



# General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

## First Committee

5<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 12 October 2020, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Santos Maraver

(Spain)

*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

**The Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the rolling list of speakers for this phase of our work will close at 6 p.m. today. All delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate should inscribe their names on the list before that deadline.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, allow me to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of this session of the General Assembly. My delegation wishes to assure you and other delegations of its full support and cooperation to make this session of the Committee a complete success.

The global strategic security and arms control situation today faces the gravest challenge since the Cold War. The United States has become the biggest threat to global strategic security and stability. Over the past years, the United States has continued to withdraw from international treaties, sabotaging the multilateral and bilateral arms control and disarmament regime gradually built up following the Second World War. The United States is investing trillions of dollars to modernize its nuclear triad, developing and deploying low-yield nuclear weapons and expanding the scope of nuclear deterrence. The United States has also lowered

the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons and even discussed the resumption of nuclear tests. We urge the United States to faithfully fulfil its special and primary responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, positively respond to Russia's appeal for the extension of the New START Treaty and further substantially reduce its nuclear arsenal.

The unrestrained development and deployment of a global missile defence system by the United States, as well as its attempts to deploy land-based intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe, undermine regional peace and security and disrupt global strategic stability. China is gravely concerned and urges the United States to stop the relevant deployments. Should the United States continue to go down that path, China will take forceful countermeasures in defence of its own national interests when necessary.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. At present, the United States is doing its utmost to shift responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, practise double standards in violation of international law on non-proliferation issues and manipulate the peaceful use of nuclear energy for political purposes, putting all three pillars of the NPT under unprecedented strain. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, China calls on all parties to take this as an opportunity to reaffirm the treaty obligations and commitments made in the outcome documents of the previous review conferences, work for progress

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on the three pillars of NPT in a balanced manner and address the differences and disputes constructively so as to achieve pragmatic outcomes at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

The United States recently named China as the third-largest nuclear Power on Earth, exaggerated the nuclear arms race between the United States, Russia and China and proposed so-called trilateral arms control negotiation. That is just a trick to shift the focus of the international community. The intention of the United States is to find an excuse to shirk its own special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and seek a pretext to free its hands and gain absolute military supremacy.

China has pursued a nuclear strategy of self-defence, always kept its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for its national security and has never, and will never, take part in any nuclear arms race with any other country. Given the huge gap between the nuclear arsenals of China and those of the United States and the Russian Federation, it is unfair, unreasonable and unrealistic to expect China to join in any trilateral arms control negotiation. China will never participate in such a negotiation and will never accept any coercion or blackmail.

China's rejection of the so-called trilateral arms control negotiation does not mean that China evades its own responsibility for nuclear disarmament or refuses to participate in the global nuclear disarmament process. Ever since the first day of possessing nuclear weapons, China has been advocating for the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. China has declared its policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances and unconditionally commits not to using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China is the only member of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) to make such commitments. China is ready to engage in meaningful dialogue on the issues related to strategic stability with all parties on the basis of mutual respect and will continue its participation in the arms control process under the framework of the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament and the P-5.

The root cause of the current tensions related to the Iran nuclear issue is the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (JCPOA), the reimposition of illegal unilateral sanctions against Iran and blocking other parties from fulfilling their obligations under the JCPOA. Having withdrawn from the JCPOA, the United States has no right to trigger the Security Council snapback mechanism, and its unilateral announcement on the restoration of Security Council sanctions against Iran has no legal validity whatsoever.

Currently, dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States regarding the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is at a deadlock. China urges the United States to show sincerity and respond with concrete actions to the legitimate concerns of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over security and development so as to bring the nuclear issue on the peninsula back to the track of dialogue. China will continue to play a constructive role in the political settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease has served to sound the alarm on biosecurity and highlight the importance and urgency of strengthening global biosecurity governance. All parties should faithfully fulfil their due obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We urge the United States to act in an open, transparent and responsible manner and fully clarify its activities in numerous biolaboratories overseas and stop impeding the resumption of negotiating a verification protocol to the BWC. As the only possessor of a chemical weapon stockpile, the United States should earnestly fulfil its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and expedite the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpile.

With the rapid development of digital economy, major risks associated with data security require global solutions. There is now an urgent need to develop a set of international rules on data security that reflect the will and respect the interests of most countries on the basis of universal participation. China categorically rejects attempts by the United States and other countries to politicize the issue of data security, push aside countries with different views in the name of the so-called Clean Network programme and prey on enterprises of other countries under the pretext of security. China recently put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security, which can serve as the basis for international rule-making on data security. China hopes that all parties can support the Initiative and propose good ideas and suggestions.

The current security situation in outer space is increasingly challenging. In particular, the United States has been pursuing a strategy for dominance in space, blatantly termed outer space as a new war-fighting domain and has even established an independent space force and a space command. The United States even plans to deploy a missile defence system in outer space. China urges the United States to stop impeding the international arms control process on outer space and join international efforts for the negotiation and conclusion of an international legal instrument based on the draft proposal put forward by China and Russia so as to fundamentally safeguard lasting peace and common security in outer space.

The rapid development of the military application of artificial intelligence (AI) may give rise to security, humanitarian, legal and ethical concerns. China supports exploring effective measures by the international community to address the associated risks and ensuring that AI technology will benefit all humankind.

China acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 6 July this year. That is a significant step taken by China in its active efforts to promote global arms trade governance and safeguard international and regional peace and security. As a State party to the ATT, China will faithfully fulfil its obligations and work closely with all parties to promote the universality and effectiveness of the Treaty. In that connection, China is ready to provide assistance to developing countries within its capacity. China provided \$1.4 million through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund in 2018 and 2019 to support the African Union's initiative of Silencing the Guns in Africa.

No matter how grave the international security situation may become, as long as we remain committed to upholding multilateralism, strengthening mutual trust and coordination centred on the United Nations and building a community with a shared future for humankind, we will be able to make progress on international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, China is ready to join hands with other members of the international community to make unremitting efforts to that end.

**Mr. Fernandez De Soto Valderrama** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to greet you, Sir, on this very special day for your country. I also want to congratulate you on your election

as Chair of the First Committee. You can count on the support of my delegation in carrying out your work.

The United Nations was established for the purpose of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, promoting respect for human dignity and human rights and fostering the progress and the economic and social development of all peoples. The maintenance of international peace and security is intrinsically linked to achieving the common purposes and principles to which we collectively committed ourselves in adopting the Charter of the United Nations.

We are witnessing a global environment of great fragility, fragmentation and volatility. We live in a "cold peace", with emerging tensions and security concerns. We face unprecedented global challenges in arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation, cybersecurity, the environment and the promotion of sustainable development. Those challenges have been compounded by the coronavirus disease pandemic. Those challenges may lead to the exacerbation and emergence of new global conflicts. At this time, we call for greater cooperation, solidarity and renewed multilateralism.

Colombia reiterates its firm commitment to the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Since its ratification in 2001, my country has managed to develop a strong institutional and normative framework, which is reflected in the significant results achieved. However, challenges remain. My country is one of those most affected by the use of such weapons by illegal organized armed groups, which are increasingly linked to illicit economies, such as drug trafficking and illegal mining. We are grateful for the international community's understanding and support for the anti-personnel landmine problem given its humanitarian dimensions. In that regard, we hope to continue to count on the political support of Member States for the approval of the extension request that Colombia has submitted in relation to article 5 of the Convention, which will be considered next November at the Meeting of States Parties.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and their uncontrolled proliferation in many regions of the world have incalculable humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. It constitutes a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, security, stability and development. It is closely linked

to criminal phenomena, such as drug trafficking, terrorism, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, organized crime, among others. We therefore believe that it is necessary to strengthen partnerships with countries with common interests and ensure participation in security and cooperation models to combat such a crime. That is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals.

We reiterate the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and of the International Tracing Instrument. We hope that the outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, postponed to 2021, will strengthen their implementation, as well as international assistance and cooperation.

As one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.44, on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, Colombia thanks Japan for the presentation of the draft resolution and hopes that it will be widely supported and co-sponsored. We highlight the importance of other arms control instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and, in the case of the Inter-American system, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

Disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are principles of Colombia's foreign policy and constitutional mandates. We support general and complete nuclear disarmament, vertical and horizontal, under strict and effective international verification. The year 2020 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with their catastrophic humanitarian consequences. This year also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension. We reaffirm the importance of that legal instrument and its three fundamental pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are also proud to be a party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which established the first densely

populated nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We share the concern about the development of nuclear weapons, their inclusion in the military doctrines of some States and about vertical and horizontal proliferation. We call on all States to work together at the Treaty Review Conference, which was postponed to 2021, in order to make progress on the full implementation of all the Treaty's provisions and to overcome any politicization that may affect deliberations at the Conference. We believe that will be an opportunity to further expand the scope of peaceful uses of nuclear technology and their contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Colombia underscores the relevance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and condemns the use of chemical weapons by any actor and under any circumstances. We consider that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is the forum for discussing incidents involving this type of weapon, and we reiterate that the States party to the Convention should work to strengthen it.

We also stress the importance of the Biological Weapons Convention. We advocate that, at the next meeting of the States Parties, in 2021, decisions should be taken to strengthen the confidence-building-measures mechanism and ensure the financial sustainability of the implementation scheme. We must work on safeguarding the legal instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, on strictly monitoring them and on strengthening the established regimes.

Malicious uses of information and telecommunications technologies can pose a threat to social coexistence and to international peace and security. It is essential to concentrate efforts on maintaining a free, open, secure, reliable, universally accessible and peaceful digital environment — a space that contributes to the fulfilment of the purposes of the United Nations.

I wish to conclude by noting that Colombia recognizes the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation to States to avoid their use in such areas.

Colombia shares the concerns that have been voiced about a potential arms race in outer space. We must

guarantee the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes and strengthen dialogue, transparency and confidence-building measures.

We regret that the Conference on Disarmament has not made any progress to date. This has put us in an environment devoid of regulation or norms in the face of the rapid development of artificial intelligence and other technologies applied to the design and development of new types of weapons. New technologies must be implemented under the precepts of the principle of humanity. If these technologies find acceptance and are used, their deployment must give priority to mitigating excessive harm or unnecessary suffering to those involved in an armed conflict and, of course, to protecting people.

I wish to reiterate my delegation's constructive spirit before the First Committee. We look forward to the success of the Committee's deliberations in the coming weeks.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Sudan): I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. I assure you, Sir, of the support and cooperation of the Sudan and look forward to constructive deliberations under your leadership.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, Egypt and Cameroon on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States, respectively (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). I would like to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Seventy-five years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the danger for humankind posed by the possible use of nuclear weapons continues to be the greatest threat to international peace and security. The Sudan reaffirms its commitment to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we reiterate that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone on which disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be founded, and we hope that the 2021 NPT Review Conference will be an occasion to reach a substantive final document and renew international support for the Treaty, as well as highlight the leading and special responsibility of the nuclear-weapon-possessing States.

The Sudan is convinced that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has a significant complementary role to play in reinforcing the spirit and objectives of the NPT. Just last July, the Sudan became the eighty-second nation to sign the TPNW. The Sudan is currently undertaking the internal legal and administrative processes necessary to ratify the Treaty. While looking forward to its entry into force, we call on all States that have not signed and ratified the Treaty to do so.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to pose a grave threat to peace and security in our region. These weapons greatly contribute to fuelling armed conflicts and undermining the long-term social and economic development of many nations. As a victim of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the Sudan is committed to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. To that end, the Sudan has enacted numerous legislative and administrative measures to combat the proliferation of these weapons.

A nationwide campaign to eliminate illicit small arms in the conflict-affected areas in the Sudan, particularly in Darfur, has been under way for more than a year. The campaign has achieved significant results. At the end of last month, 300,000 illegal and unauthorized firearms, confiscated as part of the campaign, had been destroyed. That marks the end of phase 3 of the campaign and the beginning of phase 4, in which the Government will implement strict measures to curb the proliferation of illicit small arms and ammunition.

The proliferation of these weapons in our region underlines the importance of regional cooperation to make concerted headway. A regional emphasis should be placed on border control, information-sharing and the dissemination of best practices. In that context, we acknowledge the work being undertaken by the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, which supports the countries of Eastern and Central Africa with capacity-building measures, including key areas that are aimed at strengthening arms management and control.

The Sudan is currently holding the presidency of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. During its presidency, the Sudan pledges to actively focus on

the following six items: the universalization of the Convention, stockpile destruction, mine clearance, victim assistance, compliance with the Convention and the implementation of the Oslo action plan. More than 20 years since its entry into force, the Convention has proven its significant importance in eliminating this excessively injurious and inhumane weapon with indiscriminate effects, especially on children and other innocent civilians. The Sudan will continue to work with other partners to contribute to the steady global progress that has been made to rid the world of the anti-personnel landmines.

I would like to point out that the updated draft resolution entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction” (A/C.1/75/L.26) has been submitted by the Sudan, Norway and the Netherlands, on behalf of the States parties of the Convention, for consideration at the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. We call upon all Member States to continue vote in favour of the draft resolution.

**Mr. Aldai** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on your election to head the First Committee this year. We wish you every success and assure you of our full support during the seventy-fifth session of the Committee, given the difficult circumstances we are facing as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Bolivia, for his efforts aimed at guiding the work of the First Committee at its seventy-fourth session.

I would also like to express my joy at seeing the delegation of sisterly Egypt as Vice-Chair of the Committee. We wish its representative and all members of the Bureau every success in their work.

My country’s delegation endorses the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

The State of Kuwait reaffirms its steadfast position on the issue of disarmament and international security, in particular with regard to establishing peace, security and stability worldwide, which cannot be achieved with the proliferation and constant flow of weapons, especially nuclear weapons. Therefore, we must all work to save humankind from these weapons while

providing and harnessing our material and human potential for achieving progress and development.

Our position is based on our respect for, and firm belief in, compliance with all international conventions and treaties, especially those related to disarmament, including, but not limited to, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Multilateralism — and the goals, principles and obligations agreed upon in international accords and treaties — provides the ideal framework for addressing all issues of disarmament and international security, namely, the NPT. In that regard, my country calls again for the implementation of relevant obligations by achieving the Treaty’s universality. We also stress respect for the balance among the three pillars of the Treaty and for redressing the imbalance as some States parties have deliberately focused on one pillar at the expense of the others. We also affirm the necessity of active cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and we call on all parties to promote joint action to reach effective and consensual gains during the upcoming NPT Review Conference, which we hope all States will participate in, as we believe it will be crowned with success.

We also reaffirm the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which was adopted at the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. In that regard, my country welcomes the convening and success of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, presided over by the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. We look forward to the second session of the Conference next year, as COVID-19 prevented the Conference from taking place this year. We once again call on all parties to participate with the aim of negotiating a consensual and binding treaty leading to the promotion of security and peace at the regional and international levels.

Rapid progress in the area of globalization and technology is making it easier to produce conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons. Access to those weapons is also easier for individuals and non-State actors. My country therefore calls for

strengthened cooperation among States and specialized international organizations by sharing information and experiences so that these weapons do not fall into the hands of terrorist groups and entities. We all know the suffering endured by our region, the Middle East, due to instability for a variety of reasons, including the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons. My country shares the concerns of other States relating to the humanitarian consequences of these weapons, in particular those that are remnants of war. That is why we all must make more effort to limit their spread and seriously address their threat. We also urge States to increase awareness about the threat of these weapons, leading to the promotion of international security and stability.

With regard to cybersecurity, my country stresses the importance of strengthening international cooperation to enhance security for communications technology, thereby bolstering States' capabilities against any electronic attack. The threat of cyberattacks has clearly and undoubtedly become a threat to international security. My country also emphasizes the importance of the key role of the United Nations in developing a system of international standards for information and communications security, and the importance of continued international cooperation in this field with a view to enhancing protection against any attempt to use this technology for subversive purposes that might affect all facilities of various States. We welcome the beginning of meetings of the Open-ended Working Group with the hope of issuing credible recommendations on States behaviour in this regard.

The State of Kuwait emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of the various multilateral mechanisms in the area of disarmament, including the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the First Committee, as all these important mechanisms constitute a fundamental pillar that must be sustained in accordance with the specific mandate adopted by the General Assembly at its first special session on disarmament, held in 1978. That requires that all Member States shoulder their responsibilities, make more efforts and enhance their relevant political will in order to activate the role of these important and vital mechanisms.

In conclusion, we hope that the seventy-fifth session will further strengthen the conviction of all Member States on the need to continue to pursue open,

constructive and meaningful dialogue, so that peace, security and stability will be sustained, trust will be promoted and the threat of the proliferation of these weapons will be curtailed. All States must shoulder their responsibilities in the most optimal ways, which contribute to enhancing the disarmament regime and reaching the ultimate goal, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security.

The full version of my statement will be placed on the Committee's electronic webpage.

**Mr. Rybakov** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We regret to note that the range of crisis factors affecting the state of international peace and security has significantly expanded. The total loss of trust among countries, the exhaustion of multilateralism and the collapse of multilateral mechanisms and agreements in the maintenance of international peace and security continue to be the key destabilizing factors. We are witnessing the destruction of the systemic foundations of international security.

Tensions and confrontation continue to increase as a result of the termination of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (INF). The recent decision by the United States of America to withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies damages the pan-European security architecture and conventional-arms-control mechanisms, and confidence- and security-building measures, which in turn can lead to negative consequences around the world.

As a State Member of the United Nations, Belarus has put forward and supported pragmatic initiatives aimed at maximizing the potential of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security. We advocate the need to resume a broad international dialogue to restore trust, at both the regional and global levels.

We call for effective measures to prevent the deployment of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles on the European continent and to fill the legal vacuum left by the termination of the INF Treaty. Our proposal is to adopt a declaration on the non-deployment of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles.

This year we are marking the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, the problems

associated with the existence of nuclear weapons remain not only unresolved, but they have even gotten worse.

In the near future, we will hold the next NPT Review Conference, where we will have to make an impartial and honest assessment of international efforts aimed at creating a world without nuclear weapons. We believe it is essential to ensure that the outcome of the upcoming Review Conference is as effective — and, above all, broadly supported — as possible. We are ready to engage in open and inclusive cooperation with the States parties to the NPT in the preparation and conduct of the review process.

Among the most important components of the global non-proliferation regime are nuclear-weapon-free zones. We support the negotiations that began in 2019 on the creation of such a zone in the Middle East, and we hope that the current political impasse on this issue can be broken.

We note with regret that there are still no nuclear-weapon-free zones on the European continent. Belarus has often made appeals for work to start on the creation of such zones. We deem it vital to ensure the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which plays a critical role in the achievement of a nuclear-free world. We are concerned about the continued attempts being made to devalue the Treaty. We strongly call on all countries whose actions will have an impact on the future of the Treaty to demonstrate political determination and to take steps to ensure its entry into force as quickly as possible.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic and the great need for digital solutions for intergovernmental cooperation and related threats thereto, we wish to raise the issue of enhancing cooperation in the area of information technology security in order to minimize the risks of the malicious and hostile use of information and communications technologies.

Belarus is in favour of strengthening confidence-building measures in the area of international information-technology security. A key component of such measures could be the creation of an area of so-called digital good neighbourhood, in other words, the signing of bilateral agreements among States in the area of international information security that are based on trust and mutual understanding, which would strengthen regional potential to counter such threats. That kind of work should be done exclusively based on the principle of digital sovereignty, that is,

the sovereign right of States to shape their national information-technology policies and to protect their information-technology resources and critical facilities from unauthorized use or external interference.

In that context, we support the global data security initiative proposed by China, which aligns with the Belarusian initiative and is aimed at strengthening digital sovereignty and data security as well as promoting international cooperation and ensuring international information-technology security.

We call on States also to enshrine in their national doctrines the principle of digital neutrality, as Belarus has already done. This year the General Assembly will consider the traditional draft resolution initiated by Belarus, entitled “Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament”. That resolution is perhaps the only preventive mechanism aimed at developing an internationally agreed procedure that makes it possible to monitor the possible design and dissemination of new weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). We call on all countries to support that mechanism in the framework of a broad consensus.

We also believe that a priority is to prevent WMDs from falling into the hands of non-State actors. We attach a great deal of importance to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which plays a particular role among the existing universal non-proliferation regimes and ensures a comprehensive approach to combating WMDs. We look forward to extension of the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and of its group of experts in 2021.

In 2019, at the initiative of Belarus, the 1540 Committee hosted a presentation of the outcome of regional cooperation among Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan based on a trilateral partnership review. That meeting was the first such meeting of a subsidiary body specifically aimed at the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

In the context of the issue of weapons of mass destruction, we wish to stress that we find the use of chemical weapons unacceptable. We are in favour of decisions that can restore consensus to the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and are against any steps that politicize the

work of the OPCW or somehow encroach upon the remit of the Security Council.

Belarus attaches great importance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This year, it became one of the six Presidents of the Conference and made every effort to restore a friendly atmosphere of cooperation in the work of the Conference and organize its substantive work.

We call on all countries to support the draft resolution entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament", submitted by Belarus as President of the Conference.

We note with regret that the legal gaps in the regulation of the use of outer space have not yet been closed. We reiterate our support for the agreement elaborated by Russia and China on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the use of force or the threat of force against space objects. We note the importance of the international initiative and political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space, and we call on all countries to join it.

We are in favour of further strengthening dialogue and taking into account the views of all parties, and also of undertaking practical steps to prevent an arms race in outer space.

We are concerned at the fact that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, for the second year in a row, has not been able to begin its main session owing to a lack of consensus on the start of its work. We believe that all decisions of the Disarmament Commission, both procedural and substantive, must be adopted on the basis of consensus, as has always been the case, respecting the long-standing practice of the Commission.

We have called and continue to call on the host country to comply with its obligations to ensure the unimpeded access of all representatives of States Members of the United Nations to participate in the work of both the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee.

The Republic of Belarus reiterates its readiness for and openness to a comprehensive, mutually respectful cooperation with all Member States in order to achieve our common goal of strengthening international peace and security.

**Mr. Alharsha (Libya)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to extend to you, Mr. Chair, and to the other members of the Bureau my congratulations on your election to head the work of the First Committee. I wish you every success and assure you of my delegation's readiness to cooperate with you and with all delegations to achieve the Committee's goals.

My country's delegation endorses the statements made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

The First Committee shoulders a heavy responsibility in our international efforts to eliminate all weapons that threaten the security, safety and future of our peoples, in particular weapons of mass destruction. In that context, notwithstanding the importance of resilience and the effectiveness of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to contain the spread of those weapons, the non-implementation of its provisions in a complete and transparent manner still constitutes a grave concern, in addition to certain disagreements about its fundamental goals and objectives. The nuclear-weapon States are not committed yet to the nuclear agreement and continue to develop such weapons. That in turn leads now more than ever to an arms race and to insurmountable risks.

Many countries, including Libya, and relevant non-governmental organizations have stressed the importance of negotiations on an international instrument to ban nuclear weapons. Our efforts led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first multilateral and legally binding instrument. In that regard, we renew our call to the States that possess nuclear weapons to express their solidarity with efforts to save the world from those lethal weapons and promptly join the Treaty.

In the past decade, we have seen an increase in the number of armed conflicts that have led to gross material and human losses, the displacement of millions of people and a great deal of human suffering. That has also caused instability at different levels. The suffering was compounded by negative foreign interference prompted by narrow and contradictory interests at the expense of the security, stability and well-being of peoples.

Those irresponsible trends have prolonged certain crises and hindered the finding of peaceful solutions

thereto. Libya is the best example — where continuous violations by certain States of Security Council resolutions that ban arms exports have led to the exacerbation of the conflict, a complication of the crisis and the hampering of peaceful solutions. It has been clear that those States continue their violations while benefiting from the absence of deterrent sanctions by the United Nations.

Those States continue their illegitimate policies whereby they have doubled the quality and quantity of exported arms, including drones and lethal robots, which lead to massive human and material losses. We reiterate the adherence of the accord Government to a peaceful solution to the crisis and its readiness to always deal positively with all peace initiatives, as proven on all occasions.

Libya stresses the important role of conventions creating nuclear-weapon-free zones in achieving international peace and security and promoting efforts towards nuclear disarmament across the world. My country welcomes the regional efforts aimed at creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We welcome once again the holding 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 auspices of the United Nations in November 2019, in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546. The United Nations has succeeded in adopting a number of important substantive and procedural resolutions, as reflected in reports of the Secretary-General. Libya urges all parties to contribute to that conference in good faith with a view to negotiating a legally binding treaty in that regard. That would contribute to enhancing regional and international peace and security.

Libya, one of the countries of the Mediterranean basin, remains committed to cooperation, coordination and consultation with the basin countries with a view to bolstering security, peace, socioeconomic development and well-being for all the peoples of the region. We call for everyone's interests to be taken into account and to prioritize dialogue and rely on understanding to find solutions to disagreements or diverging views while looking for new ways that lead to joint cooperation in various fields.

Most current conflicts involve small arms, which are widely used in disputes among States. They are the preferred weapons in civil wars, acts of terrorism,

organized crime and gang wars. The accumulation of small arms and light weapons might not constitute in itself a reason for the outbreak of conflicts, but their availability at the international level may lead to the exacerbation of political tensions and most often to prolonged acts of severe violence accompanied by lack of security. That in itself causes demand for these weapons.

Libya stresses the importance of activating the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The dangerous phenomenon of the increasing flows of those weapons, which can fall into the hands of terrorists and illegal armed groups, must be addressed. In that regard, my country welcomes the unanimous adoption of the outcome document of the Third Review Conference of the Programme of Action. My country rejects attempts to impose obligations related to contentious conventions that lacked international consensus when adopted. We also reject any limitation on the legitimate right of States to provide themselves with conventional weapons, as this would run counter to the Charter of the United Nations. My country looks forward to achieving tangible progress at the seventh meeting, which will be held next year, on the provision of illegal weapons internationally to unauthorized users, in accordance with the outcome of the 2018 Third Review Conference.

Libya stresses the importance of promoting international cooperation related to the security of information and communications technologies leading to enhancing the protection of States against subversive attacks. That has been confirmed by many reports of Governmental experts. Libya is committed to the continued role of the United Nations in developing international standards on information and communications security and to continued cooperation in the context of the United Nations on this matter, which has been affecting all vital facilities of various States, given that there has been an increase in related subversive acts that undermine international security. Libya welcomes the start of meetings by the open-ended working group established pursuant to resolution 73/27. We hope that they reach substantive and credible recommendations on the responsible behaviour of States in this vital field.

In conclusion, Libya reaffirms its full commitment to meeting its obligations in accordance with the international instruments related to the disarmament

of weapons of mass destruction. We will spare no effort in participating actively in international efforts to that end at the bilateral and multilateral levels. We believe that international cooperation and serious political will constitute two fundamental elements for achieving disarmament objectives and harnessing material resources as well as scientific and technological developments so as to realize a secure and prosperous world for coming generations. We must work hard towards achieving collective security, free of unilateralism. We stress that the United Nations organs must shoulder their historical responsibilities in establishing security, without any internal or external agendas. We are witnessing today an unprecedented transformation with respect to multiple international stakeholders and external interference by certain countries in the affairs of many States for the sake of specific agendas. That impedes the finding of solutions to such conflicts. We hope that this meeting will be able to adopt practical recommendations that contribute to achieving international peace and security.

**Mr. Horne** (Australia): I wish to congratulate you and the Bureau on your election; Australia offers its strong support for the session ahead.

We meet in a year unlike any other. We are grappling with an increasingly complex international security environment and a global pandemic. International rules and norms that have underpinned global security and prosperity for decades are under increased threat. Dialogue has never been more important, and the First Committee has an important role to play.

Australia strongly encourages States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to continue to respond promptly and effectively to those who challenge the Convention and its implementation.

We welcome the release of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Investigation and Identification Team's first report attributing chemical-weapon use in Syria in 2017. We call on Syria to comply fully with its obligations as a State party to the Convention.

We also call on all States parties to ensure that all users of chemical weapons and those who command, enable or shield those who use chemical weapons are held accountable. In that respect, Australia condemns the poisoning of Alexei Navalny with a chemical nerve agent. We strongly support the independent, impartial

investigative work of the OPCW in confronting such challenges.

The devastating health, social and economic impacts of the coronavirus disease provide a stark example of the potential consequences and disruption that we could see if biological weapons were ever used. We must seize next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention as an opportunity to find consensus on ways to strengthen the Convention and reduce biological risks.

We celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons' (NPT) entry into force — a remarkable multilateral arms-control achievement. The rescheduled tenth Review Conference will be a key time to reaffirm our commitment to the Treaty and build the pathway toward the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

With our cross-regional partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, Australia will dedicate every effort to finding outcomes that support the NPT's bold vision.

We welcome bilateral talks between the United States and Russia aimed at improving nuclear arms control and the security environment. Nevertheless, the engagement of China, as a major nuclear-weapon State and party to the NPT, will also be required in shaping a new era of arms control.

Australia and our Indo-Pacific region played host to more than 300 nuclear tests between 1946 and 1996; that lived experience played a role in our decision to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) text to the General Assembly in 1996, which triggered the CTBT's opening for signature.

Through our role as co-Chair of the group of Friends of the CTBT and co-leading of the annual CTBT resolution — which we urge all members to co-sponsor — our determination to end nuclear testing and see the Treaty enter into force has never faded. Our candidate for Executive Secretary of the CTBT Organization (CTBTO), Mr. Robert Floyd, is ready to lead with that same determination. We hope that all members will support Mr. Floyd as a highly qualified candidate and as the first leader of the CTBTO to come from the Indo-Pacific.

Verification and compliance are integral parts of effective arms control. Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate in the second Group of

Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and will work constructively with other participants. Our focus on the ultimate goal should not come at the expense of practical interim steps. Nuclear risk reduction has received deserved attention in recent years, and we commend the work of the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in particular.

Australia and the Philippines will co-chair a virtual workshop of the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on nuclear risk reduction from 18 to 19 November, and we invite Forum members to participate actively.

Australia joins other nations in seeking permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, including the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We condemn the repeated shorter-range ballistic missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, most recently on 29 March, which are clear violations of Security Council resolutions.

We are also deeply concerned by the announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 1 January that it no longer feels bound by its moratorium on nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches. We consider that particularly worrisome in view of its recent unveiling of a new ICBM at a military parade on 10 October. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to avoid provocations that risk instability on the Korean peninsula and make a sustained commitment to dialogue, in particular with the United States and the Republic of Korea. Australia is committed to strictly implementing sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we call on all other States to do likewise.

We welcome the agreement reached between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran to facilitate the full implementation of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol. Strict adherence to IAEA safeguards obligations is critical, and we strongly support the Agency's continued professional work on verification and monitoring.

Australia continues to support the implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty, particularly in our region. We encourage all States not yet party to the Treaty to look at it afresh, noting that

it does not impinge on a State's right to regulate and control its conventional arms exports.

New and emerging technologies with advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and enhanced autonomous functions are becoming increasingly prevalent in both civilian and military sectors. Australia recognizes the potential value and benefits that AI brings to military and civilian technologies. Australia values the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, which has been considering the technical, legal and international security implications of the potential development of autonomous weapons.

We look forward to the second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions next month, where we aspire to make progress towards a mine-free world and meet the needs of victims and survivors. We will again join Afghanistan and France as lead sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.38, on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, and we urge delegations to join as co-sponsors.

In addition to upholding the international rules-based order offline, we are also committed to upholding it in cyberspace. We are active in both the sixth Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security and the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, operating concurrently and considering how we build upon the recommendations of the 2015 Group of Governmental Experts. Those two processes must have the opportunity to conclude and make their recommendations, and we must not pre-empt their results. We are optimistic about the outcomes of the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-Ended Working Group, which are making progress in the critical conversation on responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

Australia is committed to the preservation of the space domain as a secure, safe and sustainable environment for the benefit of all. As the international community, we must consider how we build international norms, transparency and cooperation in promoting responsible behaviour in space. We see the development of a consistent and predictable set of agreed responsible behaviours as a vital step in maintaining security and stability in outer space. We encourage all States to

consider the types of behaviours that will ease tensions and reduce the scope for miscalculation.

In these challenging times, the United Nations disarmament machinery must operate to its full potential. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, we champion the full and effective participation of both women and men in international security forums and related organizations. During our presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we received exceptional support for our proposal to value diversity and equality in the CD. We will work with the incoming presidencies to make that a reality — one that is long overdue. We also welcomed the Oslo action plan's substantive gender- and diversity-sensitive actions at the Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in November last year.

We regret the fact that the United Nations Disarmament Commission was again unable to launch its work this year. Australia, as the most recent elected Chair, will submit a technical decision that will allow the Disarmament Commission to meet next April, and we hope that we can count on the support of all Member States.

Australia's Prime Minister, the Honourable Scott Morrison, noted in his national statement to the General Assembly last month that

“[i]n facing a global health threat, we have all been reminded about the importance of multilateral cooperation”. (*A/75/PV.11, annex X*)

As we sit here in masks, socially distanced from our friends and colleagues, it throws our shared challenge into stark relief. It is a reminder of how we are all in this together, and so we must all work together.

We look forward to working with you, Mr. Chair, and with all members to further our shared goal of enhancing global security and stability. Australia is committed to playing its part in our shared effort to make this unique seventy-fifth session a success.

**Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections, and I wish you success in your work.

We endorse the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see *A/C.1/75/PV.2*).

We gather today in an unprecedented international scenario where the coronavirus disease pandemic poses a challenge to all, generating a crisis of numerous devastating effects in every area of society, while nuclear arsenals are being modernized and expanded under the pretext of defence and security concepts and military doctrines that continue to threaten humankind.

Seventy-five years after the criminal bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there are approximately 13,400 nuclear weapons, of which almost 1,800 are on operational readiness and 3,720 are deployed. More than the half of them belong to the United States. The international community cannot remain impassive to the United States Nuclear Posture Review, which lowers the threshold for the use of that type of weapon, including in response to so-called non-nuclear strategic threats.

The United States, the only State that has twice used nuclear weapons, the world leader in nuclear tests and the country that invests the most in those weapons, is starting a new arms race, while withdrawing from, and failing to comply with, international agreements on disarmament and arms control. We condemn the decision of the United States Government to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We urge it to renew the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is, and must continue to be, the highest priority in the field of disarmament. Nuclear energy should be used only for peaceful purposes for the socioeconomic development of States. We will continue to oppose the imposition of unilateral coercive measures and sanctions, which limit its use for peaceful purposes.

We reiterate that the only effective way to prevent the terrible impact of those weapons is their total elimination in a verifiable, transparent and irreversible manner. In the meantime, the nuclear-weapon States must provide universal, legally binding, unconditional and non-discriminatory guarantees that they will not use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

In that regard, we hope that the outcome document of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will contain practical, concrete and tangible commitments, with established deadlines, in which the responsibility and the role of nuclear Powers in the process towards nuclear disarmament are clearly stated. Its success will

largely depend on addressing compliance with all the commitments in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, in accordance with the three pillars of the NPT: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We reiterate the call to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Cuba is proud to be the fifth State to ratify that instrument, be part of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone established in a densely populated area of the planet and belong to the first region in the world to declare itself a zone of peace.

We firmly support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different countries or regions of the world. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Furthermore, we support the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

We reaffirm our commitment to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. While attempts are being made to modify the technical mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, tasks remain pending. The destruction of declared chemical-weapon stockpiles is incomplete. The United States is the only nuclear-weapon State party that has failed to comply with its legal obligation.

We reiterate our rejection of selective and politically motivated approaches in the implementation of the Convention and the development of mechanisms and procedures beyond its scope. We will continue to support a legally binding protocol that strengthens the Biological Weapons Convention. The fierce opposition of the United States in 2001 made it impossible to achieve that instrument.

The full, active and non-discriminatory implementation of article X of the Biological Weapons Convention, which refers to international cooperation for peaceful purposes, and article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention, on economic and technological development, remain outstanding, urgent and priority tasks. The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States against Cuba for more than 60 years is the main obstacle to the full implementation of those articles.

We reiterate our commitment to 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 the outcome documents of its Review Conferences, in which the right of States to acquire and possess weapons for their legitimate defence and security needs is recognized. It is urgent to put an end to the illegal transfer of such weapons and to prevent their deviation to unauthorized non-State actors, which is the main source of illicit trafficking.

We will continue to advocate for the adoption as soon as possible of a protocol banning lethal autonomous weapons before they are manufactured on a large scale. In addition, regulations are required for the use of weapons with certain autonomous capabilities, in particular military combat drones.

We reiterate our support to the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, which is a historical process where Member States have had the opportunity to discuss that topic in a transparent and inclusive manner. We support the continuation of the work in that format.

We reiterate our rejection of the covert and illegal use of information and communications technologies for the purpose of subverting the legal and political systems of States. Likewise, we condemn the militarization of cyberspace and outer space. Both spaces require the adoption of a legally binding instrument that addresses the current legal loopholes.

We will continue to demand respect for international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, as well as a commitment to multilateralism in negotiations on disarmament, including the preservation and strengthening of its machinery.

**Ms. Abdulrahman** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. I reaffirm the support of the United Arab Emirates to you and wish you every success in leading this extraordinary session. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Bolivia, for leading the work of the Committee during the previous session.

The United Arab Emirates would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

The United Arab Emirates expresses its firm belief in the importance of using the international disarmament and international security forums to achieve progress in the fields of nuclear disarmament, international security, stability and peace. We meet today during the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations to discuss ways of enhancing international and multilateral cooperation in order to achieve international peace and security, particularly under the current security threats, which have negatively affected the achievements made over the past years in the field of disarmament and international security.

The United Arab Emirates supports all international efforts to enhance progress in achieving the common goal of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We also express our concern over the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and the ongoing instances of non-compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The United Arab Emirates supports all efforts to bolster global peace and security through international instruments such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In addition, the United Arab Emirates emphasizes the importance of adhering to international conventions on nuclear safety and security, as well as the need to follow a transparent approach to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In that regard, we would like to note the central role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its verification measures with regard to the comprehensive safeguards system, supported by its additional protocol. We stress the importance of full compliance with the verification measures so as to provide the required assurances and confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of nuclear activities.

In that context, we look forward to Iran's implementation of all its international obligations and its full cooperation with the IAEA in addressing all outstanding issues related to its nuclear activities so as to promote confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is considered an important tool for achieving nuclear

disarmament. We therefore call on the States that have not yet joined the Treaty, particularly the annex 2 States, to take urgent steps to sign and ratify it in order for the Treaty to enter into force as soon as possible.

This session coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force. The United Arab Emirates gives special importance to the Treaty, as it constitutes the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime, one of its priorities being to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that context, we look forward to the convening of the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in 2021, and we renew our call on the countries that have not yet acceded the Treaty to do so in order to achieve its goals and universality.

My country participated 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, which was held last November under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to support dialogue and the international efforts with a view to achieving that important goal, which is a priority for our region. We look forward to participating in the second session of the Conference, to be presided over by the State of Kuwait.

With regard to cybersecurity, the United Arab Emirates stresses the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the field of information security and telecommunications, which is an essential infrastructure in all international and national sectors and institutions. The world is witnessing an increase in the number of cyberincidents, especially in the light of the outbreak of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which negatively affects the security of countries. In order to keep pace with those changes, my country appointed a head of cybersecurity in the Government of the United Arab Emirates, and we look forward to continuing to work with Member States to effectively achieve the required cooperation in the area of cybersecurity.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates expresses its firm belief in the importance of reaching consensus in order to achieve progress on issues related to disarmament and international security and adopt an approach that strengthens multilateral action under the auspices of the United Nations. We also emphasize the importance of strengthening the role of women and young people at all levels of decision-making on issues

related to disarmament and international security in the light of the emerging issues, which require innovative solutions to address them.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections, and I wish you every success.

The spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for international cooperation, particularly in States that suffer from armed conflicts or include post-conflict communities. The State of Qatar reaffirms the important need to respond to the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire in all parts of the world, thereby providing an opportunity to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve international peace and security.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, poses a threat to States and peoples and constitutes a violation of humanitarian rights in many communities. That threat is exacerbated by the possibility of terrorist groups laying their hands on such weapons, particularly in areas of armed conflict, where the principles of judicial accountability for such crimes and atrocities are absent. The State of Qatar therefore stresses the need to commit to all conventions and treaties related to nuclear disarmament and weapons of mass destruction.

Any use of chemical weapons anywhere in the world and in any circumstance is a grave threat to the non-proliferation regime that the international community has worked so hard to entrench for decades. The international community has rejected and condemned the use of such lethal weapons in Syria, as stressed in many United Nations reports. Perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable. The use of toxic materials as a weapon of war is a war crime and a crime against humanity. It has become clear that the international community has rejected these horrendous crimes through the General Assembly's establishment of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

Despite the positive results in the field of disarmament and their effects on peace, security and stability in many parts of the world, the Middle

East region continues to lack security and stability. My country's delegation expresses its grave concern for the lack of considerable progress in making the Middle East region free of nuclear weapons, and for not implementing the commitments of the Review Conference the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the measures of 2000 Review Conference and 2010 action plan, in addition to the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. In that regard, the State of Qatar reiterates its support for the convening of the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in 2021. We hope all the countries of the region will cooperate to achieve that goal for the sake of their peoples, leading to the strengthening of international peace and security.

More than ever, the world is dependent on information and communications technologies in education and business, and that is especially true now during the coronavirus disease pandemic. Cyberattacks against vital installations and facilities have become more common. The State of Qatar has suffered from a cyberattack. The Qatari news agency was hacked, which created a crisis that led to unjust and illegal siege of the State of Qatar for more than three years. Cyberattacks have dangerous repercussions on regional and international peace and security. They also affect regional and international cooperation. The increasing and widespread cyberattacks constitute a grave challenge to international relations, and their repercussions will be reflected on the security and stability of the international community. The misuse of cyberspace is a grave threat to States and individuals and a source of disputes.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar stresses its commitment as a State party to international disarmament instruments. We are partners in the international efforts to achieve international peace and security.

**Mr. Gertze** (Namibia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your elections to manage the affairs of the First Committee during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

The three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear

energy — are critical to strengthening international peace and security. On 20 March, Namibia ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), becoming the thirty-sixth nation — of 46 — to accede to this landmark 2017 treaty. This is a show of our commitment to non-proliferation, disarmament and the irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. We applaud those Member States that have ratified the TPNW in the course of this year and urge other Member States to do the same so that it may enter into force.

Nuclear disarmament should remain a priority on the agenda of the First Committee. We therefore renew our call for all nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner. It is essential that all non-nuclear-weapon States be provided with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances by all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstance. Improving or modernizing existing nuclear weapons, including developing new types, undermines the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament.

The NPT Review Conference is an important element on the First Committee's agenda, and it is our sincere hope that the 2020 NPT Review Conference, which will now be held in 2021, will achieve the desired results.

Namibia remains a committed State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which provides a shield for Africa by preventing the stationing of nuclear-explosive devices and prohibiting the testing of those destructive weapons on the continent. We also join those who are calling for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

We are concerned about the lack of progress in the multilateral disarmament process, especially within the Conference on Disarmament. We are also concerned about the deadlock on the programme of work. Namibia further hopes that the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be held formally during this session. We applaud the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and that of the Secretary-General, through his agenda for disarmament. Namibia wishes to underscore that the Secretary-General's agenda for

disarmament recognizes that gender perspectives contribute to effective arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Sophisticated and deadly conventional weapons are still being manufactured and developed continuously. The trade in such weapons undermines our efforts to achieve international stability, peace and security. There is little doubt that certain manufacturers of such weapons continue to transfer them to unauthorized non-State actors while trying to hinder developing countries from acquiring and using certain conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, for self-defence purposes.

We support the legitimate right of States to manufacture, import and stockpile conventional weapons to meet their security and self-defence needs, pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. However, we cannot support agreements for the control of weapons, military equipment and dual-use technology negotiated among groups of States of limited composition that impose selective and discriminatory restrictions on the access of developing countries to materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

Namibia reiterates that, to eradicate illicit trafficking, it is necessary to address the deep socioeconomic conditions causing and contributing to it. We must promote international cooperation to support the States that request such assistance, according to their needs.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Namibia believes that it is important to achieve universal adherence to it, which will result in its early entry into force. The CTBT stands as a pillar of nuclear disarmament and provides a firm legal basis against nuclear testing, and thereby prevents the development of new types and designs of nuclear weapons. We believe that the CTBT builds confidence among States and will be much stronger once it becomes a universal treaty. The ratification of the CTBT by all nuclear-weapon States will demonstrate their will and, more important, their responsibility when it comes to the complete ban on nuclear testing.

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

security should be pursued within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is our conviction that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and security must not be used as a pretext to deny or restrict the inalienable rights of developing countries to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

**Mr. Monyane** (Lesotho): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to chair the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

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

The resolve to establish the United Nations was propelled by a determination to create a world of peace and prosperity. While the Charter of the United Nations has done its part to prevent a third world war, thereby fulfilling one of the noble aspirations of our great forebears who converged in San Francisco in 1945, the world still faces security challenges beyond humankind's imagination. Warfare has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Organized terrorist groups have emerged in various parts of the world in recent years and continue to declare war on States and innocent civilians.

What is most disheartening is that terrorist groups and other non-State actors massacre people and wreak immense destruction — not with their bare hands but using weapons that they do not produce or manufacture. How those weapons end up in the hands of non-State actors is a topic that is not often discussed. It is time to critically address that matter if we are to make progress in the disarmament field. The ongoing merciless killings of innocent people in conflict-ridden areas across the globe are a stark reminder that we need to act collectively to discharge the moral responsibility that rests on us in order to ensure our people a safe, secure and free world.

Our commitment to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has not been translated into concrete action. The existing massive stockpile of nuclear weapons, as well as the modernization of such weapons, casts a shadow on our prospects for attaining a nuclear-weapon free world in

the immediate future. Nuclear weapons create a false sense of security. Their possession breeds mistrust and heightens tensions among States. For as long as they exist, the risk of their use remains. The enormous loss of life and catastrophic destruction to the environment that could be caused by the detonation of nuclear weapons is known to all.

The seventy-fifth session presents us with an opportunity to advance our efforts to build a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the historic commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26 September, is a manifestation of the increasing global efforts by Governments, international organizations and civil society to focus attention on nuclear disarmament. We should redouble our efforts, during the current session and beyond, in ensuring that we rid the world of these horrendous weapons.

In that context, we welcome the steadily increasing number of Member States that have acceded to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). On 6 June, Lesotho ratified the TPNW, becoming the third member of the Southern African Development Community — after South Africa and Namibia — to do so. September marked the third anniversary of the opening for signature of the TPNW. We are optimistic that Member States that have not ratified the Treaty will generate the necessary momentum to push for a legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons to enter into force.

While working towards the goal of banning nuclear weapons and eventually abolishing them, we must emphasize that full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is critical. Accession to the NPT by countries that remain outside the scope of the Treaty should not be postponed any longer.

Furthermore, we reiterate that all States are entitled to and must enjoy their right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as articulated by the NPT. However, that right must be exercised in a safe and secure environment, with due regard to the parties' non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty. Cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is absolutely essential. We must all accept the IAEA safeguards to verify that nuclear activities serve only peaceful purposes. At the same time, we must respect the independence and expertise

of the Agency and refrain from politicizing it or unduly interfering in its activities.

As we prepare for the next NPT Review Conference scheduled for January 2021, we must do so with a unity of purpose. The Conference presents an opportunity that must not be squandered. Our deliberations there should be guided by the spirit of frankness and mutual understanding, without the acrimony that often characterizes our intergovernmental deliberations.

Twenty-four years after its adoption, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force. There is no doubt that its entry into force will halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their modernization. We call for the Treaty's universalization, in particular its ratification by the remaining annex 2 States. While we welcome the pronouncements of some States that they are committed to ratifying the CTBT, we nevertheless wish to emphasize that such pronouncements will be meaningless unless they are accompanied by concrete action towards ratification.

Conventional weapons continue to bring untold sorrow to us in the developing world. Approximately 16 years ago, we embarked on a path aimed at reducing humanitarian suffering by bringing the global conventional arms trade under control. We demonstrated a collective resolve to achieve that goal by overwhelmingly adopting the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in April 2013. It is gratifying to note that the ATT entered into force the next year, on 24 December 2014, following the attainment of the required number of ratifications. The entry into force of the ATT is not an end in itself. A fair, balanced, yet robust implementation of the ATT is critical in order to transform the international arms trade and achieve the Treaty's goals.

Despite the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, small arms and light weapons continue to claim scores of people's lives on a daily basis, in Africa and elsewhere. The lack of predictable funding for the implementation of the Programme of Action is a big impediment. Lesotho reiterates its call to give more attention to international cooperation in implementing the Programme of Action. On that note, I wish to take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for launching the Saving Lives Entity initiative in

October 2019 as a dedicated facility to ensure sustained financing for coordinated, integrated small-arms control measures in the most affected areas.

Allow me to conclude by pointing out that the global citizenry is keenly interested in how we, collectively, map the way forward, reduce the divergences in our views and approaches on various issues and consolidate our efforts in addressing the challenges that we face. I also wish to reiterate Lesotho's support for all United Nations resolutions on arms control and disarmament, and in particular on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world, which aim to achieve nuclear disarmament objectives and thereby promote and strengthen regional and global peace and security. It is in that spirit that I wish to reaffirm my country's commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which paved the way for the African continent to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. By the same token, we are encouraged that the long-awaited Conference on the Establishment of the Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction held its first session in November 2019.

We have common risks and common opportunities. We must work together if we are to achieve the progress we hope for and need.

**Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau of the First Committee on your elections, and we assure you of our full support.

Furthermore, we associate ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Cameroon and Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). We also align ourselves with the statement to be delivered on behalf of New Agenda Coalition by the representative of Mexico.

As we meet against the backdrop of a global pandemic and an increasingly more complex global security environment, we are reminded of the 2004 report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibility" (A/59/565 and Corr.1), whose synopsis presciently stated that

"... the biggest security threats we face now, and in the decades ahead, go far beyond States waging aggressive war. They extend to poverty,

infectious disease and environmental degradation; war and violence within States; the spread and possible use of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons; terrorism; and transnational organized crime”.

The seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly marks an important moment for the United Nations since its formation in the wake of the Second World War, when the nations of the world united in their determination that such a human tragedy should never again be allowed to happen and in their belief that the world's problems could be solved peacefully through cooperation.

We remain concerned that neither the Conference on Disarmament nor the United Nations Disarmament Commission was able to engage in substantive work since the previous session. The disarmament machinery plays an essential part in working to achieve the world envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. In the current environment, it is essential for the disarmament-machinery components to be able to fulfil their respective mandates.

We fully support the conclusion in the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament that greater efforts are needed to achieve the equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament. In addition, as the world is working to rebuild economies in the wake of the pandemic, global military expenditure continues to grow at an alarming rate. Without oversimplifying the issue, the true cost of such excessive expenditure is that it diverts much-needed resources away from investing in the achievement, inter alia, of the Sustainable Development Goals. We have to keep asking whether investment in peace and prosperity will not better yield the security that drives the military expenditure in the first place.

Turning to the topic of disarmament to save humankind, this year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the tragic events that occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which remain a constant reminder of the apocalyptic nature of the use of nuclear weapons, whether by mistake or intention. The objective of the very first resolution of the General Assembly, adopted in 1946, was to ensure

“the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction” (*resolution 1 (I), para. 5 (c)*).

Regrettably, that remains unfinished business.

This year also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. The only way to preserve and strengthen this key instrument is to build forward in a balanced manner across all three of the Treaty's pillars, without losing or reinterpreting the arguments of the past, notably the outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. With no outcome at the 2015 Review Conference, it is essential that we redouble our efforts to ensure that the delayed 2020 Review Conference yield concrete results.

It is important to celebrate the prodigious success of the Treaty in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology for socioeconomic development. In that regard, the support the International Atomic Energy Agency has provided to over 120 of its members in addressing the coronavirus disease pandemic is but one example of that pillar in action and shows how the peaceful uses of the atom can improve lives.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a historic milestone for nuclear disarmament, in that it shares the NPT's goal of abolishing nuclear weapons. As we have stated before, the two Treaties are fully compatible and indeed complementary. We are encouraged that the TPNW is fast approaching the 50 ratifications needed for it to enter into force, and we encourage States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are key to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation efforts. We therefore welcome the convening of the 2019 session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, and we call on all countries of the region to actively participate in good faith to achieve progress. The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference's Middle East resolution and relevant agreements at subsequent Review Conferences remain valid until fully implemented.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains one of the most important diplomatic achievements in the area of nuclear non-proliferation since the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and is an example of global cooperation to address global challenges. We regret the withdrawal

of the United States and the reimposition of national sanctions. We support the efforts of the remaining parties to the JCPOA to sustaining the agreement and call for full compliance with the terms of both the plan of action and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) to achieve that goal.

South Africa is fully committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and we believe we all have the collective responsibility to uphold the international norm against the production, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons established under the CWC. As with the other weapons of mass destruction, we oppose any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

We support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as the only technically competent international authority in the field of chemical weapons. It is essential for Member States to have full confidence in its work, including by ensuring that there is no political interference. It is equally imperative that States be held accountable for any non-compliance with their obligations.

We equally remain committed to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and support the work being done in the run-up to the Convention's ninth Review Conference, to be held in 2021. That Review Conference represents an opportunity to enhance the Convention's role in addressing the biological threats facing the world today.

On disarmament that saves lives, it is worth highlighting the African Union's theme of the year 2020 — Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development. It is also fitting that 2020 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the first-ever African continental initiative to address the scourge of small arms and light weapons.

South Africa continues to support the full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexed Protocols, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The sixth Conference of States Parties to the ATT, although held in limited format, was nonetheless important, as we were able to note this major conventional-arms-control instrument's further global universalization.

We trust that, with the accession of China to the Treaty, other major conventional arms producers, possessors and traders will be encouraged to do the same.

We hope that the postponement of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will pave the way for a successful Review Conference in 2024 and reinvigorate our efforts to eradicate the scourge of the illicit trade in these weapons.

In conclusion, efforts to sustain outer space as an area for exclusively peaceful purposes through preventive measures to ensure that space does not become an arena for an arms race forms an essential part of disarmament for future generations. We look forward to renewed efforts during the current session to find common ground and a return to consensus outcomes in this important area. We therefore trust that our discussions and decisions during this session of the First Committee will pave the way for a proud centenary celebration of the United Nations 25 years from now. While the issues may remain sensitive and complex during this session, humankind's common good must be our moral compass in finding common ground and creating a legacy for future generations.

**Mrs. Pierre** (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, Mr. Chair, on behalf of my delegation, to express my heartfelt congratulations on your election to the Chair the First Committee at its seventy-fifth session. My delegation wishes to assure you of our full cooperation and support for your efforts aimed at bringing the work of the Committee at this session to a successful conclusion. At the same time, we would like to acknowledge the work of His Excellency Mr. Sacha Llorenty Solíz of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in leading the First Committee at its previous session.

The Republic of Haiti has consistently made peace and security a priority in the dynamics of its international relations. In the current international security environment, which has been marked by great fragility, Haiti has continued to participate in bilateral and multilateral efforts aimed at promoting a culture of peace in the world in general and in our region in particular. Haiti therefore fully endorses the common position taken by the States members of the Caribbean Community and supports the increased efforts made by all countries of the world towards eliminating nuclear

weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, while ensuring that the nuclear arsenal does not fall into the hands of States whose belligerent behaviour does not respect the sacrosanct principles of international law.

The Republic of Haiti unconditionally supports the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, among other instruments aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and expresses its satisfaction that other regions are embarking on the path set out in the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. My delegation will continue to strongly encourage all parties involved in disarmament negotiations to seek consensus, particularly with regard to human security, while also addressing issues related to the security of States.

The Republic of Haiti is aware that threats to international peace and security as well as the fight against violent extremism, terrorist violence and organized crime are foreign policy priorities. The General Assembly must remain faithful to its task of galvanizing actions in favour of the development of peace and security in order to ensure, together with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, respect for international law.

Haiti has always favoured a strategic vision of State external security in which diplomatic policy is implemented based on permanent dialogue, the search for solidarity at all levels on the international arena and the strengthening of concrete cooperation ties with strategic countries. This cooperation strategy tends to fill the void created by the absence of a fighting army, which was disbanded in 1994 under non-objective conditions.

Nevertheless, in recent years Haiti has been faced with a rapid and inexorable proliferation of illegal weapons used by gangs to sow terror in every corner of the country. The growth of mafia networks linked to drug trafficking and the structural weaknesses of the young Haitian National Police have allowed the emergence of these armed gangs, which are turning certain areas of the capital and the provinces into lawless zones.

According to the National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration, a structure created in 2006 and responsible for coordinating and implementing State policy on the disarmament and dismantling of armed groups and

the reintegration of individuals, there are now more than 500,000 illegal weapons — weapons of war and small arms — circulating in the country. These illegal weapons are brought in by sea or across our land border, which is difficult to control. Last year, the Head of State, His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, took the decision to revive the National Commission, which had been inactive since 2011. Since its reactivation, the National Commission has initiated a gradual disarmament process in several neighbourhoods deemed dangerous in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan region with a view to achieving total disarmament. My delegation calls on the First Committee to take note of the unusual situation the Republic of Haiti is going through, which has required its full attention.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates that Haiti favours a multilateral, transparent and verifiable approach in order to monitor and control the proliferation and illicit trafficking in weapons of all kinds and to promote significant progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Mr. Iteboje** (Nigeria): We wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections. I assure you and your team of the full support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation, as we have no doubt that our work will benefit from your tremendous experience, expertise and commitment.

My delegation wishes to thank the President of the General Assembly and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their kind remarks (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Cameroon on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). We wish to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

At the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, my delegation joined other States Members of the United Nations in highlighting the daunting challenges confronting our world. Sadly, since then there has been no significant change to enhance confidence and reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security. This reality, coupled with the coronavirus disease pandemic, makes it even more

urgent that we redouble our efforts and work with great resolve for global peace and security. In that regard, building the right momentum in our multilateral approaches requires concerted efforts and a new plan of action.

Today the dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are witnessed all around us. From Africa to the Middle East, across Europe, to the Americas and Asia, the carnage has become phenomenal and unprecedented, particularly the immense bloodshed foisted on innocent populations by terrorists and other criminal elements. These are the weapons used indiscriminately by terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and massacre innocent civilians, including women and children.

Nuclear weapons are a grave existential threat to humankind as long as nuclear-weapon States continue to possess and modernize them. Nigeria therefore underscores the importance of resolution 70/34 as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort.

Nuclear weapons remain the ultimate agents of mass destruction, and their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations. We are therefore hopeful that as the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which opened for signature on the 20 September 2017, draws closer to its entry into force, the disarmament machinery will be further reinforced towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Nigeria remains proud to have participated in the processes leading to the adoption of the TPNW as well as to have been one of the first States to sign and ratify the Treaty. Our commitment was guided by our principled position on the denuclearization of the world. We are also mindful of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we call on all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to take into consideration the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among other things, and to take the necessary measures aimed at dismantling or renouncing their nuclear weapons.

The failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 2015 despite the intensive efforts

of non-nuclear-weapon States, notably from Africa, further requires our concerted engagement as State parties prepare for the tenth NPT Review Conference in 2021. As the NPT marks the fiftieth anniversary of its conclusion and 25 years of its indefinite extension this year, Nigeria calls on all States parties to the NPT to work towards preserving the credibility and sustainability of the Treaty and achieving its universality and objectives through the adoption of a balanced and a comprehensive outcome document next year.

As a State party to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, which celebrated the tenth anniversary of its conclusion in July 2019, Nigeria reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The Pelindaba Treaty serves as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear-weapon devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of nuclear weapons.

To ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further reaffirms the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as in their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. They enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament. In that context, my delegation calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate this measure in other parts of the world, including in the Middle East.

Nuclear-test explosions not only send a tense signal to the global political environment; they also have devastating effects on our environment with the spread of radioactive materials to the atmosphere. In that regard, my delegation once again welcomes the convening of the eleventh Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), held in New York on 25 September 2019, and calls on those countries that have not ratified or signed the CTBT, particularly annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

Member States of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) are again reminded of the need to reflect on whether the current impasse is serving the purposes and the objective of its establishment. It is our hope that

members of the CD would esteem to do what is required and fulfil the objectives of its establishment.

The delegation of Nigeria underscores the importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and regrets that consensus was not reached on the agenda item on nuclear disarmament for several years. In spite of the difficulties encountered in the multilateral disarmament machinery, Nigeria remains committed to its objective as the only measure put in place to advance the objectives of disarmament and international security.

Nigeria also remains committed to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and looks forward to a successful outcome during the seventh Biennial Meeting of States in 2021.

My delegation supported the adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/234 B, on 2 April 2013, and similarly notes the unfortunate increase in conflicts and terrorism resulting from the diversion of conventional arms transfers to unauthorized recipients. We therefore wish to underscore the need to present a common front to robustly respond to the threat posed to international peace and security by the lack of sustained regulation of conventional weapons.

My delegation notes with dismay the increasing threats in the outer-space domain from associated activities within the space environment that are geared towards its weaponization, as well as issues of the accumulation of space debris and the need for responsible behaviour by States in outer space. We therefore reaffirm the importance of the prevention of an arms race in outer space through a legally binding instrument hinged on transparency and confidence-building measures that complements the existing system international framework in a manner that allows for the equitable exploration of outer space based on the principle of non-appropriation and peaceful uses of outer space in conformity with the five United Nations treaties governing space activities.

Furthermore, my delegation expresses its concern over the increasing threats in cyberspace, which is fast assuming the reputation of a new domain of aggression. We therefore strongly support the central role of the United Nations in promoting and developing rules and principles for the responsible use of information and

telecommunications technologies by States through a collaborative, inclusive and equitable process. We acknowledge efforts of United Nations Group of Government Experts and the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, and hope that the active engagement by all Members States and other stakeholder through an enduring platform will further inform the development of a legal framework better suited to address dynamic threats.

In the course of the plenary meetings, my delegation will submit two draft resolutions on behalf of the Group of African States and another in its national capacity, for which we seek the full support of all delegations. The three draft resolutions, which have been subject to the necessary technical updates, are entitled: the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (A/C.1/75/L.10), the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (A/C.1/75/L.11) and the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Training and Advisory Services (A/C.1/75/L.12).

**The Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): In the light of the number of delegations having requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply, I will give them the floor now, in accordance with the decision adopted at the organizational meeting (see A/C.1/75/PV.1). The first statement in the right of reply will be limited to five minutes, the second statement to three.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to respond to a number of statements made regarding the Russian Federation on 9 October (see A/C.1/75/PV.2) on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Nordic States, as well as by delegations of Australia, Switzerland, Poland, Ireland, Iceland, Lichtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, the United States, Finland and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Unfortunately, to a great extent, the statements by those states in the First Committee constituted another element of the disinformation campaign demonizing Russia's actions on the international arena. We are accused of non-compliance with the agreements in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and with the chemical weapons regime, as well as of all kinds of aggressive ambitions, including to increase our military potential. Those are all just anti-Russian slogans backed by no evidence. Our partners in the West,

as usual, are trying to create their own parallel universe where Russia is the source of all evil and trying to impose that vision on the rest of the international community. That parallel reality is very comfortable for them and makes it possible to mask their own obstruction and reckless actions.

In reality, it is the United States that started to erode the architecture of agreements in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The United States unilaterally withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; is withdrawing from the Open Skies Treaty; has refused to ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the modified Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe or to work on creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It has failed to comply with its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), prevents the strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention regime and violates the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the same time, the United States is modernizing its strategic nuclear forces and creating new types of ammunition and its carriers. Moreover, it does not shy away from stating that it is going to use that nuclear arsenal as it sees fit, without regard to the existing regimes.

We clearly see that the real reasoning behind the United States actions is the desire to have a free hand at the global arena. Therefore, all the regimes and treaties I mentioned are simply hindrances to the United States; that is why it deliberately undermines them. All accusations levelled at us are simply attempts to shift the blame. This is plain to see for anyone who looks objectively at the facts. The same goes for the renewal of the New START Treaty. We have been saying from the very beginning that we are ready to extend the treaty without any preconditions, but the United States has continuously upped the ante and generated pretexts for being unable to come to an agreement or put forward clear ultimatums. Once again, they are trying to convince us that there is some sort of parallel reality here, that there are not two major nuclear Powers, but three.

We deeply regret to see that the United States and its allies are trying to drag not only individual States but secretariats of international organizations into its disinformation campaign. The clearest example being that of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical

Weapons (OPCW). Unfortunately, this stance has even affected the work of the First Committee. As one of the founders of the OPCW, Russia is very seriously concerned about the future of that organization. We do not want that reputable mechanism to become a puppet in the hands of a certain States, which use it to punish other States they may dislike and to promote their geopolitical interests. However, this is exactly what we are seeing now. There is enough proof that its Technical Secretariat has been engaged in violations, manipulations, falsification.

The same story repeats itself with the alleged poisoning of Russian blogger A. Navalny, which some countries have found it necessary to mention. Everything boils down to unsubstantiated accusations in the spirit of "who else if not Russia could have done this". Meanwhile, there was and there still is no evidence of that, as it is allegedly being classified. At the same time, the countries of the West refuse to cooperate with Russia in conducting an inquiry and ignore our repeated requests for cooperation and legal assistance. Even the OPCW has been unable to determine the chemical nature of the cholinesterase inhibitors that were found in A. Navalny's biological materials, which could be related to alcohol or a potent drug. This looks even more cynical given that the United Kingdom has still not provided any elementary explanation regarding the so called Skripal case.

We call on the Western countries to stop twisting facts, putting forth unsubstantiated allegations against countries that scrupulously comply with the CWC and scheme to promote their geopolitical interests. We need to take responsibility for the future of the OPCW and for maintaining international peace and security. We simply hope that our Western colleagues will leave baseless allegations and all sorts of manipulations aside and finally begin to show an interest in true cooperation and dialogue. We all stand only to gain from that.

**Ms. Baghirova (Azerbaijan):** My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in connection with the issue "outbreak of hostilities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan since 27 September", raised earlier today. While a comprehensive statement on this matter will be delivered by the delegation of Azerbaijan in the course of the general debate, we would like to offer the following remarks in response to the intervention by the representative of Armenia (see A/C.1/75/PV.4).

The groundless and fabricated arguments presented by the delegation of Armenia before this body no longer come as a surprise. All attempts by that country to deny the facts that point to its posture of aggression, hatred and falsification are nothing but a vain endeavour, especially in the light of the current hostilities being committed by Armenia against Azerbaijan and its civilian population.

It has been unanimously recognized by the international community, through the Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), that the acts committed by Armenia against Azerbaijan constitute unlawful use of force and occupation. Those documents confirm that Nagorno Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan, condemn the use of force against Azerbaijan and demand the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The occupying State with effective control over that territory has for years concealed its military potential from relevant regional arms-control and -verification mechanisms, engaged in massive military build-up, transferred and diverted weapons and munitions, as well as combat units, and conducted military exercises attended by the President, Minister of Defence and other high-ranking officials of Armenia.

Accompanied by the deliberate policy of Armenia to derail the peace process, its inflammatory and warmongering statements and consistent provocations on the ground in the territories of Azerbaijan and its deliberate actions seeking to change the demographic, cultural and physical character of the occupied territory of Azerbaijan leave no doubt that the ultimate goal of Armenia was to consolidate the occupation and achieve the annexation of the territory of Azerbaijan under the cover of a ceasefire and peace process. Therefore, Armenia's statements in support adherence to the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire are nothing other than utter falsehoods.

On 27 September, after repeated acts of provocation, the armed forces of Armenia subjected the armed forces of Azerbaijan along the entire front line and the adjacent populated areas in my country to intensive fire, with the use of large-calibre weapons, artillery and mortars. Those attacks resulted in numerous deaths and injuries among civilians and the military. In response, Azerbaijan has undertaken successful

counter-offensive measures, neutralizing Armenian fire and battle positions and liberating the territories of Azerbaijan from occupation in the exercise of the right of self-defence.

Azerbaijan acts on its sovereign soil and takes adequate and proportionate measures to repulse imminent threats to its sovereignty and territorial integrity and the security of its population. Our military objectives are to protect and to prevent loss of life among innocent Azerbaijani civilians by neutralizing the presence of the Armenian armed forces in the occupied territory of Azerbaijan and to achieve a sustainable and durable peace in our country and region.

As of 9 October, 16 command posts, 196 tanks, 38 BM-21 rocket launchers, one Hurricane Tail self-propelled artillery unit — eight Action and two Carnation — 36 infantry fighting vehicles, 24 artillery batteries, two REM — or air-defence devices — two S-300 launchers, 25 Osa anti-aircraft missile systems, two Kub anti-aircraft missile systems, four Repeland radio equipment obstacle vehicles, 136 cannons, 56 mortars, one TOS-1A firearm, two radar stations and two Kolchuga antenna belonging to the armed forces of Armenia had been destroyed. Eighteen tanks, four artillery pieces, 22 infantry fighting vehicles, 12 mortars, four UAZ cars, one excavator, 27 Iгла complexes, one ZIL truck and nine GAZ cars were acquired as trophies of war.

The very facts that civilians were deliberately targeted and that such a large number of troops and armaments were illegally deployed on the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan indicate that Armenia is the aggressor and that all public pronouncements by Armenia about its alleged adherence to a ceasefire and peaceful settlement and nothing but hollow rhetoric and smokescreen to camouflage their clear-cut annexation objectives.

We resolutely reject all baseless allegations by Armenia related to the involvement of external parties in the conflict. The armed forces of Azerbaijan are well-equipped, self-sufficient and fully capable of repelling on their own the ongoing aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan. Those allegations by Armenia are a futile and desperate attempt to distract attention from heavy losses suffered by the Armenian army and to draw in third parties, including mercenaries and terrorist groups, in order to enlarge the scope of hostilities and reverse the situation on the ground. According to international

media reports, thousands of ethnic Armenians from different countries have already arrived in the conflict zone or are in the process of being deployed.

The main destabilizing factor in the region is the presence of the armed forces of Armenia and the military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan. The sooner Armenia withdraws its armed forces from the Nagorno Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the earlier the conflict will be resolved and both countries and their peoples will benefit from prospects of cooperation and economic development.

**Mr. Yakut** (Turkey): I take the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply in relation to the references made to my country by the representative of Armenia (see A/C.1/75/PV.4). I refute those allegations in their entirety.

Turkey strongly condemns the Armenian attacks, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law. Armenian armed forces continue to target the civilian population and infrastructure indiscriminately along the line of contact, as well as in major cities of Azerbaijan away from the combat zone, with long-range artillery and rocket fire.

Despite the humanitarian ceasefire, the armed forces of Armenia have been attacking the densely populated areas of Azerbaijan, causing civilian casualties. We strongly condemn Armenia's rocket attacks yesterday on Ganja, the second-largest city of Azerbaijan, which constitute a clear violation of the humanitarian ceasefire. Against such aggression, Azerbaijan has the right to defend itself in order to protect its people and its territorial integrity.

Armenian allegations about Turkish involvement and fighters from outside are baseless. Both Azerbaijan and the relevant authorities in Turkey totally and unequivocally rejected those Armenian fabrications. That disinformation campaign aims to portray Armenia as the victim while it continues its illegal occupation and indiscriminate attacks. Armenia's use of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries from a number of countries are well documented.

Yerevan is receiving support from some terrorist groups, primarily the People's Protection Units-Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has long-standing ties with terrorist groups, such as the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, known

as ASALA. Certain Armenian diaspora organizations operating under the cover of being a charity have also been instrumental in mobilizing funds and facilitating the transfer of foreign terrorist fighters to the conflict zone. We would like to simply remind Armenia of its obligation to uphold without delay the relevant Security Council resolutions on the conflict calling for the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of their occupying forces in Nagorno Karabakh.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on Spain's National Day.

I take the floor to exercise my right of reply against some baseless allegations that the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia mentioned about my country (see A/C.1/75/PV.4). We categorically reject them.

We regret to see that degree of hostility from countries like Saudi Arabia while Iran has persistently offered them its concrete peace proposals to secure stability in our region. However, they have not accepted those calls for peace and instead have continued to deepen their failed policy of either military solutions or begging others to confront Iran, in addition to their ill attempts to vilify Iran. Iran's nuclear activities are totally transparent, and we are fully cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The most recent reports and statements of the Director General of the IAEA have explicitly affirmed Iran's cooperation. The IAEA Director General calls the recent agreement between Iran and the IAEA a shining moment of diplomacy.

I should remind the delegation of Saudi Arabia that the IAEA is the only competent authority for evaluating the activities of Member States, not countries like Saudi Arabia with ill intentions about Iran that do not allow them to hear or see the true facts.

We are sure that, if the issues are to be discussed in a fair manner, there are a lot of issues that Saudis must clarify. Just in the context of nuclear activities, I would like to give an example and put on record the concerns of my delegation over the lack of full implementation of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement by Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh is not implementing the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement completely and, unless it rescinds its current small quantity programme, as was requested many times by the IAEA, it is not providing the IAEA with enough verification authorities. A

failure to implement the IAEA safeguards at a time when Saudi nuclear capabilities appear to be launching an ambitious programme could allow the Saudis to hide certain nuclear activities without them being subject to IAEA inspections. Concerns about the leaked nuclear activities of Saudi Arabia to the media and identifying covert nuclear sites in the desert need broad support for the collective international efforts to hold the Saudis responsible for their behaviour.

Uniform, rather than selective, enforcement of safeguards, norms and rules will benefit the international community in the long run. Therefore, the international community should call upon Riyadh to immediately bring into force the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement in full. Halting nuclear assistance to Saudi Arabia is the only way that can alleviate those concerns. That lack of transparency on Saudi activities surely will undercut the whole safeguards regime.

**Mr. Kim In Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation takes the floor to exercise the right of reply in respect of statements made by representatives of European countries yesterday (see A/C.1/75/PV.4) and by the representative of Australia for today.

No one can dispute that it is the legitimate right of a sovereign State to build up national capabilities for self-defence. It is an undeniable reality of today that cutting-edge military hardware continues to be introduced into the Korean peninsula and nuclear-strike means of all kinds are directly aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Given the fact that the nuclear threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued unabated, along with all sorts of hostile acts taking place before our very eyes, it does not make sense to call for abandoning the efforts for self-defensive capabilities. There is no mention in the Charter of the United Nations or international law that any effort to build up national defence capabilities constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Otherwise, each and every country's effort for national defence capabilities should be questioned and condemned. We clarified that our war-deterrent force is being developed not for provoking others, but for defending ourselves. It is attributable to our reliable and effective war-deterrent for self-defence that peace and security on the Korean peninsula and the region are now firmly safeguarded.

We will continue to strengthen the war deterrent — the righteous means for self-defence — in order to contain, control and manage all the dangerous attempts and menacing acts by hostile forces, including their sustained and growing nuclear threats. If they are truly interested in ensuring international peace and security, the countries I referred to are urged to take an impartial approach with a correct understanding into the nature of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and raise their voice for a complete and irreversible withdrawal of hostility against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, instead of stirring up a hornets' nest about others' nuclear threats and complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement.

Arguably, the previous theme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States negotiations should change from denuclearization measures versus the lifting of sanctions to a formula of the abandonment of hostility versus the resumption of Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States negotiations.

The dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States is deemed as unnecessary in the future as long as there is no significant shift in the United States position. Political bias and a one-sided policy will not help address any issue. European countries are urged to set an example by way of introducing complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization in Europe first.

It is the consistent goal of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to build a peaceful world without war. Therefore, in the future as in the past, we will make every possible effort, as a peace-loving nation, to safeguard peace and security on the Korean peninsula and the rest of the region in a responsible manner.

**Mr. Knight** (United States of America): I listened carefully to the remarks by the representative of China today. It should be clear by now to everyone in this room that we are confronting a disturbingly aggressive authoritarian ruling party in Beijing, which is bent on remaking the entire international system in its own image. That image is unfortunately one of intimidation and bullying, one that is opposed to basic human and individual freedoms, one that has no tolerance for free speech and freedom of expression and one that lashes out at Governments and civil society organizations that call out China for its menacing and threatening behaviour.

It is that very menacing and threatening behaviour that is severely undermining strategic security and should be cause for alarm internationally. China claims that its intentions and actions are peaceful, but the reality is something fundamentally different. China is engaging in a rapid nuclear and missile build-up that is threatening to upend international peace and security. It refuses to sit at the negotiating table with the United States and Russia, which could allow us to prevent a three-way arms race.

There is a question that we should be asking ourselves: why will Beijing not come to the table? It claims that the United States and Russia must reduce existing strategic arsenals to a comparable level with China's before it will engage in those talks with us. That is a hollow excuse. A trilateral conversation would allow us not merely to address the issue of strategic arsenals; it would also allow us to establish patterns of trust and to build the proven underpinnings of meaningful progress on arms control, such as nuclear doctrines, transparency, approaches to non-strategic nuclear weapons and broader risk reduction. The real reason that Beijing does not want to come to the table with the United States and Russia is because it prefers to engage in the framework of the permanent five process. That allows China to block those additional steps that it does not want to take — for example, progress on transparency, progress towards a fissile material production moratorium and progress on risk reduction.

China instead prefers to shield itself from international criticism. It would rather avoid engaging in real, substantive discussions bilaterally with the United States on policies and doctrines, risk reduction and transparency. It would rather avoid engaging on their non-stop efforts to weaponize outer space. We want to ensure that, when China's representatives say their country will not sit down for trilateral discussions and negotiations, the Member States in this room understand why.

I am pleased to be able to say that there are some encouraging signs in dealing with this issue. Many Member States are now growing more vocal and pushing back against China's reckless behaviour internationally and opposing its attempts to see the so-called Xi Jinping thought language throughout the United Nations resolutions and other documents. That language comes directly from China's domestic policy documents and has broad ramifications for internationally agreed norms and practices.

Again, China's goal is to slowly, but fundamentally, remake the United Nations system in its own image. However, the United States and a growing number of other States understand what China has been trying to do. And we will spare no effort to prevent Beijing from achieving those nefarious goals.

As I reminded our colleagues last week, the United States fulfils its obligations (see A/C.1/75/PV.3). However, when the United States remains faithful to its commitments while other Member States cheat and fail to fulfil their obligations, then that disconnect must be addressed and resolved. Instead of trying to conduct its so-called wolf warrior diplomacy, we urge China to pursue a collaborative and constructive approach, one that would actually allow for progress towards a safer world. That is the central reason we all sit here today. China should take its responsibility in that regard seriously. China should decide that it will meet this moment.

I will have additional comments for future rights of reply.

**Mr. Alnahdi** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to exercise my right of reply to what the representative of Iran said. I should like to clarify to him that what the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia mentioned with regard to Iran's failure to abide by its nuclear commitments was based on recent reports issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

This is also an appropriate opportunity to call on Iran to be as transparent as my country with United Nations agencies, including the IAEA. We call upon it to cooperate fully and promptly, in particular as there is evidence that heightens suspicion about Iran's intentions regarding its nuclear programme.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has previously reached out to Iran in a positive and open spirit for achieving peace. We have received its Presidents many times to discuss ways to ensure good-neighbourliness and mutual respect. We have welcomed international efforts to deal with Iran's nuclear programme. Notwithstanding all those efforts and our good-neighbourliness for the past 40 years, Iran has not committed to the simplest criteria, principles and values of good-neighbourliness or accepted norms and diplomatic relations. In continuation of that approach, the Iranian regime targeted oil installations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in gross contravention of international law, which constitutes an assault on

international peace and security. That demonstrates that the Iranian regime does not care for the stability of the world economy or the security of oil supplies reaching oil markets worldwide.

Through its proxies the Iranian regime has also continued to launch ballistic missiles against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including more than 300 missiles and 400 drones, in gross contravention of resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015). The time has come for the international community to take a serious stand in confronting Iran's policies and curtail its arms and proxies, which undermine regional security and the safety of all peoples. That would end the state of instability and division prevailing in the region.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The United States representative made a statement replete with ideological bias and prejudice. We are deeply shocked. Moments ago, the representative of the United States abused the United Nations platform and this meeting of the First Committee to spread a political virus to serve its own domestic politics.

China firmly rejects the United States delegation's baseless allegations against China. The United States pursues unilateralism and exceptionalism in the field of disarmament and international security and is trying to shirk its responsibilities and conduct itself like a bully.

The United States has a horrendous record. Facts speak louder than words. China's contribution to international security and disarmament is widely recognized and will not be written off by any lies. The United States damage to international security and disarmament is well known and will not be covered up by any lies.

The United States persistently hypes the so-called trilateral arms control negotiation, which in essence is meant to find an excuse to shirk its own special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament, shift the focus of the international community and seek a pretext for procrastination on the extension of the New START Treaty. We sincerely hope that the international community will have a clear understanding of the United States intentions.

The United States' hype about China's so-called nuclear expansion and drastic projection of its nuclear force is totally groundless and unjustifiable. The political motivation behind the United States' accusation against China is well known by all Member

States. China is the only nuclear-weapon State among the five permanent members of the Security Council to have made a no-first-use commitment.

According to statistics from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the United States and the Russian Federation each possess about 6,000 nuclear warheads, accounting for more than 90 per cent of the global nuclear-weapon stockpile. Given the huge gap between China's nuclear arsenal and those of the United States and the Russian Federation, it is unfair, unreasonable and unfeasible for the United States to expect China to join trilateral arms control negotiations. China wishes to reiterate, as it did today in the general debate, that we are ready to have a discussion with all parties on a wide range of issues related to strategic stability and disarmament within the context of the five nuclear-weapon States and the Conference on Disarmament. China is ready to communicate and coordinate with all parties and work actively towards promoting international arms control and disarmament.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to highlight that, as per documents from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has been cooperative in responding to all of the Agency's requests. Iran has been subject to intrusive inspections. Its nuclear activities are fully transparent to the IAEA and the entire international community.

Against the backdrop of the catastrophic human costs of Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Yemen's civil war, the Saudis have continued to participate in, fund and direct a coalition force in support of one side. It is regrettable that the representative of Yemen, instead of recognizing the real and actual destroyer of his country and compelling that aggressor to stop its destructive actions and take responsibility, blames Iran.

Year after year, bombs have fallen on weddings, funeral halls, fishing boats and school buses, killing thousands of civilians. By doing so, the Saudis have directly contributed to one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history, including the deliberate starvation of innocent Yemeni civilians and the direct killing of thousands more. People are struggling to survive severe outbreaks of the coronavirus disease, cholera and other communicable diseases, which are ongoing, and the risk of famine looms.

Military invasion and economic pressure, largely imposed by the Saudi leadership, have helped produce

what the United Nations considers the world's most severe humanitarian catastrophe. Over the past year alone, the hunger crisis in Yemen has worsened dramatically, with a 60 per cent increase in the number of districts affected. The Saudis must be held accountable for all of those atrocities, including the massacre of civilians and allowing the humanitarian crisis to continue.

Iran looks on with great concern as Saudi Arabia commits its crimes with extraordinary brazenness and then does everything it can to dodge responsibility. When held to account, it shifts the blame to scapegoats and away from those who are truly responsible.

**Mr. Sautter** (Germany): I would like to say a couple of words on the remarks by my Russian colleague with regard to the Navalny case. I would like to make it clear that this is not a Western plot, and I would like to establish three very simple facts.

First, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as the competent and impartial international body, and three other laboratories confirmed that Mr. Navalny was poisoned by means of a nerve agent from the Novichok group.

Secondly, Russia has not provided any credible explanation for the poisoning of Mr. Navalny in Russia. Instead, responses from the Russian Federation have grown less constructive by the day. The fact remains that we are here talking about the poisoning of a Russian citizen on Russian soil by means of a military-grade nerve agent.

Thirdly, the discussions in the OPCW Executive Council have shown that the international community does not accept this and has asked Russia to produce an explanation for what happened in the Navalny case.

I would therefore like to renew the request to the Russian Federation to please shed light on the poisoning of Mr. Navalny on Russian territory on 20 August.

Let me conclude by quoting a line from Bob Marley: "You can fool some people sometimes, but you can't fool all the people all the time."

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This new round of insinuations by my German colleague comments about the so-called Navalny case is very timely. I once again stress to our German friends that the evidence that was published in the media — and not shared with us — is extremely unconvincing. We

cannot start a criminal case in Russia without evidence. Maybe in Germany it is normal practice, but it is not done in Russia.

We made four requests through our prosecutor and received only one non-committal note in reply. For us to move forward, we need the cooperation of our German friends. Otherwise, we will not make any progress, and everyone will most certainly understand that this is merely provocation. At least that is what it looks like now.

Furthermore, the representative of the United States who just spoke tried to give the impression that all problems in the area of arms control are due to the fact that China does not want to sit down to negotiate with the United States and Russia. That is completely wrong. The bilateral agenda of the United States and Russia is far from being exhausted. For instance, the next item is a very important issue for the entire world — the extension of the New START Treaty. China bears no responsibility. If going forward we are to have a multilateral dialogue, it must be conducted by consensus and without any external pressure. And, for us, it is clear that in this case certain nuclear allies of the United States, such as France and the United Kingdom, need to be the first to be involved in the discussions, as their nuclear arsenals combined exceed that of China.

**Mr. Alnahdi** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): This is an appropriate opportunity to remind the representative of Iran that the reason for the crisis in Yemen is the Iranian role in destabilizing Yemen and stalling political efforts. There is no Arab country where there is Iranian influence that does not suffer from division, instability, coup militias and the spread of armed groups and sectarian and communal strife.

I would also like to remind the representative of Iran that the intervention of the coalition to support legitimacy came following an official request from the Yemeni Government to protect Yemen and its people. The policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is to confront terrorism wherever it exists. My country will continue to fight terrorism until the objectives of the coalition are achieved.

The last thing the Iranian regime wants is calm and peace in Yemen. The regime provides its followers with arms and missiles that target the people of Yemen, the Kingdom's security and that of the countries in the region.

**Mr. Sautter** (Germany): In reply to my Russian colleague, I would like to point out the following on the Navalny case. Russian doctors in a Russian hospital took life-saving measures with regard to Mr. Navalny, who is a Russian citizen. All of this happened on Russian soil. One might therefore think that everything necessary for a criminal investigation has been at Russia's disposal for weeks. That makes us wonder why such investigations have not yet been initiated. Instead, we hear evasive and diversionary manoeuvres from Russia. We therefore renew our plea for the Russian Federation to shed light on the Navalny case and start engaging in a serious investigation.

**Mr. Knight** (United States of America): I would like to briefly address a couple of the comments we heard from our Russian colleague.

The first is that the United States is in full compliance with its New START Treaty obligations and is fully implementing the Treaty. I want to make that very clear. We have not yet made a decision about a potential extension. Our primary focus is on securing an agreement that addresses the broader set of nuclear challenges that we face, from both Russia and China. We have conveyed to Russian officials a path forward for United States consideration of extending the New START Treaty. The steps required include reaching a separate understanding on a serious and detailed concept that seeks to address all nuclear warheads of the parties, which we have requested. That is commensurate with China's current capabilities.

With regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Russia's position rings a bit hollow, as it has already fielded multiple battalions in excess of INF ranges. The United States withdrew from the INF Treaty because Russia developed, flight-tested and then fielded those battalions of intermediate-range systems, in violation of its obligations. The INF Treaty's termination does not mean that the United States is dismantling or walking away from arms control. We have reaffirmed our commitment to effective arms control and made clear our interest in having Russia and China join the talks.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In recent years, the United States has walked away from international treaties and organizations, one after another. To date, it has pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Intermediate-Range

Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty, and it revoked its signature of the Arms Trade Treaty.

In addition, the United States consistently enhances the role of nuclear weapons in its military doctrine, lowers the threshold for using nuclear weapons and develops low-yield nuclear weapons for combat purposes. Recently, it publicly announced that it would consider resuming nuclear testing. The United States has become a saboteur of the international arms control system.

Just now the United States representative touted the issue of the so-called trilateral arms-control negotiations between China, the United States and Russia. I want to reiterate China's position. China has no intention of participating in the so-called trilateral arms-control negotiations. Our position is very clear and has been widely understood by the international community, including the Russian Federation. China has exercised utmost restraint in the development of nuclear weapons, and we have maintained our nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. Our nuclear arsenal is not at all at the same level as those of the United States or Russia. It is unfair and unreasonable to request China to join in such negotiations.

The current priority should be for the United States to respond to Russia's appeal for extending the New START Treaty and make further drastic and substantive reductions in its nuclear arsenal so as to create conditions for other countries to join in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. That is also the consensus of the international community.

**The Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further requests from delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply. I remind delegations that due to the current conditions caused by the coronavirus disease, the compendium is available for delegations wishing to submit a right of reply in written form so that we can continue with the debate.

We have exhausted the time available for this afternoon's meeting. Before we adjourn, let me remind delegations once again that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close in five minutes. All delegations interested in taking the floor should make every effort to inscribe themselves on the list before the deadline.

Tomorrow at 3 p.m. we will hold a meeting with all delegations participating remotely. We will first have an exchange with Mrs. Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and then an exchange with civil society.

The sixth meeting of the First Committee will be held Wednesday, 14 October, at 10 a.m. in this

Conference Room. We shall continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items, and I appeal to all delegations to be punctual in order to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*