not shoulder all of the burden of preserving the JCPOA on its own any longer. We cannot and will not stand idly by in the face of non-compliance on the part of the other participants. Iran must receive the intended benefits of the JCPOA. Our recent steps are aimed at bringing a balance to the JCPOA, and are taken in full conformity with paragraphs 26 and 36 of the agreement, according to which, in case of a reintroduction or reimposition of the sanctions, or an imposition of new nuclear-related sanctions, Iran will have the right to cease fulfilling its commitments under the JCPOA, in whole or in part. The fact is, a year after the United States' withdrawal and reimposition of its sanctions, that is the minimum measure that Iran could adopt. At the same time, I should stress that our measures are reversible. The remaining JCPOA participants, particularly the E3, must now either prove their goodwill by taking timely, adequate, serious, practical steps to preserve the JCPOA, which is in critical condition, or accept full responsibility, together with the United States, for any possible consequences.

Unfortunately, the lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States with regard to starting meaningful negotiations on nuclear disarmament is a serious obstacle to the full and effective implementation of the NPT. To prevent that trend, the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must make concrete decisions on nuclear disarmament. Iran will continue calling for the full, effective and balanced implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty, as well as the decisions of its Review Conferences. In that context, in addition to nuclear disarmament, we will focus seriously on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Nuclear weapons are dangerous in the hands of Israel, with its long, dark record of occupation, aggression and every core international crime. In addition to threatening regional and international peace and security, Israel's nuclear weapons and stubborn policies are the main obstacles to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which Iran proposed in 1974. To that end, and to prevent any further deterioration in the volatile security situation in the Middle East, Israel must be compelled to join the NPT, without preconditions or further delay, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and to place all its nuclear activities and facilities under the full scope of IAEA safeguards. And it must be forced to participate in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November.

**Mr. Nyanid** (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, we would like to congratulate the Chair, and through him the other members of the Bureau, on their election to preside over the work of the Committee, and to assure them of our support and cooperation as they carry out their duties.

My delegation reaffirms that disarmament is a tool for conflict prevention. Its implementation is one of the founding missions of the United Nations. By pursuing that goal with determination, the United Nations will underscore its role in preserving both international peace and security and shared development, as set out by its founding fathers.

Cameroon remains firmly committed to disarmament, which we view as an essential factor in the broader efforts to strengthen international peace and security. We believe progress must be made in the area of disarmament and through the prevention of a new arms race in order to ensure greater security for all. My delegation hopes that the efforts to create new nuclear-weapon-free zones will continue so as to include as many countries as possible. We reiterate

that we want to see the issue of proliferation remain on the agenda of the United Nations bodies tasked with discussing disarmament issues. In addition, the progress made during the Nuclear Security Summits, the fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and through the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty shows that we can advance the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda when we do it in a constructive and pragmatic spirit. However, if we cannot achieve a balance between nuclear disarmament and credible disarmament in every other area — whether we are talking about biological, chemical or conventional weapons, anti-missile defence or outer space — the result could be another destabilizing arms race.

My country emphasizes its commitment to peace. That is why we support a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Cameroon has ratified the main instruments that the international non-proliferation and nuclear security regime are based on. We are convinced that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned — such as the Treaty of Pelindaba, which seeks to ban nuclear weapons in Africa — builds regional peace and security, strengthens the non-proliferation regime and supports nuclear-disarmament objectives.

I would like to reiterate the importance of emphasizing what brings us together rather than what divides us. We must agree on an approach directed towards the future and based on action in a spirit of shared responsibility. It must be inclusive and based on dialogue, mutual trust and transparency. In that regard, we should work together to define specific and attainable measures, while at the same time taking account of efforts already made, objectively different situations and shared perspectives. Only that pragmatic and realistic approach will enable us to make tangible progress in building a safer world for all.

**Ms. Aondona** (Nigeria): I would like to start by congratulating the Chair on his election to lead the First Committee during the General Assembly's seventy-fourth session. Our work will indeed benefit from his tremendous experience, expertise and commitment and we therefore assure him of our full support and cooperation. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau, and I want to take this opportunity to commend the Chair's predecessor, His Excellency

Mr. Ion Jinga, for his leadership and laudable efforts during the seventy-third session. Lastly, my delegation welcomes the remarks made by the President of the General Assembly and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Nigeria aligns itself with the statements made 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), and I would like to add the following remarks.

At the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, my delegation joined other Member States in highlighting the daunting challenges confronting our world. Sadly, so far little has changed that might give us confidence and reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security. That reality makes it even more urgent that we redouble our efforts and work diligently for global peace and security. In that regard, building the right momentum and multilateral approaches requires a concerted effort and a new plan of action.

In the context of threats to international peace and security, we want to emphasize the astronomical proportions of global defence budgets, including the enormous resources devoted to the maintenance and upgrading of their nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapon States, as well as the unfettered access that unauthorized non-State actors have to a broad range of conventional weapons. Today we are witnessing all around us the dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. From Africa to the Middle East, across Europe to the Americas and Asia, the carnage has become horrific and unprecedented, particularly the terrible bloodshed inflicted on innocent populations by terrorists and other criminal elements. We have witnessed the destruction of cities and communities, including heavy losses of precious lives and property, as well as the toll taken on livelihoods and surges in forced mass migration. In most of the recent cases, those mindless aggressions have largely been enabled and effectively supported with arms illicitly procured or transferred by non-State entities. Those are the weapons used indiscriminately by terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and massacre innocent civilians, including women and children.

The *raison d'être* for the overwhelming support and adoption on 2 April 2014 of the landmark Arms

Trade Treaty was the need to present a common front to robustly respond to the threat posed to international peace and security by the lack of regulation of conventional weapons. In that regard, my delegation welcomed the outcome of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Tokyo in August. We must do what is necessary by standing with States parties and other signatories to the Treaty.

Nuclear weapons are still the ultimate agents of mass destruction, and their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations. My delegation would like to point in that regard to the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which opened for signature on 20 September 2017. The delegation of Nigeria is proud to have participated in the processes leading to its adoption and to have been one of the first States to sign the Treaty. Our commitment was guided by our principled position on the denuclearization of the world. We are also mindful of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, my delegation calls on all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to take into consideration the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among other things, and to take the necessary measures to dismantle and renounce them.

Nuclear test explosions not only send an alarming signal in the global political context, they also have devastating effects on our environment by spreading radioactive materials into the atmosphere. We all have a duty to protect the environment by respecting the moratorium on nuclear testing as we work assiduously to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In that regard, my delegation welcomed the convening of the eleventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York on 25 September, and calls on countries that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, particularly the annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

As a State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria has welcomed the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world. The Pelindaba Treaty serves as a shield for Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices

on the continent and prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons. As a measure to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate this measure in other parts of the world, including the Middle East.

Member States of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) have once again been reminded of the need to reflect on whether the current impasse serves the purposes and objectives for which it was established. Despite the CD's deliberations and actions in the past, there can be no doubt that the CD's long-standing inability to agree to act on concrete issues has adversely affected its reputation and credibility. We had hoped that the members would hasten to do what is necessary and fulfil the goal for which it was created. However, in spite of the difficulties that the multilateral disarmament machinery has encountered, Nigeria remains committed to its objective, as the only architecture in place for advancing the objectives of disarmament and international security.

In the course of the Committee's meetings during this session, on behalf of the African Group the delegation of Nigeria will submit three draft resolutions, for which we seek the full support of all delegations, on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste.

**The Acting Chair:** I would like to remind delegations to kindly limit their interventions to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity.

**Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election and assure them of our full support during this session.

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3). In my national capacity, I would like to emphasize the following aspects.

We live in a complex security environment today, facing multiple security challenges that include military build-up, undeclared snap exercises and active intelligence operations, including sophisticated cyberattacks on high-value political and economic targets, as well as hybrid strategies intended to raise levels of miscalculation and unpredictability. At the same

time, the international arms-control, non-proliferation and disarmament system faces numerous challenges. Upholding the integrity of the rules-based international system is critical, as it is designed to preserve and guarantee international peace, security and stability. The agreed security principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and other internationally or regionally agreed instruments must be respected and preserved.

With regard to conventional weapons, we reiterate the significance of existing arms-control arrangements in Europe. We strongly support an initiative to modernize the 1994 Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, which is an important tool for building trust, predictability and security in the Euro-Atlantic region.

We look forward to a productive Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2020, which will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty. It is important to uphold the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and preserve its credibility and effectiveness. As a non-nuclear State, Lithuania reiterates its support for an inclusive and gradual approach to nuclear disarmament and for meaningful steps towards creating an environment conducive to further nuclear disarmament negotiations, in order to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. It should be based on all the provisions of the NPT, including article VI, and built on the principles of effectiveness, verifiability and the promotion of international stability and undiminished security for all. As a member of the North Atlantic Alliance, Lithuania wants to emphasize that NATO's nuclear arrangements have always been fully consistent with the NPT.

Lithuania greatly regrets that the international arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture has been challenged by violations, selective implementation and refusals to enter into meaningful dialogue. It is unfortunate that such actions by Russia have led to the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, thereby weakening the existing security architecture and increasing distrust and unpredictability. Lithuania strongly believes that implementable and verifiable treaty-based nuclear arms control can contribute to international security and strategic stability. We also deplore Russia's violation of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, under which the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed

their commitment to respecting the independence, sovereignty and existing borders of Ukraine.

Lithuania reiterates its strong support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its mission to ensure the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We commend the establishment of its Investigation and Identification Team and look forward to its first report, which will represent important progress towards identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. Lithuania is also an active member of the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. All countries must stand united against any attempts to use chemical weapons or assist those accused of their use.

The security of cyberspace is an increasing international concern. We support the work of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security and emphasize the importance of their complementarity. We have all agreed by consensus that international law applies to cyberspace, and we must work further to secure an open, free and safe cyberspace for all.

We reiterate our strong commitment to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and call on the States Members of the United Nations to respect their obligations and commitments, including meeting their financial obligations to disarmament treaties and conventions in full and on time.

**Mr. Gimolieca** (Angola): First and foremost, I would like to echo those who have congratulated the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election. I also want to take this opportunity to wish them success in guiding our work and deliberations in the course of this session, as well as in finding common ground and lasting solutions for most of the draft resolutions and draft decisions that will be put forward for action.

The Republic of Angola aligns itself with the statements made 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 multilateral efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament, since such weapons pose a high risk and a terrible threat to humankind. We therefore advocate for their total elimination. As the Committee may recall, in 1961 the General Assembly adopted resolution 1652 (XVI), which called on Member States to consider and respect the African continent as a denuclearized zone. In 1964, the Organization of African Unity issued the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly. To that end, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, was signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996 by 47 of Africa's 53 States. Angola signed the Treaty on that date and ratified it on 20 June 2014. Most of the world's regions now have nuclear-weapon-free zones. We therefore appeal to the Middle East and other regions to embark on that path in the same spirit as soon as possible.

With regard to conventional weapons, Angola has participated in the Conferences of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and trusts those Conferences to help to call on States parties and signatories to implement the Treaty fully and ensure its universalization through domestic procedures and activities. The Angolan authorities are fully committed to ratifying the Treaty in the near future.

As members are aware, after 30 years of fratricidal war our country was badly affected by several types of landmines. Thanks to the commitment of the Government and partners such as non-governmental organizations, the international community and the International Committee of the Red Cross, we were able to conduct a successful demining process in order to facilitate the free movement of people and goods, rehabilitate railways and road networks and boost our agricultural and livestock production. Angola, together with 19 other African countries, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Network on Explosive Weapons and other civil-society organizations, met in Maputo on 27 and 28 November 2017 to share knowledge and evidence on the distinctive pattern of harm caused to civilians by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and to explore steps to address the issue at a political and operational level.

When the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

concluded in May 2010, it succeeded in approving an action plan with concrete measures to be undertaken by States parties regarding the three main thematic pillars of the Treaty — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Yet despite the signs of a renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament, there is still much to be done. More than 40 years after the Treaty's entry into force, the continued existence of numerous stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear proliferation keep alive the possibility of the use of such weapons, whether intentional, accidental or by miscalculation, with potentially catastrophic consequences for all humankind. That possibility only increases with the emergence of new countries possessing nuclear weapons and the growing access to explosive nuclear technology available to non-State actors such as terrorist groups. There is hope that those developments can be reversed with all possible speed in the light of the commitments made or reiterated at the 2010 Review Conference, in order to ensure the credibility and future sustainability of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

The opening ceremony of the signing of the Treaty of the Prohibition Nuclear Weapons, on 20 September 2017, was a clear illustration of the commitment of many nuclear-weapon States and others to working hard to contribute to the total eradication of nuclear weapons and to international peace and security. The Republic of Angola signed the Treaty during the high-level week of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

Angola believes that the international community should continue to prioritize the nuclear-disarmament process, as there is an urgent need for concrete measures to reflect a clear commitment to the complete elimination of such weapons based on the obligations assumed by nuclear Powers under the NPT.

**Mr. Kulmatov** (Kyrgyzstan): I would first like to congratulate the Chair on his election to his important post, wish him success in his endeavours and promise him our delegation's full support.

Today we are witnessing the destruction of the existing nuclear arms-control system, which is a dangerous trend for all humankind. It is therefore vital that we begin the process of establishing a new system. It will be important to continue to strengthen cooperation among all countries in ensuring regional and international peace and security, including the possibility of establishing effective mechanisms

for their joint cooperation. In that regard, the First Committee is facing a number of very important issues whose solution will ensure peace and stability throughout the world.

A commitment to a policy of disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of the fundamental principles of the foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. As an active supporter of the idea of a nuclear-weapon-free world, the Kyrgyz Republic has become one of the initiators and a depositary of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. We strongly believe that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones based on agreements voluntarily concluded between the States of the region represents an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes to the achievement of general and complete disarmament. Our region is a prime example of strengthening regional and global security in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We consider strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and its foundation, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be our most important goal in that regard.

The Kyrgyz Republic considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty one of the most fundamental and effective international instruments in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In spite of the significant progress that has been made towards its acceptance, however, the Treaty still has not entered into force. In that regard, we call on all Governments to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

Kyrgyzstan looks forward to the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which continues to make little progress in its work, thereby delaying negotiations on a number of key issues such as nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. We encourage all States to demonstrate the necessary political will so that the disarmament machinery can fulfil its mandate.

My delegation regards international safeguards and the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities as the first line of defence against nuclear terrorism. As such, Kyrgyzstan strongly endorses the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to strengthen the international safeguards system. We also support efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540

(2004) in order to address the proliferation challenges posed by non-State actors. I would like to inform the Committee that the delegations of Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan made a joint presentation on 3 May to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on a peer review of our countries' implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

Kyrgyzstan firmly supports the importance and urgency of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the promotion of the use of outer space solely for peaceful purposes. We reaffirm the central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We note the continued importance and significance of the multilateral disarmament mechanism, as well as the contribution of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia and the media, in that area. We are deeply convinced that only through joint efforts can we make progress in resolving existing obstacles and problems in achieving our States' shared security objectives.

The delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic will support the work under the leadership of the Chair on the issues considered by the Committee.

**Mr. Ley De Araujo Mantilo** (Timor-Leste): At the outset, Timor-Leste would like to congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their election to lead the Committee. We believe that their leadership will ensure the successful conclusion of the Committee's work.

Timor-Leste 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).

Like other delegations, Timor-Leste is concerned about international security and security within its region. In that regard, we have been heartened by the dialogue that has taken place on the Korean peninsula and urge all the parties to continue their dialogue in order to reduce tensions and reach agreement on the denuclearization of the peninsula.

Timor-Leste believes in a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. We do not possess nuclear weapons or aspire to produce or own weapons of mass destruction. We have been a full and proud member of the United Nations since 2002. We are a peaceful, democratic country with a system based on the rule of law, full respect for human rights and gender equality.

As a young country, we are consolidating our State institutions. We have been a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) since 2003 and are recognized as a non-nuclear weapon State. We are a signatory to the Biological Weapons Convention and a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Timor-Leste has signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and is in the process of ratifying it, as we view the Treaty as an important international norm for peace, our collective security and the preservation of human life. As a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Timor-Leste is also concerned about countries' continued access to chemical weapons and their use by both State and non-State actors, which bring indiscriminate suffering, especially to civilian populations, including women and children.

Timor-Leste continues to believe that international legal instruments and United Nations resolutions on disarmament and international security are vital to sustainable development. Without peace, stability and security, we cannot implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That is why Timor-Leste continues to promote peacebuilding and State-building, together with the other 19 member States of the Group of Seven Plus, as fundamental guarantees for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially the cross-cutting Sustainable Development Goal 16 on the nexus between peace, justice and strong institutions and sustainable development. The Group of Seven Plus is an intergovernmental organization composed of member States that are in conflict or have emerged from conflict.

Timor-Leste strongly believes in upholding the international rules-based order and the use of international mechanisms, dialogue and diplomatic efforts for the peaceful settlement of disputes among States. We have used such a mechanism — compulsory conciliation under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea — to complete the delimitation of our maritime boundaries with Australia. With an exclusive economic zone bigger than its landmass, Timor-Leste is now working in cooperation with its neighbours to control its seas and guard against terrorism, organized crime and the trafficking of arms across its borders and within the region. We are firm believers in regional cooperation for safeguarding security in our region and preventing regional destabilization.

In conclusion, we look forward to working closely with the other experts on the Committee on our common programme of the work to fulfil the Committee's mandate.

**Mr. Rai (Nepal):** I would like to begin by congratulating the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election and assuring them of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in discharging their duties effectively.

I align myself 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).

Next year we will celebrate 75 years of the establishment of this great Organization, the United Nations. An overarching goal of its establishment was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. However, that goal remains elusive, as approximately 14,000 nuclear weapons exist in the world today and total yearly global military expenditures now exceed \$1.8 trillion. Nepal is deeply concerned about the fact that scarce resources are being squandered for militarization to decimate fellow human beings, but not to bring people out of poverty, hunger and disease.

We are deeply concerned about the recent collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the debilitated Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Nepal is a steadfast supporter of general and complete disarmament for all weapons of mass destruction. Our unwavering commitment to disarmament and international security is based on the norms of world peace enshrined in our Constitution as a basis for our foreign policy.

Nuclear weapons pose a persistent threat to humankind as a whole and should therefore find no place in any country's security doctrine. Nepal continues to emphasize that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. The world will never be a safer place as long as nuclear weapons exist. We underline the importance of unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, under any circumstances. Nuclear technology must be harnessed for the prosperity of people, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

of Nuclear Weapons, which stipulates the inalienable right of States to acquire and use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Nepal reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament-related issues. We stress the necessity of starting negotiations in the CD on effective nuclear-disarmament measures and call for concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible.

Nepal supports the establishment of an effectively verifiable zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, we welcome the convening of a high-level conference on the issue next month. We hope it will be a building block for the success of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, not a stumbling block for another failure in 2020.

Nepal has initiated the necessary domestic procedures to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a landmark agreement towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We urge all countries to sign and ratify the Treaty to ensure its entry into force without delay. Nepal welcomes the momentum that the implementation plan of the Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament has created.

We are pleased with the effective functioning of the Chemical Weapons Convention and support the norms against the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. We also recognize the importance of further strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention. There is an urgent need for a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding verification mechanism for tackling the issue of the threat of biological weapons.

The weaponization of drones, artificial intelligence, automated robots and cyberspace poses serious threats to humankind. Nepal stresses the peaceful use of frontier technologies to help people come out of poverty, hunger and disease. Outer space should be kept free of an arms race and weapons of mass destruction and used for the greater benefit of humankind. Nepal supports the negotiation of a treaty preventing an arms race in outer space.

*Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

Nepal reaffirms the complementarity of regional and global approaches to disarmament. We believe that regional mechanisms can play a role in confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels and that disarmament education helps change the basic attitudes of people and policymakers. Regional centres should therefore be encouraged to disseminate information and develop educational models for different age groups to enhance their awareness level, as well as to share good practices and lessons learned among themselves for emulating in their respective geographical contexts. Nepal supports the engagement of women, young people, civil society and the private sector in spreading awareness and urging their respective Governments to develop a world view in support of accelerated disarmament.

As in previous years, Nepal will submit a draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to the Committee at its current session. We would appreciate the continued support of all delegations in the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus. We also ask all member States to become sponsors of the draft resolution. Nepal echoes the Secretary-General's call to countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre in order to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, we call on all parties to resort to dialogue and negotiation and build relationships of mutual trust and confidence so that progress can be made towards disarmament and non-proliferation. Nepal believes that it is only dialogue, not competitive military build-up, that helps to make a safer and more secure world. Our hope is still that human conscience can prevail in order to ensure the ascendancy of peace and development over war and destruction.

**Mr. Gertze** (Namibia): I want to congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their election to steer the important work of the Committee this year, and I assure them of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

We believe that the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), that is, peaceful use, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, are essential instruments for strengthening international peace and security. Nuclear

disarmament should remain a priority on the agenda of the First Committee. We therefore once again renew our call to the nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner. It is essential that all non-nuclear-weapon States be provided with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances by all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Improving or modernizing existing nuclear weapons, including developing new types, contradicts the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament. Like many other State parties to the NPT, Namibia regrets the failure of the last Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite the efforts of many delegations. It is our sincere hope that the 2020 Review Conference will achieve the desired results.

Namibia remains a committed State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which provides a shield for Africa by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of such destructive weapons there. In that connection, we join those calling for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and welcome the convening of the conference to be held here in New York in November.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Namibia believes that it is important to achieve universal adherence, which will result in the CTBT's speedy entry into force. The CTBT is an instrument for halting the further development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, which thereby contributes to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We also welcome the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in July 2017. Being mindful of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, we believe that the full implementation of the Treaty will be a guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons by ensuring their total elimination. We reiterate how important it is that all States comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, at all times.

The principal responsibility for nuclear safety rests with individual States, and the responsibility for nuclear security within a State therefore rests entirely with that State. Multilateral norms, guidelines and

rules on nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is our belief that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and security should not be used as a pretext to deny or restrict the inalienable right of developing countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Namibia rejects and calls for the immediate removal of any limitations and restrictions on exports to developing countries of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, consistent with the provisions of the relevant multilateral treaties. In that regard, we stress that the technical cooperation and assistance provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency in meeting its member States' needs for material, equipment and technology for peaceful uses of nuclear energy should not be subject to any conditions that are incompatible with the IAEA Statute.

We remain concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible testing, use or threat of use. The situation in nuclear disarmament continues to be one of impasse, as nuclear-weapon-States have not made progress in eliminating nuclear weapons.

As a champion of women and peace and security, Namibia reiterates the words of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who charged us all to

“address the gendered impact of weapons and to promote women’s full and equal participation in the field of disarmament” (*A/C.1/74/PV.3, pp. 5-6*).

She further tasked us to apply a gender lens to their work and to take a proactive stance in coordinating gender-related language across First Committee draft resolutions this year.

International peace and security cannot go in parallel with an arms race. The Secretary General’s Agenda for Disarmament is therefore critical to saving humankind, saving lives and safeguarding our common future. We cannot privilege one over the other, because in the final analysis, human lives are at stake. In that context, let us modernize technology, not for weapons but for the betterment of human living conditions, as the concept of “atoms for peace” aspires to.

Finally, we want to emphasize that multilateral disarmament negotiations will achieve tangible results only if and when we can generate the necessary political will to support the process.

**Ms. Bartolini** (San Marino): I would like to congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their election and to wish them a successful session.

Every day we witness alarming and destructive conflicts in various parts of the world. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 50 million people are currently affected by armed conflict. We live in very uncertain and insecure times where chaos seems to be growing. Mass displacement and humanitarian crises have reached unparalleled levels. In various regions, violence and extremism are on the rise, civilians continue to bear the brunt of conflict and our plans for peace processes and reconstruction are in danger. Against that international backdrop, it is vital to ensure that the international community sends a strong signal. Unfortunately, the signals that we are sending are not very promising. Regrettably, with about 14,000 nuclear weapons still in existence, the threat they pose remains real. Any use of nuclear weapons would have disastrous implications for our survival and that of the environment, and for the well-being of current and future generations. Any detonation would have catastrophic and long-lasting humanitarian consequences.

With the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we sent the world the clear message that any use or threat of use of such weapons would be a violation of international humanitarian law as well as environmental and human rights law. We are pleased that the Treaty has already received 79 signatures and 32 ratifications. We call on other countries to sign and ratify that important instrument.

We look forward to the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. We hope that by working together in good faith, we will be able to strengthen its role and reach a successful outcome next year. Unfortunately, we know that huge amounts of money have been invested in modernizing nuclear arsenals. It is clear that a qualitative nuclear arms race is under way. Such activities run directly counter to the fulfilment of existing obligations under the NPT and are not in line with our final goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. We are also concerned about the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty regime and about the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. San Marino joins other countries in seeking permanent peace in the Korean peninsula and believes

that lasting peace can be achieved only through a diplomatic process.

The Republic of San Marino wholeheartedly reaffirms its rejection of all weapons of mass destruction. We are deeply concerned about the use of chemical weapons and violations of the relevant laws. We firmly condemn any use of chemical weapons by any party and believe that we should always ensure accountability for such acts.

We also need to reflect on the use of armed drones and fully autonomous weapons, areas for which international standards should be discussed and developed. There are deep ethical and legal doubts that must be addressed. San Marino believes that meaningful human control is required over life-and-death decisions.

The urbanization of armed conflict continues to have a devastating impact on civilians. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas does broad and ongoing harm to their populations. Tens of thousands of women, men and children are killed or injured every year by the use of explosive weapons in areas where they live and work. The victims and survivors face long-term disabilities, psychological trauma and social exclusion. Furthermore, the use of such weapons in populated areas destroys vital infrastructure and essential services, depriving civilians of access to basic necessities. In addition to that, many are forced to flee their homes, while the affected areas can become inaccessible to humanitarian aid. The Republic of San Marino therefore calls on all parties to refrain from using explosive weapons in populated areas and to comply with international humanitarian law. We fully support the adoption of an international political declaration in that regard.

The Republic of San Marino is deeply concerned about the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in our societies. The illicit trade in such weapons threatens security and stability. It undermines international humanitarian and human rights law. It fuels crimes, terrorism, human trafficking and the drug trade. It helps to support abuses and violations such as torture, rape and the forced recruitment of child soldiers. It fuels conflicts, is conducive to future violence and undermines reconciliation and development. Furthermore, vulnerable groups such as women and children are often disproportionately affected by the uncontrolled accumulation of such

weapons and ammunition. The implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects remains fundamental to addressing the devastating human impact of such weapons.

San Marino is also concerned about the improper use of cyberspace. Cybercrime is one of the fastest-developing threats to international security. It is therefore critical to support responsible State behaviour in cyberspace so that human rights and the rule of law are respected and implemented. Lastly, outer space should never become an arena for warfare. We must preserve it as a peaceful domain for the benefit of all. We will therefore work to advance discussions and collaborate on further transparency and confidence-building measures.

We live in an extremely complex and interconnected world, whose challenges and crises can be addressed only through effective multilateralism. We must act collectively to combat global challenges, rebuild trust and engage in substantive dialogue in order to achieve the results the world expects from us. We must also prevent the erosion of our rules-based multilateral system. We have the potential to make progress on the disarmament agenda and to build a more secure world and a more peaceful society for all. Let us not lose that chance.

**The Acting Chair:** Before giving the floor to those delegations that have requested the right of reply, and in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee today, I now give the floor to the representative of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Mr. Sabor** (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean) (*spoke in Spanish*): In my capacity as President of the Council of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), I would like to warmly congratulate the Chair of the First Committee. It is a pleasure to work under the leadership of such a distinguished diplomat from Latin America and the Caribbean. He can count on OPANAL's full support. I would also like to convey greetings to him from the Secretary-General of OPANAL, Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, as well as to the members of the Bureau and the secretariat.

Now that we are at the end of the general debate, having heard statements by the representatives of member States, it is the turn of the representatives of intergovernmental organizations, of which there are very few in the First Committee. The fact is that few intergovernmental organizations address the issues that the Committee discusses. OPANAL is perhaps the only one entirely devoted to matters related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

As it does every three years, the General Assembly is expected to adopt a draft resolution during this session under agenda item 92, on the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The draft resolution is first formulated at OPANAL headquarters and Mexico, as the depositary State, is responsible for holding consultations that as on previous occasions should lead to the draft resolution's adoption without a vote.

On 26 September, the member States of OPANAL issued a declaration on the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, as they have done since the General Assembly established it in 2013. The declaration is comprehensive and covers the main aspects of the problem of nuclear weapons. Another example of our work this year was the position paper submitted to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty of Tlatelolco is a precursor of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which explains why OPANAL members are keen to preserve and strengthen the NPT by means of a successful Review Conference in 2020. All documents issued by OPANAL consist of negotiated language that reflects a consensus in the region.

Last year, through our coordinator in New York, OPANAL introduced a draft resolution convening the fourth Conference of States Parties and Signatories to the Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which is another important event taking place next year. OPANAL is fully committed to the success of this important event, which is being coordinated by Mongolia. In that regard, OPANAL has formulated a number of suggestions for improving communication and cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones, which include, first, ensuring greater cooperation with the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs; secondly, issuing a new, comprehensive study on the subject of nuclear-weapon-free zones; thirdly, adopting a joint annual General Assembly resolution on all

nuclear-weapon-free zones; and fourthly, establishing focal points or an advisory group for regular information-sharing.

Lastly, among our many other activities, I would like to highlight our concrete and effective efforts with regard to education on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. In the past two years OPANAL organized four courses on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, held in Uruguay, Bolivia, Guatemala and Nicaragua. That may seem a limited achievement, but it was very important for approximately 150 Government officials of those countries to receive comprehensive information and training on the subject. To that we can add our internship programme, which is also part of our educational programme.

**The Acting Chair:** Several delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Akbaruddin (India):** I am taking the floor to exercise our right of reply in response to the statement by the representative of Pakistan earlier this afternoon. She attempted to present baseless fabrications and resurrect some old and discredited ideas and proposals. Our position on those issues is well known and needs no reiteration. India's security concerns are not confined to one region, and we have therefore always approached those issues in a global context. The representative of Pakistan also made a number of baseless and unsubstantiated allegations about India, including regarding the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, that do not even deserve a response, as they pertain to matters internal to India.

As a responsible State, India strictly abides by its obligations under international treaties and needs no lessons from a country that has no credibility. The First Committee has a vast agenda dealing with global issues relating to disarmament and international security. We hope that Pakistan will refrain from misusing this forum and wasting our time by introducing issues extraneous to it. Since I have already said what I needed to say, I will not take the floor again to spend any more time on the issue, out of respect for the Committee and its work.

**Mr. Wood (United States of America):** I am taking the floor to respond to the comments made earlier by

the representative of Iran. Given Iran's long history of committing and funding acts of terrorism and hostage-taking, and its clandestine nuclear activities, it is in no position to lecture anyone on peace, disarmament, multilateralism or anything else, for that matter.

With regard to his comments on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the JCPOA was agreed to in the hope that it would lead to an improvement in Iran's behaviour in other areas, outside the nuclear issue. But that clearly did not happen. Instead, Iran's behaviour became more aggressive, threatening the United States and its interests under the cover of the deal. Iran's destabilizing regional conduct, continued development and proliferation of ballistic missiles, support for militants and proxies and shameful human rights record all remain pressing concerns that the JCPOA did not address.

The goal of the United States continues to be that of leveraging maximum pressure on Iran in order to achieve a new deal that comprehensively addresses the full range of threats that Iran poses, including its destabilizing regional activities, its development and proliferation of ballistic missiles and its nuclear programme. To achieve that goal, Iran must be willing to operate like a normal country, change its malign behaviour and take lasting steps to demonstrate that its nuclear programme will forever remain exclusively peaceful. Unfortunately, while President Trump has said that we are open to diplomacy with Iran, Iran has continued to meet our diplomacy with violence. Its recent attack on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia was unacceptable and unprecedented and underscores the continuing challenge that Iran poses to international peace and security.

The international community must come together to counter Iran's aggressive, reckless and threatening behaviour. In addition, we have made it clear that Iran's continued actions to expand its uranium enrichment programme are unacceptable. Iran will only deepen its political and economic isolation if it takes further steps that escalate international concerns about its nuclear programme. The international community must remain united on those issues and hold the Iranian regime accountable for its actions. We will continue to put maximum pressure on the Iranian regime until it ceases its destabilizing activities and negotiates a comprehensive deal.

Given Iran's long history of non-compliance and its past illicit pursuit of nuclear weapons, thorough verification and monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) remain essential. The recent statement by the IAEA's Acting Director-General suggesting that Iran is not being sufficiently cooperative regarding the completeness of its safeguards declarations, and that "time is of the essence" for Iran to cooperate, is deeply troubling.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): With regard to the false allegations made yesterday (see A/C.1/74/PV.7) by the representative of the Saud family's regime, I would like to remind him of the Arab adage that says that if your hands are dirty, it is better to keep out of sight. I want to remind him once again that his regime abducted the Prime Minister of a country, detained three quarters of the Saudi regime and killed a former Saudi agent in Turkey. The United States is depleting Saudi Arabia's resources. The Saudi regime has funded terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, besides providing armed terrorist groups in Syria with toxic chemicals to be used against civilians and military personnel. It has waged a bloody war in Yemen and helped to spread terrorism all over the world.

The Saud family regime, which sponsors takfiri terrorism around the world, has supplied the Da'esh and Al-Nusra Front terrorist groups and others of their affiliates with toxic chemical substances, and has facilitated their delivery in Syria with direct support from Bandar bin Sultan's Saudi organization and in collaboration with Turkish intelligence services. It has continued to supply terrorist groups on Syrian territory with weapons, equipment, ammunition, and toxic chemical substances. I suggest that our colleagues revisit the information that was published by various media in April 2018 about equipment for producing and mixing toxic substances that originated in Saudi Arabia. It was found in Douma at the headquarters of one of the terrorist armed groups and was used by the terrorists there to produce chemical weapons. The actions of the Saudi regime provide support to terrorist groups, and specifically some listed by the Security Council, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

The Turkish regime has also been involved in every event related to the use of toxic chemical substances in my country. It facilitates their transfer and then in collaboration with various other regimes orders terrorist armed groups to use them, after which it

fabricates video clips to be used against my country's Government. We say to the Turkish regime that the Syrian people will never forget those crimes. We will hold the perpetrators accountable and prosecute them. The statement of the representative of the Turkish regime is full of the usual fabrications and hypocrisy. The Turkish regime violates all its international obligations, particularly with regard to disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. It is violating the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by supplying Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and other affiliated terrorist groups with toxic chemical substances. It also permits other terrorist groups to run chemical tests on its territories, especially in the city of Gaziantep.

Turkey also transfers foreign terrorist fighters to Syria and provides them with weapons, equipment, munition and intelligence. We reiterate our request to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Security Council to reveal the results of the investigations that we asked for with regard to the sarin gas that was seized from 12 terrorists on Turkish territory. We asked this question before, but I will now ask the representative of the Turkish regime about it in the presence of everyone here in the Committee. Why is his regime still refusing to provide the international community and the OPCW with information on the sarin gas that was seized in Turkey? What happened to it? Why has the Turkish regime released the 12 terrorists who were caught red-handed and arrested for being in possession of it? We challenge the representative of the Turkish regime to deny those facts and explain why the regime halted the investigation and why 18 judges and prosecutors were expelled from office as a result. The Turkish regime also fired police officers who revealed that weapons were being smuggled from Turkey to Syria using the corridors established by resolution 2165 (2014) for cross-border humanitarian assistance. The reports of the relevant subsidiary committees of the Security Council are full of facts exposing the hypocrisy of Turkish policies that sponsor terrorists involved in bringing chemical weapons from Turkey to use them in Syria.

The Syrian Arab Republic will continue to counter all terrorist groups and aggressive forces that seek to encroach on its sovereignty and independence. We stress that the protection of the Syrian people is the sole responsibility of Syria and its army. The aggressive behaviour of the Turkish regime clearly reflects

Turkey's greed for expansion into Syrian territories and is unjustifiable under any pretext. Turkey's aggression against my country is now threatening international and regional peace and security. It also violates resolutions of international legitimacy, particular the relevant Security Council resolutions, which underscore the importance of respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we are determined to counter it with all legitimate means.

**Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan):** I have asked for the floor to exercise our right of reply in response to the comments just made by the representative of India.

The world is witness to India's recent illegitimate actions and gross and systematic violations of human rights in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at further consolidating its illegal occupation of that territory. Those moves are in clear breach of various Security Council resolutions, particularly with regard to Kashmiris' realization of their right to self-determination. I would like to emphasize one fact here. Jammu and Kashmir is neither an integral part of India nor a matter internal to it. As is expressed in the relevant Security Council resolutions, it is internationally recognized as a disputed territory. Those resolutions clearly prohibit unilateral actions and provide for final disposition of the dispute through a United Nations-supervised plebiscite.

India's unilateral action is also in breach of its own solemn pledges to the international community, to the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and to Pakistan. We are raising the issue in the Committee because it has grave implications for regional and international peace and security and stability, especially since the repression in Indian-occupied Kashmir has been accompanied by continued fighting and the shelling of civilian-populated areas in Azad Jammu and Kashmir across the line of control. It is therefore important to urge India to act responsibly and work to preserve rather than imperil peace and security in South Asia.

The representative of India did not address the many undeniable facts presented by my delegation regarding its massive and destabilizing arms build-up and aggressive military policies. India's claim that its security motives are not limited to any geographical region are contradicted by the fact that the bulk of India's offensive capability is deployed against Pakistan. It is deplorable that India continues to deny and deflect the

legitimate concerns regarding its illegitimate actions in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my right of reply to respond to the absurd accusations and comments made by the representative of the United States, which are all baseless. However, it is not surprising to hear such comments from the representative of the United States, whose attitude in the First Committee has been an aggressive one aimed at ruining the Committee's efforts. As an example, I want to address the comments made by the representative of the United States about our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA has explained its position on Iran's cooperation, which should be enough for the members of the Committee, because they all value what the Agency has to say. However, the United States is seeking to destroy, undermine and weaken the IAEA's credibility, in line with its practice of challenging international institutions and multilateralism.

The United States of America has deliberately refused to honour its obligations under many international disarmament instruments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. It is the only country in the history of the world that has used nuclear bombs twice. The fact is that Iran is now subject to the world's most robust nuclear-verification regime and is implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Whatever the Committee may hear from the representative of the United States about the JCPOA and Iran's nuclear activity is therefore mere self-justification and lies.

We will leave it to the judgment of the diplomats in the Committee, which they have already rendered by expressing their deep regret about the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and about the sanctions imposed on Iran. They have reason for that regret. The United States is wrong, and the vast majority of the international community deplores that mistake. The Islamic Republic of Iran is at the forefront of the fight against terrorism, alongside its friends in Syria and Iraq. We have suppressed Da'esh and lost many in the fight against terrorism. It is the United States that is disrupting regional security and stability in the Middle East by supplying excessive amounts of weapons to countries in the region and supporting terrorist groups there.

**Mr. Yakut** (Turkey): I am taking the floor to respond to the baseless allegations made by the representative of the Syrian regime.

His delusional allegations are nothing but a futile effort to distort the reality of the atrocities committed by his regime, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism confirmed four times that the regime used chemical weapons against its own people. The representative made a reference to sarin gas. Perhaps Syria is where he should look for that sarin gas, as it was used by his regime against its own people. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons also states that gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies remain with regard to the regime's declaration of its chemical-weapon programme and stockpiles.

While the regime's representative has many stories to tell, these are the facts. Once again, this year we have seen that whoever speaks up about the reality of the situation in Syria is described by the regime as a provider of chemical substances, a trainer of terrorists and so on, just to divert attention from what is happening on the ground. The regime lost its legitimacy long ago and has a well-documented and ever-growing record of the use of chemical weapons, in violation of its obligations under the international agreements and conventions to which it is party. It is the root cause of all the problems emanating from the Syrian conflict, and it will be held accountable for its crimes.

Lastly, I would like to say a word about Operation Peace Spring, which Turkey launched last week. It seeks to guarantee our national security by removing the threat posed by a separatist terrorist organization along our border regions. It is in line with our right to self-defence as outlined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and in Security Council resolutions on the fight against terrorism.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor again, but I have to respond to the remarks by the representative of Iran. He charged me with fabrications. I suppose the 1979 hostage-taking of Americans at the United States Embassy was a fabrication. I suppose that Iran's hostage-taking of Americans and other nationals around the world is also a fabrication. I suppose that the seizure of oil-tanker crews in the Gulf region is a fabrication. Iran is a country that provides support, arms and funds to

terrorists around the world — not just in the Middle East but all over the world. Many nations represented here in the Committee have lost nationals because of terrorist acts either perpetrated or funded by the regime in Tehran. It supports Hizbullah, Hamas and the Houthi rebels with arms, funds and ballistic missiles. It is in no way entitled to accuse anyone of anything. It is irresponsible. Its malign behaviour is undermining peace and security around the world, and we as the international community need to hold it to account.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): If the representative of the United States wants to bring up history, we welcome it, because we can remind him that in 1953 the United States Government sponsored a coup d'état against the legitimate Government of Iran. It was also the United States Government that brought down an Iranian civilian airplane in the 1980s. The United States has sponsored invasions of a number of countries, and many citizens of the nations represented here lost their lives as a result of bombing by the United States or its support of terrorists. It is a fact that United States officials themselves have acknowledged that the United States has supported the creation of various terrorist groups. We are therefore not surprised if it now seeks to accuse Iran. Iran has been a victim of terrorism and of a United States-sponsored invasion. We reject the comments and allegations of the representative of the United States because they are baseless, and we urge the delegation of the United States to consider the historical truth and to refrain from directing accusations at other nations.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the Turkish regime is once again attempting to divert attention from the actions of his regime, which directly supports terrorist groups and supplies them with chemical substances, while also allowing terrorists to be trained on its territory in the use of toxic chemical substances. It cooperates fully with terrorist groups in fabricating and filming chemical attacks in order to subsequently broadcast and use them as a pretext for blaming my Government.

The Committee is aware of the close cooperation that exists in every area between the Turkish regime, Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front. We know that the oil stolen by Da'esh from Syrian and Iraqi territories was marketed and sold through Turkish territories, supervised by the Turkish regime. The Turkish regime also received a large share of the revenue from Da'esh's oil sales. That is an example of just one form of the

cooperation that existed between the Turkish regime and the Da'esh terrorist organization.

As I said before, Turkey violates all of its disarmament-related obligations under the various conventions to which it is party, and in particular those related to weapons of mass destruction, notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Turkey has nuclear weapons on its territories, in violation of the provisions of the NPT. The Head of the Turkish regime recently announced that his country is willing to possess nuclear weapons, which means that those who placed those weapons on Turkish territory must assure the world that the weapons are safe and keep them under their direct control, because otherwise the Turkish regime will try to hold on to them and would therefore have to declare itself a nuclear-weapon State.

The Turkish regime has brought together terrorists from all over the world on its territory and has facilitated their entry into Syria, along with weapons and military equipment. The representative of the Turkish regime has still not answered my question regarding the location of the sarin gas that his regime declared it had seized from 12 terrorists on Turkish territory. He referred to the aggression launched by his country against Syria and brought up an article of the Charter of the United Nations. Does that mean that any State can refer to that article in order to justify launching an aggression against another State? That is simply illogical. In conclusion, I also want to point out that our two countries signed an agreement in 1998 that must be adhered to.

**The Acting Chair:** As there are no further requests from delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply, and given that we are so far behind schedule, with the consent of the Committee I shall resume the general debate in order to take advantage of the services available this afternoon.

**Ms. Bavdaž Kuret** (Slovenia): Let me start by congratulating the Chair and the Bureau on their election and wishing them every success.

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

Our focus in the coming year will be on ensuring a successful outcome of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

of Nuclear Weapons. For Slovenia, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We firmly believe that its three pillars cannot mutually reinforce each other if its provisions are not implemented in their entirety. That includes achieving concrete progress towards the full implementation of article VI, with the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that noble goal can be achieved through a progressive approach focused on concrete steps and tangible results. There can be no doubt that one of the most vital steps towards a nuclear-weapon-free world would be a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon testing that eliminates vertical as well as horizontal proliferation. I therefore urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), particularly those whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to enter into force.

We are confident that a rules-based international order, with multilateralism as its key principle, is at the heart of our common interests. My country is fully committed to preserving and further advancing effective, treaty-based international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as the key pillars of global peace and security. In that connection, we are deeply disappointed that the Russian Federation did not address the concerns repeatedly expressed about its non-compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which brought about the end of the Treaty. We firmly believe that the two States that possess the world's largest nuclear arsenals have a special responsibility with regard to arms control and nuclear disarmament. For that reason, my country attaches the utmost importance to ensuring the extension of the New START Treaty and encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to further reduce their arsenals.

Another vital part of the global nuclear-non-proliferation architecture facing considerable challenges is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We deeply regret both the withdrawal from the JCPOA by the United States and Iran's recent measures, which are inconsistent with the agreement. I would like to assure the Committee of my country's commitment to supporting both the JCPOA and the International Atomic Energy Agency, for its continued professional

and impartial work in verifying and monitoring the implementation of the nuclear deal in Iran.

In connection with the issue of non-compliance with arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements, we condemn the proliferation of the use of chemical weapons, which is utterly unacceptable. It is a responsibility of the international community to allow no impunity and to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of such acts. Slovenia pledges its full support to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its efforts to uphold the global norm against chemical weapons.

Slovenia is fully committed to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and the vision of a world free of landmines. That is why in 1998 the Slovenian Government established ITF Enhancing Human Security, formerly named the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victim Assistance, aimed at alleviating the scourge of anti-personnel mines in regions all over the world. We firmly believe that the dire humanitarian consequences of such indiscriminate weapons can be mitigated by universal adherence to the Ottawa Convention and its full implementation. We look forward to the upcoming Review Conference in Oslo and hope that we can take further steps towards a mine-free world.

Before concluding, I would like to underline that we should recognize the importance of the gender dimension in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In that connection, we welcome recent positive developments such as the consideration at the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty of the gendered impact of armed conflicts.

Finally, I would like to assure the Committee of my delegation's full commitment to participating actively in the Committee's discussions and of our wholehearted support for its work.

**The Acting Chair:** The next meeting of the First Committee will be held tomorrow at 3 p.m. in this conference room, when we will continue the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Delegations are reminded that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions under all agenda items is tomorrow, Thursday, 17 October, at 4 p.m.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*