



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

First Committee

10th meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Santos Maraver(Spain)

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Penaranda (Philippines), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 94 to 110 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I wish to convey my delegation's congratulations to Mr. Santos Maraver on his election as Chair of the First Committee. I wish him every success in the discharge of his mandate and assure him of Guyana's full support. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections.

Guyana aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). I wish to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

As we observe the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, Guyana takes this opportunity to reflect on our collective aim to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to renew our unwavering commitment to the disarmament agenda of the United Nations, as one of the primary means to ensure that the world is never engulfed in war again. The maintenance of international peace and security requires the collective effort of the entire membership, and disarmament is a crucial component of our efforts to achieve that objective.

Disarmament is even more urgent when we consider that development depends on peaceful, stable and secure societies, and vice versa. As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rightly recognizes, there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development.

The coronavirus disease crisis has highlighted the importance of global action for global crises and caused my delegation to give renewed thought to the humanitarian element of disarmament. The work that we undertake on the disarmament agenda should always have people and the planet at its centre, which should motivate us to make the most genuine and earnest efforts to secure global peace. We hope that we can further advance the First Committee's work at this session despite those constraints.

Guyana remains concerned about the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. We neither manufacture nor export small arms and light weapons but continue to experience the impacts of their illegal circulation. Stronger cooperation and collaboration at all levels are necessary to prevent the diversion and illicit international transfer of such weapons, which fuel the incidence of armed violence on our territory.

We look forward to the convening in 2021 of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and hope that we can agree on further concrete measures to enhance its implementation. Guyana takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty and

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encourages those Member States that have yet to ratify the Treaty to do so at an early date in order to ensure its universalization.

Guyana remains concerned about the continued existence of nuclear weapons despite the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences that would be occasioned by their use, which we have already seen. We are equally concerned about the promulgation of the idea that nuclear weapons are important for security and are disappointed that resources continue to be invested in nuclear-weapon modernization programmes.

As a developing country, Guyana deems it unconscionable that resources should be utilized on weapons of mass destruction while millions of the world's people are mired in poverty. Guyana is firm in its conviction that nuclear weapons have no place in our world and that their continued existence is contrary to the purposes and principles of the Organization and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

We express our strong support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and recognize the important contribution that the Treaty makes in closing an important legal gap and strengthening the global norm for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Guyana recognizes that the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world depends on action by both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States and is pleased to see the leadership displayed by several countries in bringing the Treaty to the cusp of its entry into force. We urge all Member States to ratify the Treaty with urgency in a tangible show of commitment to the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We appeal to all stakeholders to demonstrate responsible leadership on the question of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and underscore the need for all Member States to commit to the obligations provided in the other legal instruments underpinning the disarmament architecture, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, we look forward to the convening of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Guyana affirms the Chemical Weapons Convention and condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances. Our position is that the use of chemical weapons is in violation of international norms

and standards and the human rights of persons affected by their use. We therefore underscore the importance of attributing responsibility whenever chemical weapons are used, as a means of ensuring that perpetrators of that war crime do not act with impunity. We also believe that the process of attribution should be evidence-based and should be conducted in an impartial manner without politicizing the issue.

In conclusion, Guyana is pleased with the increasing recognition of the need to include a gender dimension in our deliberations on questions of disarmament, peace and security. We recognize the essential contribution that women make to dealing with those critical issues and believe that they should be included at all levels of discussion and decision-making. Guyana reiterates its strong and principled commitment to the United Nations disarmament agenda and its aspiration to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We therefore intend to remain actively engaged in the work of the Committee.

Mr. Ko (Myanmar): I wish to congratulate Mr. Santos Maraver on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee and also pay tribute to the other members of the Bureau. I assure him of our delegation's continued support and cooperation for the successful outcome of this session.

Myanmar aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). I would like to underscore several points from a national point of view.

The year 2020 is an important one of historic anniversaries. The United Nations — the heart of multilateralism — is commemorating its seventy-fifth anniversary. We are also celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and marking 75 years since the dropping of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those anniversaries provide us with the impetus to reinforce our efforts to advance the work of disarmament, based on our belief in multilateralism.

However, as great as the global challenges we face as an international community may be, we must not overlook the potential deeper divisions we are witnessing in many parts of the world. Distrust

among States is growing, and military expenditure is increasing worldwide. The danger associated with nuclear weapons is also on the rise, and geopolitical and economic tensions are escalating. The world is becoming more polarized, and multilateralism is under great strain.

On top of all of that, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is burning its way across the globe, placing immense pressures on our societies, economies and daily lives. As the global health crisis continues, international security faces tremendous challenges and uncertainties, which call for redoubled global efforts.

The existence of nuclear weapons and their deployment pose the most serious security challenge, putting at risk the existence of humankind. I would like to reaffirm our position that nuclear disarmament is the highest priority on Myanmar's disarmament agenda. Myanmar has consistently attached great importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in the firm belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use, assuring the absence of the humanitarian consequences of such weapons of mass destruction.

Regional nuclear-weapon-free zones are steps that bring us closer to creating a nuclear-weapon-free world, and I reiterate our strong commitment to the full implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

Myanmar has been a signatory to the historic treaty on nuclear disarmament — the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) — since 2018. As Myanmar nears its ratification of the Treaty, we strongly encourage other Member States to join the Treaty to demonstrate the political will to bring about nuclear disarmament. Myanmar welcomes the recent ratification of the TPNW by our fellow ASEAN member Malaysia, as the forty-sixth ratifying State.

In the same vein, Myanmar is against any nuclear-missile test by any country, anywhere. Myanmar believes in the important role played by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and calls on all States that have not signed or ratified the Treaty to do so.

Myanmar recognizes the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are fully convinced that the integrity and credibility of the NPT depend on the balanced and effective implementation of its three pillars. Myanmar urges all States parties to the NPT, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to demonstrate full and urgent compliance with their obligations under article VI of the Treaty.

As we all know, the pandemic has forced the postponement of the 2020 NPT Review Conference until 2021. That delay has afforded States the extra time and space to better prepare for achieving a new vision towards the emergence of a consensual final document.

With regard to the situation on the Korean peninsula, it is important for all the parties concerned to settle their differences in order to further reduce tensions and work towards a denuclearized Korean peninsula. Myanmar reaffirms its commitment to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and supports efforts to resolve the issue of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful and constructive manner.

We also share the international community's concern about the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Developments concerning the Treaty have significant implications for the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

In line with its priority and commitment to nuclear disarmament, and together with like-minded countries as co-sponsors, Myanmar has annually submitted to the First Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament since 1995 and will continue to do so this year. Through the annual resolution, we have called on the nuclear-weapon States to cease immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and take measures leading to their total elimination within a specified time frame.

Our strong dedication and commitment to that great ambition has once again compelled us to submit draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.50. Myanmar deeply appreciates Member States' valuable sponsorship of, and support for, the draft resolution, and we look forward to their continued support.

Myanmar's participation in, and dedication to, the multilateral disarmament machinery dates back to early 1960s and the establishment of the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament. Despite the prolonged

stagnation at the Conference on Disarmament, Myanmar remains faithful to the Conference as the single and best multilateral negotiating forum for advancing the disarmament agenda. During its 2020 session, the COVID-19 threat overshadowed the work of the Conference. Although we had high expectations for this year's session, we concluded it without reaching a consensus on even a programme of work. We share the disappointment of many delegations over the inability to conduct substantive work in 2020.

Although the picture that emerged from the 2020 session is not satisfactory, we appreciate the coordinated efforts of the six 2020 Presidents, the 2019 President and the 2021 President of the Conference to move it forward, including the proposal of three packages. We should maintain such positive steps and build further to achieve greater mutual understanding and closer cooperation at the upcoming session. As the global pandemic continues to magnify existing challenges, we need more concrete actions and innovative ways to advance towards the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work agreed by all Member States.

In the light of the global pandemic, strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is crucial. We should make every effort to conclude the universality and implementation of the Convention and address inadequate responses and institutional gaps at the upcoming 2021 BWC Review Conference.

We are also concerned about a potential arms race in outer space. We must make every effort to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as we believe that the peaceful use of outer space is in the interests of all nations. In that regard, we welcome the initiatives leading to the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on that important issue.

We have been actively facilitating the return of displaced persons, and the measures we have taken to that end have been made known clearly to the international community and Bangladesh. It is irrational and irresponsible to suggest that the Myanmar Government is hindering the return of displaced persons by planting landmines at the border. We categorically reject such accusations. Displaced persons are expected to return to Myanmar through designated reception centres at the immediate border, which is also in line with the bilateral agreement. The

idea of planting landmines in those closely monitored areas is totally absurd and imaginary.

Although bilateral repatriation has not yet started, more than 350 displaced persons from camps in Cox's Bazar have returned to Rakhine state on their own volition through unofficial channels. In that connection, there have been no reports of returnees falling victim to landmines inside Myanmar.

As we have said before, the reason that the repatriation process has been hindered is owing to the presence of Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army terrorists and their supporters in refugee camps in Bangladesh. They have been actively impeding the repatriation process by means of threats, violence and harassment directed against — and even the murder of — those who are willing to return to Myanmar. There has also been extensive foreign media coverage of that matter, but the Bangladesh authorities continue to deny its existence.

For a better and safer world, we must all work together in a more cooperative, collective and constructive spirit to unify our vision, reach consensual solutions, make tangible progress and achieve the goals we all desire in the field of international disarmament for sustainable peace.

Mr. Simbyakula (Zambia): I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved elections and assure them of my delegation's support and cooperation.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia and the representative of Cameroon on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively.

As we galvanize our multilateral efforts to eradicate the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and poverty and focus on climate change, let us bear in mind that international vision may not be fully realized if the threat posed by nuclear weapons and other destructive weapons is not addressed through international security cooperation, and the work of the First Committee in particular. As we look back, the picture of international peace and security has changed very little and remains worrisome, as disarmament compliance by Member States continues to move at a slow pace. That situation has also been compounded by reduced assessed financial contributions to the United Nations in various categories by some Member

States and has also been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has ravaged the world economy.

It is vital that we all meet our obligations under the various international treaties and conventions that ban and prohibit the manufacturing, testing, trading and proliferation of all forms of weapons. Zambia remains committed to supporting all well-intentioned treaties and protocols, and I am pleased to inform the Committee that Zambia was among a number of States that signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September 2019. In the same vein, we make an appeal to those that have not yet signed it to do so, and eventually ratify it, so that the Treaty will come into effect after reaching the required ratification threshold.

With the prohibition of nuclear weapons on the horizon, allow me to cite former President Ronald Reagan, who said,

“Our moral imperative is to work with all our power for that day when the children of the world can grow up without the fear of nuclear war.”

The time is now for the world to completely shift the paradigm from armament issues to concentrating on the Sustainable Development Goals, which bind us to finding permanent solutions that will help us eradicate pandemics, such as COVID-19, poverty, climate change and other negative political and social problems. Given the challenges I mentioned, the huge sums of funds used in nuclear-weapon research, manufacturing and testing could definitely save many lives if used for poverty eradication and health care.

For decades, arms control and disarmament conferences have been held under the auspices of various international peace and security platforms, offering a thin ray of hope for the total elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth. Instead, we see nations developing nuclear arsenals for probable defence or retaliation, and in some cases for offensive purposes. The countermeasures offer little hope of physical protection for a nation against the annihilation of its population.

Such positive and collective disarmament agreements should restrict not only nuclear and chemical weapons but all armaments that are manufactured and fully intended to fuel the instability of nations in every region of the world. As the United Nations commemorates the seventy-fifth anniversary

of its founding, its deliberations should make an impact towards the achievement of a world free from armaments that are designed to eradicate life from the surface of the Earth.

Mr. Bourgel (Israel): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Santos Maraver on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. Let me assure him of my delegation's full cooperation.

The General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session is meeting at a time of global struggle with the coronavirus disease pandemic. It is a threat that knows no borders. In that vein, we believe that multilateral deliberations should adjust to the situation with patience and caution.

We continue to witness a worrisome escalation in the realm of arms control. In that regard, the Middle East continues to struggle with the chronic lack of compliance with arms control norms and principles. The culture of non-compliance and disregard for international obligations and norms is unfortunately very common and dangerous in the region. The use of chemical weapons by States in the Middle East against their own populations and neighbouring countries has occurred five times since the Second World War. Those events were a clear violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Two additional cases of Member States from the region violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are also pending and need to be further investigated. To that end, the international community should support the important work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its agencies. In that regard, Israel has also done its share by contributing to the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in and of itself does not provide a remedy for the unique security challenges of the region, let alone the repeated violations of the Treaty by some of its signatories. Four of the five cases of serious violations of the NPT in the Middle East occurred after its entry into force. Surface-to-surface missiles and rockets and their related technologies, know-how and production processes have proliferated among, and been transferred to, terrorist organizations. There is an urgent need to focus on the implementation, compliance and verification of the obligations of States.

For more than a year, Iran has been violating its nuclear obligations. To date, its violations with regard to enrichment, stockpiling, research and development are so extensive that they have completely emptied the Iranian obligations of their essence.

Iran has also violated its commitment to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards under the additional protocol by not responding in a timely manner to IAEA access requests and inquiries. The nuclear archive demonstrated that Iran had a robust plan to develop nuclear warheads. Iran continues to conceal such undeclared activities, including the location of sites, equipment and materials that it has stockpiled in defiance of the IAEA safeguards.

Iran has also blatantly violated its obligations under annex B of resolution 2231 (2015) from the outset and has continued to fuel an abundant supply of advanced and destabilizing weapons to numerous terrorist organizations under its influence. Those facts were confirmed by the June 2020 report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/531), which determined that the uncrewed aerial vehicles and cruise missiles used in various attacks on Saudi Arabia, including the attack on Aramco oil facilities, were of Iranian origin and that an extensive amount of arms aboard two vessels headed to Yemen originated from Iran. Iranian arms, some of which are of strategic importance such as precision-guided munitions, are used by terrorists and armed militias and threaten all Middle East countries, including Israel.

Iran also attempts to destabilize the region by using every possible tool, such as terrorism and the use of missile and rocket attacks against its neighbours, which it does from the territory of other countries in the region, namely, Syria and Iraq. Iran's support for terrorist organizations, including the supply of weapons and the provision of financial and political support, and military training, runs counter to numerous Security Council resolutions. Since the entry into force of resolution 2231 (2015), Iran has tested dozens of ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Iran should be strongly condemned for launching several satellite launch vehicles, as they include components used in intercontinental ballistic missiles.

In the light of the concerns I mentioned, the United States has acted boldly to prevent the removal of the conventional arms embargo. The Security Council's failure to extend the embargo led the United States to

conclude that it had no other choice but to exercise its legal right and initiate the snapback mechanism set out in Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). Iran must be held accountable for its malign actions and be restrained by the international community.

Last April we witnessed the first report issued by the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) established by the OPCW in June 2018. The report attributed responsibility for three different chemical attacks on civilians carried out in the spring of 2017 to the Syrian Government, which had acceded to the CWC and pledged to forgo its entire chemical weapons programme. The IIT report followed the various reports and findings of the Declaration Assessment Team, the Fact-Finding Mission and the Joint Investigative Mission, which the international community established as a result of its concern following Syria's first use of chemical weapons against its own citizens in 2012. The IIT report clearly calls on the Syrian Government to cooperate with the OPCW and the international community in rectifying the gaps and discrepancies in its declaration on chemical weapons and to assume full responsibility and accountability for its actions in violation of its obligations under the CWC and with regard to the destruction of its chemical-weapon arsenal.

It is vital that the international community remain vigilant in dealing with the challenge of the non-compliance of Syria in order to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons and to reinstate it.

Conventional weapons continue to claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world on an annual basis. It is clear that States need to fulfil their international obligations, not proliferate conventional weapons. Rather, they need to fight proliferation and be effective in the management of their stockpiles. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Committee that Israel has decided to extend the moratorium on all exports, sales and other transfers of all anti-personnel landmines for an additional period of three years until July 2023.

On the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Israel would like to emphasize its long-stated view that the Treaty — which Israel does not support — does not create, contribute to the development of, or indicate the existence of customary law related to the subject or content of the Treaty.

On the issue of cybersecurity, Israel attaches great importance to efforts to strengthen international security and stability in cyberspace. Israel's global position in the digital domain is based on a robust domestic ecosystem that encourages real-time information-sharing and the development of comprehensive methodologies. Israel also supports educational programmes and raises public awareness of cybersecurity. Israeli-designed cybersecurity tools and know-how assist in safeguarding critical data and infrastructures around the world. The basic tenets of Israel's cyberecosystem should therefore be promoted at the global level in order to enhance global resilience through practical cooperation and capacity-building programmes.

Finally, initiatives of the Group of Arab States such as the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction run contrary to the guidelines and principles of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The experience of other regions demonstrates that any regional security framework can result only from the mutual political desire of all regional parties to engage with one another, taking into consideration the security concerns of every State and reflecting arrangements freely arrived at by all States concerned, as stipulated in the 1999 report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (A/54/42) on guidelines and principles for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. Israel's position is well known and has been elaborated in the past.

Ms. Abbar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I would like to congratulate Mr. Santos Maraver on his election as Chair of the First Committee and assure him of our full support in the accomplishment of his task. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

The Moroccan delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of Arab States and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/75/PV.2) and would like to share some observations in its national capacity.

The work of the First Committee is proceeding in an international context in which there is no respite from the recurrent and multifaceted challenges to the peace, security and stability of the members of the international community. That state of affairs makes the

risk of the proliferation of nuclear and other destructive weapons more probable than ever. Although some action has been taken, the goal of nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons has yet to be achieved.

The Kingdom of Morocco remains convinced that nuclear weapons are neither a guarantee for security nor an assurance of stability at the regional and international levels. In addition to the danger posed by their mere existence, the use of such weapons would cause humanitarian, ecological and security disasters, the risk of which not only could be avoided by the international community if it were to show genuine political will but also should lead us to take concrete steps towards their total elimination.

Moreover, far from calling for our inaction or a new arms race, the persistent challenges in the area of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation provide the international community with the opportunity to recommit to overcoming them. Seventy-five years after the establishment of the United Nations and 50 years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the value of the Treaty has never been as pertinent or timely as it is today in a world in which the issues of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation remain of primary relevance.

Morocco therefore would like to reiterate its commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. With its three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the NPT has shown itself to be an undeniably effective tool for disarmament and non-proliferation and has directly contributed to the reduction of large arsenals and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Accordingly, Morocco believes that following the previous Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it is our collective duty to ensure the full success of the tenth 2021 Review Conference, because the stakes are high and we cannot allow the outcome be put in jeopardy by the pandemic. Moreover, the crucial role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in bringing about regional and international peace and security has not faded — the opposite is true.

Morocco recently signed and ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba, under which the African continent has

been a nuclear-weapon-free zone for 11 years. As it is committed to the ultimate goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, the Kingdom of Morocco welcomed the adoption of decision 73/546 and the subsequent convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in November 2019, under the able presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The work of the historic first session of the Conference culminated in the adoption of key final documents. Morocco welcomes the convening of the second session of the Conference, to be held in 2021 under the presidency of Kuwait.

My delegation recalls that the extension of the NPT was linked to the commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons in the Middle East through the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Moreover, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the importance of which is stated in the very preamble to the NPT, has yet to enter into force despite the fact that more than 20 years have passed since the adoption of the NPT. Similarly, the long-awaited negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty that would strengthen the international non-proliferation regime have not yet begun. Morocco encourages members' commitment to serious and transparent negotiations for the elaboration of a multilateral, universal and non-discriminatory instrument that effectively and verifiably bans the production of fissile material for military purposes.

As a State party to the Conventional Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, Morocco attaches great importance to the eradication of such weapons of mass destruction and condemns all use of such weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances.

Morocco also remains deeply concerned about the threats posed by the illicit circulation of destructive weapons; terrorism, including nuclear terrorism; the spread of non-State actors; and trafficking of all kinds, which has a direct impact on States' sovereignty and the most vulnerable segments of society.

In accordance with its commitment to combat all forms of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including radiological weapons, Morocco also endorsed the Statement of Principles of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and adopted the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

The current international environment and growing challenges make it imperative to return to achieving the goals of peace and security. Such a spirit of renewed commitment must guide the actions of the international community with regard to investing in the new frontiers of outer space and cyberspace.

Concerning outer space, from the very outset Morocco ratified five treaties in that area and joined the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1961. My country believes that it is important to work towards the negotiation of an instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

As a developing country connected to the Internet, Morocco attaches great importance to information and communications technology and cybersecurity, which is especially relevant as advances in telecommunications have dramatically evolved and continue to propel us every year progressively further into the cyberspace, especially in the wake of the coronavirus disease pandemic. In that context, Morocco is actively participating in 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 Governmental Group of Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security and joined the 2018 Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, as well as France's initiative establishing a programme of action to promote responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

In addition to the human tragedies they lead to and the conflicts they fuel and perpetuate, the uncontrolled circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons represent a genuine challenge to the peace, security, stability and development of States. Morocco therefore reiterates in the strongest terms possible its support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The achievement of the goals of the Programme of Action as a political instrument and its full and effective implementation remain predicated on the firm and ongoing commitment of its States parties.

In that regard, the collective awareness that reigned over the adoption of the Programme must continue to inspire our actions, particularly in view of the convening of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of

Action, to be held in July 2021 under the chairmanship of Kenya.

With regard to the multilateral disarmament mechanism, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its firm commitment to contribute to the active and effective revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament in order to break its years-long impasse. While the current international situation is further complicating the situation, we should not see that as a reason for not moving forward in deliberations and overcoming the political divisions affecting the international security environment. We cannot allow that entity to be diverted from the mandate that was conferred upon it at its establishment.

I would like to conclude by recalling that disarmament is one of the *raison d'être* of the United Nations. Genuine and effective disarmament geared towards bringing about peace and security throughout the world can be achieved only if it is promoted at the multilateral level. Dialogue and diplomacy are key factors for achieving irreversible, general, comprehensive and verifiable disarmament.

Mr. Hermann (Denmark): Let me start by thanking the Chair for ensuring the smooth functioning of the First Committee in these extraordinary circumstances.

Denmark associates itself with the general statement made by the observer of the European Union, as well as the statement delivered by the representative of Iceland on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). We would like to stress the following points in our national capacity.

The coronavirus disease pandemic poses new challenges to the multilateral system and actually risks exacerbating existing geopolitical fragilities, but it also serves as an opportunity to reinvigorate and reform global cooperation — certainly also in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

We are witnessing a deterioration of the global security environment, and there are those that seek to challenge the international rules-based disarmament regime, which should be a cause of concern for all of us. Upholding international norms and fully implementing their obligations and commitments must be at the heart of the efforts of all States. Denmark attaches great importance to the preservation of the existing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation

architecture. At the same time, we must be prepared to develop new measures to address new challenges.

As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, let us not lose sight of the fact that it also marks 75 years since nuclear weapons were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with devastating consequences. Let us honour the victims by making the necessary advances towards a safer world.

This is a year of anniversaries. We are also celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — a cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We emphasize our strong support for the Treaty and encourage all States to work constructively towards a successful outcome of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, we welcome endeavours such as the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament Initiative.

Denmark joins others in urging States outside the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty. We also support the early negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. Denmark is a strong supporter of the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Agency plays a key role in the implementation of the NPT, and we fully support the IAEA safeguards system and its further development.

The New START Treaty is the last agreement standing that puts legally binding constraints on nuclear arsenals and launching systems. The significance of the Treaty can hardly be overestimated, not only for the two signatories but also for world peace and security. Without the Treaty, the risk of a new arms race is imminent. We strongly call for the extension of the New START Treaty and encourage early progress on the ongoing strategic stability dialogue between the United States and Russia. An extension would allow time to come up with answers to the handling of new technologies, all types of nuclear weapons — both tactical and strategic — and a changing global security landscape with new important players. We encourage China to join the discussions.

The nuclear weapons and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a blatant

violation of numerous Security Council resolutions and among the most severe threats to international peace and security. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations, fully comply with its obligations and return to the negotiation table. Any hope for a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula rests on the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We also remain deeply concerned about Iran's breach of the limitations set by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We strongly urge Iran to return without delay to full compliance with the agreement. We regret the 2018 withdrawal by the United States from the JCPOA and the subsequent reimposition of previously lifted United States sanctions.

We have witnessed in recent years the appalling use of chemical weapons in several places. We deeply deplore that and urge the international community to stand united in fighting that scourge. In that vein, we strongly condemn the Syrian regime's continued violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as most recently concluded by the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). But our condemnation cannot suffice. We owe it to the victims to bring the perpetrators of those abhorrent crimes to justice. Furthermore, there must be consequences for the complete lack of cooperation with the OPCW by the Syrian regime, as reported by the Director General very recently.

Denmark condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent assassination attempt on opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia by a military chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group. We reiterate our call on Russia to investigate the crime thoroughly and in full transparency, bearing in mind Russia's commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Denmark attaches the highest priority to bringing to account those who unscrupulously violate the global norms against chemical weapons. Among other things, we are committed to such work through the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. Let me also emphasize the importance of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team for identifying perpetrators. We have unwavering confidence in the objectivity,

impartiality, independence and technical expertise of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, and we are troubled by the continuous attempts by certain States to discredit the organization.

Denmark supports a free, open, stable and secure cyberspace in which human rights and fundamental freedoms fully apply. The rise in malicious cyberactivity by both State and non-State actors is a cause of deep concern. Such acts can put lives at serious risk and are unacceptable. The international community must come together to strongly condemn such acts. The Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the Governmental Group of Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security serve as an opportunity to build common understanding and promote the implementation of already-agreed rules, norms and principles of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

We consider outer space as a common good. Activities in outer space are directly linked to our global infrastructure and security. Denmark is committed to preventing an arms race in outer space, which should be reserved for peaceful purposes in the long term. We encourage further international cooperation on the norms of responsible behaviour in outer space and appreciate draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.66 in that regard.

Denmark supports the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, in particular the 11 guiding principles. In our work on those principles, we should in particular aim to develop an understanding of the type and degree of human-machine interaction.

Lastly, echoing my initial words, let me finish by stressing the importance of treating this unprecedented moment as an opportunity for a reformed and reinvigorated multilateralism with the aim of strengthening global peace and security. The disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation architecture forms a delicate system, which should be safeguarded and further developed.

The Acting Chair: I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the representative of France.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the Conference Room.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Caccia (Holy See): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election and commend the work that you and the members of the Bureau have completed so far to allow us to pursue the First Committee's vital work to advance international peace and security.

During his visit to Japan in November 2019, Pope Francis underscored that,

“One of the deepest longings of the human heart is for security, peace and stability. The possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is not the answer to this.”

Those words underscore how important the work of the Committee is. It far transcends our deliberations and responds to humankind's deepest longings. Seeking security through arms, however, only makes us progressively more insecure, filling us with a mentality of fear and mistrust — one that ends up poisoning relationships among peoples and obstructing any form of dialogue. To pursue arms is contradictory to advancing dialogue.

For three quarters of a century, general and complete disarmament has been an objective of the international community. The first resolution adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)) called for the elimination of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction, while resolution 41 (I) called for treaties governing the general regulation and reduction of armaments. Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) made State parties' pursuit of negotiations in good faith on a treaty on general and complete disarmament a binding legal obligation. Such principles of the international community remain, and as such should be high on the Committee's agenda.

For some time, an array of treaties has helped the international community make progress in reducing and controlling both nuclear and conventional weapons, concluding with the New START Treaty in 2011. Those advances, unfortunately, have given way in recent years to backsliding on prior agreements and growing rivalries on the part of both global and regional Powers. The Holy See strongly urges the parties to the New

START Treaty to conclude the steps necessary to extend it for a further five years, while they develop the framework for broader bilateral or multilateral undertakings with the objective of moving closer to a world without nuclear weapons.

Given the recent dismantling of some aspects of the disarmament architecture, the tensions in inter-State behaviour and the increased risks posed by artificial intelligence and cybertechnology, the current geostrategic environment is an exceedingly dangerous one. Now is the time to break the impasse blocking progress towards general and complete disarmament. Whereas the current limitations on the arsenals of the two chief possessors of nuclear weapons were adopted nearly a decade ago, time has not been devoted to working out the next steps.

Such work must proceed with greater urgency. There are many issues for consideration, such as establishing overall limits on a State's weapons and delivery systems, constraints on the deployment of nuclear weapons, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the verification of agreed undertakings.

The evolution of technologies that may find application in nuclear weapon systems, such as nuclear-powered missiles, torpedoes and hypersonic vehicles, adds further urgency to the need to immediately commence negotiations on limitations and reductions. The strategic doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States have contributed to fomenting the climate of fear, mistrust and hostility that afflicts the world today. A major step towards general and complete disarmament should therefore begin with the abandonment of defence strategies that blur the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons.

If it is immoral to threaten to use nuclear weapons for purposes of deterrence, it is even worse to intend to use them as just another instrument of war, as some nuclear doctrines propose. The awareness of our common vulnerability and the pre-existent vulnerability that the pandemic has laid bare — not least of which involves the urgent crisis caused by climate change — and the need to recommit to caring for our common home make the modernization programmes under way even more incongruous and take us further away from the noble goal of general and complete disarmament.

Beyond renouncing doctrines of nuclear warfare, nuclear-weapon States should make a no-first-use pledge. When the postponed NPT Review Conference

convenes, the recommitment of States parties to general and complete disarmament under article VI of the Treaty, with a firm calendar for negotiation, should be of the highest urgency. It is far past time for nuclear-weapon States to meet their disarmament obligations under the Treaty.

The fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT and the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension are important milestones that must be recognized as remarkable achievements of the international community. The rescheduled Review Conference needs to be marked by positive engagement, resolute commitment and concerted action by all States to make our world free of nuclear weapons.

A positive development has been the 2017 adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which gives full recognition to the enormous humanitarian consequences that would follow from a conflict in which nuclear weapons were used. The Holy See was among the first to sign the TPNW and deposit its instrument of ratification. As we await the day for the Treaty to enter into force, it is imperative to continue encouraging, through our concerted diplomatic activity, the participation of all nuclear-weapon States in negotiations to establish ceilings, if not reductions, regarding their nuclear weapons. Those States could also join with TPNW parties to develop the competent verification authority or authorities called for in article 4, paragraph 6, of the Treaty.

There is a need to adopt a new tone in the dialogue among both nuclear and conventional military Powers. States should avoid recrimination, heated rhetoric and impossible preconditions for dialogue and should instead build trust and commit to civil exchanges and goodwill initiatives. The coronavirus disease pandemic has shone a light on the grave challenges that will follow us in the coming years. Genuine progress towards general and complete disarmament should release much-needed resources that could be better used to benefit the integral development of peoples and protect the natural environment.

As we embark on the decade of action for sustainable development, the Holy See urges renewed consideration for the establishment, as first urged by Pope Paul VI, of a global fund to assist the most impoverished peoples, drawn partially from military expenditures — a contemporary and much-needed realization of the call to turn swords into ploughshares

and spears into pruning hooks, a transformation to which the words of Isaiah inscribed across the street from the entrance to the United Nations never cease to summon us.

Mr. Tiare (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates the Chair on his election, as well as all the other newly elected members of the Bureau. My delegation wishes to assure them of its full support and cooperation for the successful completion of our work. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the outstanding manner in which the previous Chair, Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Solíz, conducted the work of the Committee at its seventy-fourth session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Cameroon and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

Our work is being carried out this year in a difficult environment, as the challenges facing the Organization are further compounded by the pandemic that has been disrupting the world for the past several months. Since its foundation 75 years ago out of the ashes of the Second World War, the Organization has always given pride of place to disarmament issues.

However, 75 years after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons remain a threat to peace, security and the survival of humankind. Their total elimination is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of international peace and security, and as such the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of its adoption calls on us all to consider the need for its universalization and the implementation of its obligations.

Moreover, a quarter of a century after the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the challenges related to its universalization and the need for the balanced implementation of its three pillars are being acutely felt. My delegation therefore calls on all States parties to the NPT to engage in frank discussions so that we can reach a successful outcome at the 2021 NPT Review Conference.

The Chair took the Chair.

My delegation also welcomed the 2017 adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which complements the NPT and the legal regime for the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, and we are pleased by the growing number of signatures and ratifications, which suggest its entry into force in the very near future.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was opened for signature more than two decades ago, will be indispensable to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. To that end, my delegation calls on its annex 2 States to sign and/or ratify the Treaty without delay, given its importance in the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation architecture.

My delegation welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in Africa thanks to the Treaty of Pelindaba. The establishment of such zones is a disarmament and non-proliferation measure that should be supported and added to.

With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, my delegation calls for the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. While advances in technology and biology are beneficial in many ways, they also pose risks that we must confront. In that regard, it is of the utmost importance that we seize the opportunity at the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to strengthen it through a verification regime.

Developments in the area of conventional weapons concern us all. The illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons poses a threat to peace, security and progress in several regions of the world. Such weapons not only fuel numerous conflicts and the activities of criminal organizations and terrorist groups but also jeopardize the stability of several States. Like all countries in the Sahelo-Saharan region, Burkina Faso has faced an upsurge since 2015 in cross-border crime, characterized by terrorist attacks and illicit trafficking of all kinds.

The universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and its full and complete implementation are imperative, as it provides an adequate and collective response in the regulation of international arms transfers. The seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2021,

will hopefully provide States with the opportunity to engage constructively and set national goals.

The universalization and full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Ottawa Convention are imperative, given the many repercussions of the use of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines. The second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to be held next month, will also provide States with the opportunity to reaffirm their support for those Conventions.

As part of the Africa Amnesty Month activities to implement the initiative's goal to raise awareness and inform populations about the dangers of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the marking, collection and destruction of weapons and the strengthening of community policing capacities, my country welcomes the support it has received from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the African Union.

As my country faces the problems caused by improvised explosive devices used by terrorist groups, Burkina Faso welcomes the support provided by the United Nations Mine Action Service to the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in raising awareness among internally displaced persons, host populations and persons living with disabilities about the dangers of improvised explosive devices in certain regions of the country.

With regard to outer space, my delegation believes that we must all work together to prevent its militarization.

Concerning cyberspace, its usefulness in countless everyday life situations is undisputed. However, the many cyberattacks sustained, including against critical infrastructure, call on us to devote greater attention to the issue. Accordingly, my delegation welcomes 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, which is helping us focus on an issue that is of vital importance to all.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that Burkina Faso supports multilateral initiatives in the field of disarmament and believes that it is more urgent than

ever that we join all our efforts within the multilateral framework to confront the multiple challenges that threaten the survival of humankind. The coronavirus disease pandemic reminds us more than ever of the importance of devoting additional resources to the various development projects so that we can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in order to provide future generations with a more secure, stable and prosperous world, in keeping with the intention of the founding fathers of the Organization.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): I join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

While the international community undertakes efforts to invest in and sustain peace, the world continues to witness the alarming deterioration of the disarmament and arms control architecture, whereby existing instruments are rescinded and others are in danger of termination. The challenges to the contemporary global security environment are further compounded by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Yet at the same time, the pandemic has demonstrated that multilateral cooperation is central to all global efforts. The uncertainties we face in current times warrant concrete and urgent progress in the area of arms control and disarmament. Malaysia underscores once again the need for all States to work together to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the disarmament machinery, including the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Achieving a nuclear-weapon-free-world has been a long-standing desire of the international community since the inaugural session of the General Assembly, held in 1946. Malaysia reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again are the only absolute guarantee against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their use.

As the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been instrumental in supporting international efforts to curtail the threats posed by nuclear weapons and their proliferation. The fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT this year, as well as the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension, should provide States parties with strong impetus to achieve tangible and much-needed progress.

The tenth NPT Review Conference presents a timely opportunity for States parties to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the implementation of their obligations and past commitments concerning the Treaty across its three pillars. Malaysia stands ready to work with all States parties towards achieving a meaningful outcome of the Review Conference.

On 30 September, Malaysia deposited its instrument of ratification to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Ratifying the TPNW is a testament to our unwavering commitment to, and support for, the total elimination of nuclear weapons and Malaysia's tangible efforts to advance that long-standing goal. The TPNW complements and strengthens international law on nuclear disarmament. The Treaty will further reinforce the norm that nuclear weapons are unacceptable, should not be used, should not be threatened to be used and need to be discarded and destroyed as soon as possible. We are pleased that the TPNW is close to achieving the requisite number of ratifications and look forward to its early entry into force.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty is fundamental to ensure systematic progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Malaysia calls on all States, particularly the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

With regard to the New START Treaty, Malaysia welcomes the ongoing dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation and calls on both sides to extend the New START Treaty in the interest of the collective security of all. As in the past, Malaysia is pleased to submit its annual draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/75/L.55). We count on the continued support of partners to co-sponsor the draft resolution and welcome other States to consider co-sponsoring it.

Malaysia is firmly committed to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). We underscore the urgent need to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty pertaining to the earliest signing and ratification of its protocol. That is in line with the aspirations of the ASEAN leaders as reflected in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025.

In accordance with the joint communiqué of the fifty-third ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, held on 9 September, Malaysia will continue to work with other ASEAN member States to move the process forward. We are also committed to working constructively with fellow ASEAN member States on the submission of the biennial SEANWFZ draft resolution to the First Committee at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, to be held in 2021, following the last substantive submission in 2015.

Malaysia welcomes the convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in November 2019 and hopes for more progress to be made in that regard.

With regard to the Korean peninsula, Malaysia remains concerned about developments related to the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We stress the importance of continued peaceful dialogue among all parties concerned in order to realize lasting peace and stability on a denuclearized Korean peninsula. That will require the full and expeditious implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and agreements reached among the parties concerned.

Concerning the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), we regret the status of its implementation and call on all parties to refrain from undertaking any actions that could further undermine the agreement. We also emphasize the importance of continued adherence to the JCPOA by all parties concerned.

Malaysia condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. The use of such weapons is abhorrent and a flagrant violation of international law, especially the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Those responsible for the deployment of such weapons must be held accountable.

Malaysia supports the efforts of the international community to promote universal adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and compliance with its provisions. To that end, we are of the view that effective verification measures should be put in place to strengthen the BWC. We will continue to work closely with other States parties to promote concrete and specific actions in strengthening the implementation of the BWC and the CWC.

Malaysia remains deeply concerned about the wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. We encourage all Member States to implement stringent national legislation and guidelines to combat the proliferation of such weapons. We also underscore the need for the balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument.

There is no doubt about the growing exploitation of information and communications technologies for malicious purposes in every sector and society, which is increasing in frequency, precision and sophistication. Our shared experience from the recent global pandemic suggests possible negative trends in the digital domain that could undermine international security and stability. Malaysia is enhancing national efforts to address cyberrisks and cyberthreats, from both the operational and policy perspectives, with a view to increasing its expertise, capacities and capabilities in the field.

We welcome the efforts of the Open-Ended Working Group 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 their constructive discussions in the area of information and telecommunications in the context of international security.

With regard to outer space, Malaysia reiterates the importance of the inalienable right of all States to explore and use outer space for the benefit of all humankind. Its use must be exercised in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter

of the United Nations. We reaffirm that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and of its weaponization is of vital importance.

In conclusion, with the growing complexities of global challenges, there is a clear need to preserve and strengthen the United Nations disarmament machinery and other related multilateral and bilateral mechanisms. Malaysia reiterates its readiness to continue its constructive engagement in the work of the First Committee at this session.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Bamya (Palestine): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections and to assure you of our cooperation in advancing a more peaceful and prosperous world free of weapons of mass destruction.

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). While this is unusual, allow us also to align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/75/PV.2) given the many elements of that statement with which we agree.

Seventy-five years ago, civilian inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki became the first victims of an attack using atomic bombs, which killed hundreds of thousands of people and left many more to live with the injuries sustained during the attack or from its fallout. That is an eternal scar on humankind's consciousness, and there is no doubt that those actions were illegal — in today's terms, they amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We have yet to answer the appeals of the hibakusha to end that threat once and for all. Seventy-five years after those attacks and 50 years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons has yet to be fulfilled.

The State of Palestine reiterates that the use of nuclear weapons by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes is morally and legally unjustifiable, as it is incompatible at all times and under all circumstances with the rules of international law. The

use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes the greatest possible breach of the foundational principles of international humanitarian law, including the cardinal principles of humanity and distinction. It necessarily entails the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity, given its indiscriminate short-term and long-term effects.

We therefore call for immediate action towards their complete, irreversible and internationally verifiable elimination. The exceptional status enjoyed by nuclear weapons as compared to that of other weapons of mass destruction can no longer be justified, neither can the Non-Proliferation Treaty or its indefinite extension be interpreted as allowing for the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons.

The State of Palestine is therefore proud to have participated in the elaboration of the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and was among the first countries to ratify it. We look forward to the early entry into force of the Treaty. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation cannot be disassociated from one another, as they are both mutually reinforcing and non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament and from our common objective and obligation to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Any other interpretation would undermine the credibility, integrity and efficiency of the NPT.

The State of Palestine expects that, following the unfortunate opposition to a consensus outcome at the previous NPT Review Conference, we will work collectively at the upcoming NPT Review Conference to ensure that we move forward towards the full implementation of obligations across all three pillars of the NPT, including in relation to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

We reiterate the special responsibility of the States sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to ensure its full and timely implementation. The State of Palestine welcomes the convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and thanks the Secretary-General for his efforts in that regard.

The State of Palestine notes that Israel — the only country in the region that has illegally acquired and

developed nuclear weapon and continues to refuse to join the NPT — decided to boycott the first session of the Conference, thereby pursuing the policy of obstructing efforts to establish such a zone, which it has done since the adoption of the landmark 1995 resolution.

Nuclear disarmament is a top priority, not only as a matter of peace and security but also for the survival of the human race. The General Assembly enshrined that objective in the first resolution it adopted (resolution 1 (I)). We cannot wait for another tragedy to muster the necessary resolve to act. Humankind has foolishly developed the instruments of its own extinction and must get rid of them before it is too late.

The State of Palestine also calls for full respect for, and the implementation of, the relevant instruments prohibiting other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we call for the development of a protocol to address the shortcomings of the Biological Weapons Convention, especially with respect to the absence of a verification system similar to the one enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Outer space and cyberspace belong to all humankind and must be used solely for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all humankind. It is important to address the legal gaps in that regard as a matter of urgency. We express our deepest concern about, and rejection of, declarations that characterize outer space as a warfighting domain, or the next battlefield, and actions that are conducive to an arms race in outer space.

We stress the urgent need to start substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on, inter alia, the prevention of such an arms race. Similarly, the State of Palestine rejects the use of new information and communications technologies for non-peaceful purposes in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We call for the development of an appropriate international legal framework within the United Nations with the active and equal participation of all States.

The State of Palestine is deeply concerned about the ever-increasing production and international trade of weapons, including conventional weapons, many of which are used in the systematic targeting of civilians or indiscriminately and disproportionately. Articles 6 and 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty prescribe States parties' responsibilities to monitor the arms trade, prior to any transfer, in accordance with international

law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We call on all States to fulfil their obligations in that regard.

The setbacks we are witnessing in the field of disarmament are a reflection and a result of the attacks against the multilateral rules-based order. The founders of the United Nations knew well that multilateralism, mutual respect and abidance by the same set of rules were indispensable for advancing a more peaceful and prosperous world. The United Nations was not founded upon ideals alone; it was also founded on the determination to avoid the repetition of the tragedies and horrors of the Second World War. There are those who forget what a world built on unilateralism, disregard for rules, selfishness and hyper-nationalism looks like.

On this seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we should all remember why we built a multilateral rules-based order in the first place and what the alternative looks like. As we are faced with the grave pandemic, some want us to believe that salvation comes from egocentric approaches and populist ideas, rather than from a collective and responsible approach. The money spent on armaments could end poverty, ensure sustainable development for all, eliminate diseases and provide health care. More than ever, that money is needed to help those most in need, support economic recovery and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Disarmament is critical for a more peaceful world and to achieve all those noble objectives.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Abdelaziz (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. Please be assured of the full support of the League of Arab States in fulfilling our shared objectives.

The Arab League fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

Despite the major security, humanitarian, health and economic challenges facing our world, especially as a result of the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the First Committee remains the multilateral forum responsible for the implementation of agreed objectives, principles and commitments related

to general and complete disarmament and for arriving at consensus to strengthen regional and international peace and security. The Committee is a key forum for the promotion of solidarity and international cooperation to protect humankind.

In that context, throughout the 75 years since its founding in March 1945, the League of Arab States has strived to enhance the regional security of its States members and uphold the principles and values of the United Nations in maintaining international peace, security and stability. To that end, the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, is imperative.

We must also restrict the circulation of conventional weapons and redirect financial resources from military expenditures to sustainable development, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In fulfilling that commitment, the League of Arab States works to realize general and complete disarmament, including with respect to weapons of mass destruction.

The States members of the Arab League have always supported the nuclear non-proliferation regime, all of them having acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Arab League has also been supportive of, and committed to, establishing a zone free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and has fully and effectively sought in every regional and international forum to achieve the noble goal of general and complete disarmament.

The Arab League also works to effectively implement international conventions and treaties and actively participates in regional and international disarmament conferences. However, certain regional parties do not abide by the relevant resolutions and decisions, and certain nuclear-weapon States continue to ignore any specific timeline for implementing such international obligations, in particular with respect to abandoning their nuclear arsenals and supporting and establishing zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including in the Middle East.

The League of Arab States is therefore concerned about the absence of the desired progress on nuclear disarmament and the lack of implementation of relevant agreed commitments in that regard, including the lack of progress on the universalization of the NPT and compliance with its provisions by all. We must therefore

work together to reactivate the role of disarmament bodies and their various mechanisms — especially the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, we must redouble our efforts to revive the credibility of the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, especially given the failure of 2015 NPT Review Conference to come up with an outcome document. Three States parties to the Treaty, some of which are unfortunately nuclear-weapon States, violated the consensus on the outcome document in order to protect another party that still has not acceded to the Treaty. The same States have also shunned our determined efforts to achieve the universality of the NPT and its effective implementation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Review Conference was postponed until 2021. We must nevertheless make every effort to avoid a recurrence of the previous Review Conference, at which a minority of States parties to the Treaty threatened the entire non-proliferation regime. There is also an imbalance concerning the implementation of the Treaty's three pillars and the provisions under which the NPT was indefinitely extended in 1995. I refer to the full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East, failing which the agreement on an indefinite extension will collapse.

The League of Arab States encourages its States members to advance the implementation of General Assembly decision 73/546, on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction under the auspices of the United Nations, in line with the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which unfortunately has not been implemented for 25 years.

First, the League of Arab States believes in the importance of adopting conventions to establish zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, realizing international peace and security and advancing nuclear disarmament efforts throughout the world, especially in the Middle East.

Secondly, the States members of the Arab League honour their regional and international commitments. Israel, however, continues to fail to uphold its obligations, as it insists on not acceding to the NPT

and placing its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards agreements, in addition to violating many United Nations resolutions in that regard.

Thirdly, efforts to achieve peace in our region must go hand in hand with freeing it from weapons of mass destructive by all parties; above all, Israel that must accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and place all its facilities under an IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement.

Israel must also join international and regional efforts, within the framework of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction, especially as it boycotted the first session of the Conference, held in 2019. The Arab League once again encourages all States invited to the second session of the Conference, including Israel, to participate in it and to prioritize regional and international interests over narrow individual interests.

The Arab League urges the five nuclear-weapon States, in particular the three depositary States, to act in accordance with the 1995 resolution that they adopted. The Arab League also calls on Israel to reconsider its decision not to participate in the Conference, the substantive work of which is based on consensus among the States of the region, in line with the United Nations Disarmament Commission's 1999 guidelines. We note that the Islamic Republic of Iran has participated in the Conference, which will undoubtedly reduce the growing tensions in our region.

The Arab League also calls on the international community, through the First Committee and the NPT Review Conference, to support the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Secretary-General will submit a progress report on its work to the next NPT Review Conference. It is also important that the NPT Review Conference send a strong message in support of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction, in anticipation of its desired outcomes.

Those developments will also be strengthened by continued international efforts to achieve the universalization of the NPT, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention

and the Biological Weapons Convention. All the relevant organizations should effectively participate in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, the Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for the dedicated performance of their duties.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ms. Christory (International Committee of the Red Cross): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is grateful for this opportunity to address the First Committee. The issues on its agenda are critically important. The ICRC brings to these discussions its experience as a humanitarian organization, its knowledge of the effects of weapons on civilians and combatants and its expertise in international humanitarian law.

This year we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. The birth of the United Nations instilled in us the hope that we can save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Since 1945, the world has not witnessed another world war, and the United Nations has worked tirelessly to maintain international peace and security.

Yet unfortunately armed conflicts continue to rage and cause devastating global consequences. With the increasing urbanization of warfare comes immense civilian harm. Such harm is direct and indirect, immediate and long-term, visible and invisible. Similarly, the pace at which new technology is being developed for use in warfare cannot be ignored. In particular, we need to work together to prevent the potentially disastrous effects of the use in war of unrestrained technological developments.

This year also marks a more sombre anniversary. It has been 75 years since nuclear weapons were first used, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those horrific events left an indelible mark on humankind's conscience. We have testified to the devastation of those cities and the human suffering on an unimaginable scale caused by

the atomic bombs, including the long-term effects of radiation exposure.

Less than one month after the two atomic bombs were dropped, the ICRC called for nuclear weapons to be banned outright. That call resonated widely. In 2017, States responded to their long-standing concern by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Its imminent entry into force is a truly historic achievement and signals that such weapons are unacceptable in humanitarian, moral and now also legal terms. Crucially, it offers the promise that one day we will be freed of the dark shadow of nuclear warfare. Such a signal is needed more than ever in a world in which the risk of the use of nuclear weapons continues to grow.

The tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will provide a crucial opportunity to implement long-standing risk-reduction commitments and reverse the disturbing trends towards a new nuclear arms race.

Armed conflicts today continue to be fought predominantly using heavy explosive weapons. The ICRC remains deeply concerned about the devastating civilian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. Such use results in unacceptably high levels of civilian casualties and destruction directly caused by the blast and fragmentation effects of such weapons. Our first-hand experience shows that they also cause significant indirect effects, such as disruption in services essential to the survival of the civilian population, leading to displacement and causing major setbacks to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. That cannot be accepted as a normal and inevitable consequence of war.

In a joint op-ed published earlier this year with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, we described how the use of heavy explosive weapons hampers societies' capacity to contain the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and we called once again on States and all parties to armed conflict to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas as a matter both of policy and good practice. In that regard, the ICRC firmly supports the ongoing diplomatic process led by Ireland on the elaboration of a political declaration to address the

civilian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions has contributed significantly to saving lives, limbs and livelihoods. The ICRC urges States to seize the opportunity at the upcoming Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to be held next month and presided over by Switzerland, to join the Convention and advance its goal of a world free of cluster munitions. The ICRC is deeply concerned about the repeated reports of the use of cluster munitions in several contexts. Let us be unequivocal: their use anywhere and by anyone must be condemned.

The ICRC is also concerned that the widespread availability of, and poor control over, the transfer of arms continues to fuel serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in armed conflicts and other situations of violence in many parts of the world. The ICRC welcomes progress on universal adherence to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Yet the ATT can fulfil its promise only if States parties place humanitarian considerations at the centre of arms transfer decisions at all levels.

This year also marks the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which plays an important role in minimizing suffering in armed conflict. The past 40 years demonstrate that the CCW is a dynamic instrument that can respond to advancements in weapons technology and the evolution of armed conflict. Today it is critical that the Convention live up to its potential by responding to new advancements in weapons technology.

The ICRC is concerned about developments leading towards increasingly autonomous weapon systems. The associated erosion of human control over the use of force creates clear risks for civilians and combatants who are no longer fighting, challenges related to compliance with international humanitarian law and fundamental ethical concerns about leaving life-and-death decisions to sensors and software. Internationally agreed limits on autonomous weapons must be established with some urgency. Rapid developments in military technology indicate that this is not a question for the future, but a concern for the present.

It is therefore encouraging to see the agreement among High Contracting Parties to the CCW that

human control or involvement in the use of force must be retained. Measures aimed at ensuring human control, as proposed by the ICRC — such as limits on the types of targets, constraints on the environment of use and requirements for human supervision, intervention and deactivation — can inform the internationally agreed limits.

Today we are witnessing a rapid uptake of artificial intelligence and machine-learning for a variety of military applications. The ICRC remains convinced of the need for a human-centred approach that allows sufficient time for human control and judgement to apply the law and ensure that human agency is retained in decisions with serious consequences for people's lives. Artificial intelligence and machine-learning systems are tools that should be used to improve human decision-making, not to replace it.

In recent years, the ICRC has repeatedly expressed concern about the potential human cost of cyberoperations against critical civilian infrastructure. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been reports of cyberoperations against medical facilities, and the first casualty related to a ransomware attack, against a hospital in Germany, was reported just last month.

In May 2020, the President of the ICRC joined a group of global leaders to call on Governments to work together and declare cyberoperations against health-care facilities as unlawful and unacceptable. States have taken an essential first step by affirming that international law applies in cyberspace. The ICRC urges all States to also affirm that international humanitarian law restricts cyberoperations during armed conflicts, on the understanding that such affirmation neither encourages the militarization of cyberspace nor legitimizes cyberwarfare.

Given the rapid digitalization of our society, it is critical that the way in which international humanitarian law is interpreted and applied protect the digital means and tools that we increasingly rely on in every aspect of our lives. The ICRC shared its views on those issues in a position paper submitted to the two processes mandated by the First Committee.

The past year has seen continued militarization in outer space, which could increase the likelihood of hostilities in outer space. Technology enabled by space systems permeates most aspects of civilian life, making the potential consequences of attacks on such systems

a matter of humanitarian concern. The weaponization of, and hostilities in, outer space would not occur in a legal vacuum. They are constrained by existing law — the Outer Space Treaty, the Charter and the rules of international humanitarian law prohibiting the use of certain means and methods of warfare and affording protection for civilians.

In conclusion, let me recall what was said on behalf of the ICRC 40 years ago at the adoption of the CCW:

“We hope that the progress we have made today will not only reduce the harm caused by war, but also mitigate the hatred among belligerents. Thus, we may also consider this agreement on conventional weapons as a step forward in the difficult path towards universal peace.”

That holds true to this day for the CCW, the other treaties I mentioned earlier and all humanitarian disarmament efforts. The ICRC therefore calls on every State to ratify and implement all those treaties. We also call on every State to join efforts to address the new humanitarian concerns raised by the development of weapons technologies and the evolution of conflicts.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by Mr. Flávio Roberto Bonzanini, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the Conference Room

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We have exhausted the list of speakers for today.

I shall now call on those representatives who have requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply. In accordance with the decision made at the organizational meeting (see A/C.1/75/PV.1), the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second intervention to three minutes.

Mr. Alharsha (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply to respond to the Syrian representative's claim that chemical weapons were transported from Libya through Turkey into Syria to be used against civilians (see A/C.1/75/PV.8). Let me stress that this claim has been made repeatedly for a number of years by the Syrian representative, without any proof or evidence. It is nothing but an attempt to manipulate public opinion and deflect the

accusations made against his regime regarding the use of those internationally prohibited weapons against its own people.

Syria possessed the facilities to produce such weapons. How can we therefore believe his claim given that more than 27 facilities to produce those weapons have been destroyed in his country? We recall that Libya, under the supervision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), destroyed all its stockpiles of such weapons, as attested to by the OPCW itself. Sarin gas was not among the chemicals that were destroyed. Sarin was proven to have been used to kill civilians in Syria.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): Concerning the references to Iran's missile programme made by some delegations, including the delegations of the United Kingdom and France (see A/C.1/75/PV.7 and A/C.1/75/PV.8, respectively), I would like to reiterate that Iran has developed, based on international law, its home-grown defensive-missile capability to deter any threat against our country.

With regard to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), I would like to highlight that the agreement is not a one-way commitment accepted only by Iran. Rather, it specifies the individual commitments of its other participants, including the three European signatories. We believe that, instead of putting pressure on Iran, they should implement their own obligations and have the United States of America stop its violation of resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA and avoid imposing illegal maximal sanctions on Iran.

My delegation rejects the baseless allegations that the representative of the Zionist regime of Israel made earlier concerning Iran. In fact, Israel is an entity that continues to impose institutionalized discrimination against Palestinians living under its rule and in the occupied territories. Israeli forces are killing Palestinians, who do not pose any threat to Israelis. Israel has failed to ensure accountability and redress for the victims of those grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

It is subjecting Palestinians to collective punishment and deepening the humanitarian crisis there. It continues to restrict the freedom of movement of Palestinians in the occupied territories through checkpoints and roadblocks. Israeli authorities have unlawfully detained thousands of Palestinians, holding hundreds in administrative detention. Torture and other

ill treatment of detainees, including children, have been committed with impunity. Israel continues to displace Palestinians as a result of home demolitions.

The authorities have used a range of measures to target human rights defenders, journalists and others who criticize Israel's continued occupation of Palestine and other neighbouring countries. With regard to human rights, the statistics speak for themselves. For instance, in just one year at the Human Rights Council, Israel has been the focus of 70 per cent of the approximately 50 condemnatory resolutions adopted by the Council, 60 per cent of its 10 special sessions and 100 per cent of its five fact-finding missions and inquiries. It is worth mentioning that comparisons between the apartheid and Nazi regimes and Israel are increasingly being made.

In addition, Israel possesses all types of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Its nuclear capabilities have been acknowledged on different occasions. In 2006, the then Israeli Prime Minister appeared to acknowledge that Israel had nuclear weapons. When its Prime Minister in 2018 threatened Iran with nuclear annihilation, it was another case that should have been addressed by the international community, for obvious reasons.

Israel has undeclared chemical warfare capabilities and an offensive biological weapons programme, although it continues to deny those capabilities, while rejecting all international calls to put aside the WMD option and abide by the rules that responsible States have been recognizing and implementing. Israel has an operational nuclear-weapon capability, with the mass production of nuclear warheads. The number of Israeli nuclear weapons is estimated at as many as 400. Israel is also reported to possess a wide range of different systems. The range of its nuclear-weapon delivery mechanisms is estimated at up to 11,500 kilometres.

Israel has no justification for crying wolf on non-proliferation or non-compliance and must stop lying and accusing other countries, because Israel itself is the number one violator of international law in the areas of human rights, international humanitarian law and all disarmament instruments, especially with regard to WMD regimes. It must join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention and destroy its entire WMD arsenal, while accepting the relevant verification regimes.

The international community should compel the Israeli regime to put aside any pretext, join the negotiations on establishing a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, under the auspices of the United Nations, and participate in the discussions and conference on that subject.

Mr. Molla (Bangladesh): Bangladesh takes the floor in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made earlier by the representative of Myanmar.

Bangladesh strongly rejects the allegations of Myanmar regarding the presence of Myanmar's terrorist elements in the territory of Bangladesh. Such claims are totally baseless, false and fabricated and intended solely to divert attention from Myanmar's own failure to fulfil its obligations as a State. Bangladesh reiterates its policy of zero tolerance for terrorism. We do not allow our territory to be used by any terrorist entity whatsoever.

The truth is that Myanmar has driven more than 1 million people from their homes through a terrifying campaign and has failed to assure them of a minimum level of safety and security upon their return. Despite Bangladesh's repeated efforts to send forcibly displaced Rohingyas to their homes under the bilateral agreement of return, not a single one of them has volunteered. The Rohingyas continue to suffer from the trauma caused by the atrocities that Myanmar unleashed on them and their families. It is indeed shameful to see that Myanmar has claimed once again that 350 Rohingyas have returned to Myanmar of their own volition. The dismal statistic of 350 out of 1.1 million people, whom nobody knows about, over a three-year period, says it all.

Concerning the issue of using land mines, we express our utmost dismay over Myanmar's continuing denial of the evidential facts. The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission, in its report submitted to the Third Committee, documented the use of landmines by both State and non-State actors in Myanmar's Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states in 2011, often with fatal consequences.

In its report, the fact-finding mission concluded that landmines were planted by the Tatmadaw both in border regions and within northern Rakhine state as part of the clearance operations with the intended or foreseeable effect of injuring or killing Rohingya civilians fleeing to Bangladesh. Furthermore, new anti-personnel mines were placed in border areas as part of a deliberate and

planned strategy of dissuading Rohingya refugees from attempting to return to Myanmar.

A number of international organizations, including Amnesty International, reported on Myanmar's military use of anti-personnel landmines in areas of Kachin and the northern Shan states. The annual *Landmine Monitor* confirmed the presence of landmines in Myanmar's townships stretching almost the entire length of the country from north to south, as well as in Rakhine state.

The President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention requested the Government of Myanmar to consider an independent fact-finding mission with international participation in the matter. Can Myanmar inform the First Committee about any engagement on its part with the President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty? In a survey conducted by Doctors Without Borders in Cox's Bazar on the causes of death of Rohingyas in the course of clearance operations by the Tatmadaw, it was found that 2 per cent of the deaths were caused by landmine blasts. After those findings from such authoritative and diverse sources, can any doubt remain?

We believe that a plain acknowledgement of the facts by the State of Myanmar would be an important first step to demonstrate its genuine goodwill to work towards a just and comprehensive solution to the crisis. As a responsible neighbour, we reiterate our call on Myanmar to take the urgently needed steps to ensure mine clearance, declare a moratorium on the production of landmines and end civilian casualties.

In conclusion, Bangladesh would like to highlight that it is Bangladesh that continues to suffer the consequences of Myanmar's internal actions. We are currently hosting 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas, who fled atrocities in Myanmar and are now unable to return owing to the lack of suitable conditions. We reiterate that the Rohingya problem originated in Myanmar and its solution lies in Myanmar. Myanmar needs to address the root causes of the problem and ensure the safe and sustainable return of the Rohingyas without delay.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): In exercise of the right of reply, my delegation rejects the statements made by some European countries earlier today. My delegation does not see the point of commenting on those statements but would like to stress a number of points.

Those European countries would be well-advised to take an impartial and objective approach with a correct understanding of the nature of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. We are really shocked by the lack of ability on the part of those countries to assess the nature of the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula. If they were truly interested in ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula, those countries should urge the United States to rescind all hostile policies against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a complete and irreversible manner, instead of clamouring about groundless threats.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to strengthen its self-defensive war deterrent in order to counter and manage the sustained and growing nuclear threats by hostile forces in future as well.

Mr. Dandy (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Concerning the remarks made by the representative of Libya, we did not say that toxic chemicals and toxic chemical-weapons coming from Libya were Libyan-made. We said that they were transferred from Libya on a civilian passenger aircraft.

As for the statement made by the representative of the Israeli entity, it lacks all standards. Repeatedly, we hear lies directed against other countries, while everyone knows that the aim of such accusations is merely to divert attention from the threats posed by Israeli nuclear weapons and from the relevant international resolutions, including those of the Security Council, which call on that entity to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and place all its facilities and nuclear activities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Israeli entity's arsenal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons remains the greatest challenge to peace and security in the Middle East region. For decades, it has been a grave challenge to the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

Although the vast majority of Member States have called on that entity to join the NPT as a non-nuclear party, the Israeli occupation authorities remain intransigent owing to the support of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany and other countries that sponsor the Israeli nuclear programme and Israeli military, biological and chemical programmes. They also contribute to developing and enhancing those programmes.

Those countries also continue to condone Israel's refusal to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions on non-proliferation. That has been clear to all, as the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada assured the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which encouraged the Israeli entity to continue challenging the international will and refusing to accede to the NPT and the instruments on the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction. Instead, the Israeli entity bolstered its arsenal of those weapons and their means of delivery and refused to participate in the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in New York in October last year.

Everyone knows that Syria has been party to the NPT since 1968. We signed the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972 and the Convention on Chemical Weapons in 2013. My country also welcomed the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction and participated in its first session with all the other countries of the region, although Israel refused to participate.

My questions are therefore as follows. What will Israel do with its 200 nuclear warheads? Against whom are they directed? I hope that Member States will be able to provide us with answers.

Mr. Ko (Myanmar): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the representative of Bangladesh. I would like to reiterate my earlier statement that we are facilitating the dignified and voluntary return of displaced persons, and therefore we have no reason to engage in actions that would obstruct that objective.

It is very important to be aware that there are other armed insurgents operating in Myanmar that are known to be using landmines. Although we are just an observer to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Myanmar attended the fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention at the ministerial level for the first time in November 2019.

Myanmar in principle supports the provisions of the Convention, and we recognize the initiatives taken by the Convention to avert the indiscriminate use of landmines, which can lead to humanitarian impacts. In Myanmar, about 1 million people have been well-informed on the dangers of landmines since

awareness-raising campaigns began in 2016. Having educated 280,000 people on the matter in 2019 alone, the Government is in the process of establishing a national mine action centre and a national body to clear landmines.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Committee has thus concluded the general debate. In this segment, an impressive number of 143 delegations made statements. As a result of the early conclusion of this stage of our work, the remaining meetings for the general debate scheduled for this week will be cancelled.

In accordance with the schedule of interactive dialogues on specific subjects, as set out in document A/C.1/75/CRP.2, there will be a virtual meeting without physical presence on Monday, 26 October at 10 a.m. During the two-hour virtual meeting, there will be exchanges with independent experts and briefings by other high-level officials, including the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security and the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

I also take this opportunity to remind delegations that the deadline for the submission of written general debate statements for inclusion in the compendium is Friday, 23 October, and the deadline for the submission of statements in exercise of the right of reply for inclusion in the compendium is Monday, 26 October.

The eleventh meeting of the First Committee will be held on Tuesday, 27 October at 10 a.m. in this Hall, when the Committee will begin the second and final phase of its work, namely, action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions submitted. In that regard, the Committee will be guided by the informal papers that will be issued by the Secretariat listing the draft resolutions and draft decisions on which action will be taken each day. Informal paper No. 1 has been, or will be, circulated online. We will take action on the drafts under each cluster listed therein. The Secretariat will revise the informal paper on a daily basis, in order to update the drafts that are ready for action at each of our meetings during this stage.

In keeping with past practice, at the start of our meeting on Tuesday morning, 27 October, I will explain the procedure that will guide our work during the action stage.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.