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*Chairperson:* Mr. José Luis Cancela . . . . . (Uruguay)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

## Agenda items 86 to 103 (continued)

### Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): This morning we have a full programme of work. We will begin by hear the remaining statements on conventional weapons. We will then take up the theme of other disarmament measures and international security. First, we will hear an introduction by His Excellency Mr. Roberto García Moritán, Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, followed by statements on other disarmament measures and international security. Following that discussion, we will have a round-table discussion on regional disarmament and security with the participation of the Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the directors of the three regional centres for peace and disarmament. If there is time after the round table, we will hear thematic statements on regional disarmament and security.

Given our very full programme of work, I would ask all speakers to be concise in their statements. If necessary, they may circulate longer written statements.

We shall now continue our discussion on the theme of conventional weapons.

**Mr. Degu** (Ethiopia): While my country is invariably concerned with all disarmament issues considered in the Committee's thematic discussion, I would rather dwell on an issue of particular interest to Ethiopia, that of small arms and light weapons.

Small arms, which have often been rightfully described as the new weapons of mass destruction, are the real weapons that account for the loss of human life in many parts of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa has suffered more than any other region in the world from the devastating effects of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. It is a saddening fact that every year over half a million people are killed by small arms, the majority of them from armed-conflict-ridden parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

In Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, which has become increasingly unstable as a result of the continued crisis in Somalia, the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons is causing an enormous human tragedy. By and large, such arms hamper peace, stability and security, impede development, obstruct relief programmes, foster a culture of violence and, above all, aggravate violations of human rights.

Due to that distressing reality, we in Africa are taking the matter seriously and harnessing our efforts to combat problems related to small arms and light weapons, doing so within our institutions established to implement the United Nations Programme of Action on

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Small Arms. The Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Nairobi Declaration, with its protocol at the subregional level, are testimony to those efforts. The Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA), established under the Nairobi Protocol, of which Ethiopia is a member, is working tirelessly to prevent, combat and eradicate the trafficking in and the spread within member countries of small arms, light weapons, ammunition and other related materials.

In view of the disproportionate harm being inflicted on human lives, as well as on our development endeavours, my Government has put in place an all-round national plan, and has also assigned police commissioners, at both the federal and the regional levels, to effectively deal with the problem of small arms and light weapons. Currently, the federal and regional police forces and the army are working closely to strengthen border controls and to stop the illicit import and transfer of firearms.

Moreover, the collaboration being fostered with the local community has expedited the identification of small arms in many regions in the country. The process of setting up a national committee, comprising all domestic stakeholders, as well as appointing a national focal point for the effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention, has been successfully accomplished. Recently, we launched the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, with technical and financial support from RECSA and other partners. We are thus in no doubt that Ethiopia will be in a better position to fulfil all its treaty obligations.

As we pointed out during our first intervention, in the general debate (see A/C.1/64/PV.7), the ongoing crisis and the absence of a stable Government in Somalia have created a fertile ground for the clandestine operations of terrorist groups and the proliferation of the illicit trade and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Given that the international community is paying very little or no attention, this alarming state of affairs in the region has enabled terrorists and some irresponsible States to profit from human misery. We, therefore, would like once again to urge the international community to take appropriate measures to restore the long-sought peace and stability in Somalia before it is too late.

Ethiopia also reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. In line with that, we are optimistic that the coming meeting of the Open-ended Working Group will make substantial progress.

Finally, all those efforts undertaken at the regional and national levels would certainly have been difficult to realize without the strong financial and technical support of various organizations and countries. In that regard, let me take this opportunity to thank our partners for their assistance in all our efforts to combat and prevent the spread of small arms and light weapons and to call upon them to continue and increase their support.

**Mr. Strohal** (Austria): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, as other speakers have, on the excellent way in which you are presiding over our business.

Austria associates itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add a few specific points of particular concern to Austria at a time when we can welcome a new global commitment to comprehensive disarmament and non-proliferation. That development is raising expectations with regard to a number of issues, which contributes to a busy international agenda ahead.

Small arms and light weapons have rightly but sadly been termed the real weapons of mass destruction. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people are killed through their use. The United Nations Programme of Action in this regard remains the cornerstone of international efforts and constitutes a significant step forward in combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Austria is supporting its implementation, with particular focus on the African continent, where we cooperate and fund several important projects that aim to strengthen national capacities, as well as legal frameworks, at the regional and subregional levels. We are heartened that the third Biennial Meeting of States, in July 2008, laid out an action-oriented path for a more effective implementation of the Programme, and we look forward to working with Ambassador Macedo of Mexico as the Chairman-designate of next year's Meeting of States. The Programme needs the full attention of us all.

Turning to the arms trade treaty, it is obvious that insecurity, instability, human rights violations and lost development opportunities are only some of the negative consequences of the illegal arms trade. Austria therefore supports early negotiation of a strong and robust arms trade treaty. We believe that current discussions on procedural questions distract us from the main goal — a strong treaty — and should therefore be postponed until the international conference itself or, at least, its last preparatory committee session.

Overall, we are witnessing an intensifying range of preparatory activities in that regard. Within the framework of a series of regional seminars sponsored by the European Union and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Austria is honoured to host both the last regional seminar addressing countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the concluding conference of that whole seminar series, aimed at presenting the up-to-date state of the discussions, recommendations and ideas on the arms trade treaty process to the international community as a whole. These two conferences will take place next February in Vienna. Allow me in advance to extend an invitation to participate in these meetings and to express my delegation's confidence that together we will succeed in laying the groundwork for the successful negotiation of an arms trade treaty.

The prohibition of anti-personnel mines has been a constant priority of Austria's foreign policy. Since its adoption, Austria has lent its full support to the Mine Ban Treaty, and we are committed to continuing to do so at the upcoming second Review Conference, which will be hosted by Colombia in a few weeks in Cartagena; we thank our hosts for their preparatory efforts. We certainly will respond by working assiduously towards a strong Cartagena action plan. The plan should assist States in implementing their commitments and should bring all of us closer to a mine-free world. With that goal ahead of us, Austria calls on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty at the earliest date.

One of our priorities continues to be the improvement of assistance to landmine victims. In preparation for the Cartagena Conference, Austria co-sponsored a project to examine the global impact of and remaining challenges for the Mine Ban Treaty in order to improve the situation of victims. This project's

results have been brought together in a report entitled "Voices from the Ground". It was presented by our Foreign Minister, Michael Spindelegger, in Geneva in September, just a few weeks ago. The report constitutes a thorough analysis of what has been achieved to date for the betterment of landmine survivors as well as their affected families and communities. At the same time, the report also highlights areas where more work needs to be done to secure a life of dignity and economic independence for mine victims.

Austria will continue to strengthen victim assistance within the framework of the Mine Ban Treaty, as well as in other forums, such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Conventional Weapons Convention. One important future task will be the overall coordination of victim assistance activities in order to allow the use of resources in the most rational and effective manner.

The Mine Ban Treaty has inspired the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the most important recent contribution to international humanitarian law and disarmament. As members know, today there will be a special event organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and we encourage States in this context to use the opportunity afforded by this event to sign the Convention or to deposit their instruments of ratification.

We have done so already, as the sixth State, on 2 April 2009. We certainly also want to use this opportunity to commend Malawi and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for their ratifications, which bring us closer to the Convention's entry into force. It is our sincere hope that the Convention will receive the necessary 30 ratifications before the end of this year. We certainly welcome the offer made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic to host the first meeting of States parties. To support these developments, Austria has engaged in a worldwide campaign and will support a cluster munitions conference to be held in Indonesia in November this year.

In conclusion, let me express Austria's continued commitment to contributing actively to these processes, as well as our expectations for active engagement by all in order to secure meaningful results.

**Mr. Obisakin** (Nigeria) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor on behalf of the Group of African States.

*(spoke in English)*

On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and all the other members of the Bureau on the highly commendable manner in which you have steered our debate.

On the subject of a future arms trade treaty, the African Group recognizes the need to address the problems relating to unregulated trade in conventional weapons and the diversion of such weapons to illicit markets. Considering that such risks can fuel instability, international terrorism and transnational organized crime, the African Group supports the idea that international action should be taken to address the problem. It believes that exporters and importers respectively bear a responsibility to address the current situation, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, avoiding political abuse and acting in a non-discriminatory manner. The African Group believes that we should work towards a legally binding instrument that will address effectively the challenges posed by the illicit trade in conventional arms.

On a future arms trade treaty, the African Group wishes to make the following points. The larger purpose of the principles of an eventual arms trade treaty must be to promote and sustain international peace and security. Africa, like many other areas, has regional and subregional arrangements that regulate the transfer of arms. We are of the opinion that these existing regional arrangements should inspire our work here. As to scope, the African Group recommends, *inter alia*, that an arms trade treaty should be fundamentally anchored on the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The future instrument should be an efficient tool for addressing the challenges posed by unregulated trade in conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. International assistance in supporting and promoting capacity-building, including measures to promote and popularize the instrument, should be encouraged.

The African Group wishes to express its concern at the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons. Accordingly, the African Group wishes to state that the framework of the third Biennial Meeting of States on national and regional implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should be pursued with vigour.

Africa also wishes to draw attention to the necessity of focusing more on the needs of developing countries for technical and financial empowerment to enable them to address adequately the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons. Regarding the menace of anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), Africa wishes to reiterate its previous appeals for the training of personnel, specifically for modernization of existing but old institutions for training experts, in order to improve capacity for preventing the pernicious effects of anti-personnel mines and ERW. In that connection, Africa fully supports all multilateral and bilateral technical efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of victims of ERW.

**Mr. Kaganda** (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation has the pleasure of sharing its perspective on the important topic of conventional weapons. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the entire Bureau on the outstanding service you have rendered to the First Committee thus far. My delegation also wishes to align itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Conventional weapons, whether legitimately acquired or otherwise, are today responsible for instability in most countries the world over, and especially on the African continent. They are contributory factors in illegitimate and unconstitutional changes of government, a source of untold pain and suffering to innocent civilians, and a major threat to national, regional and international stability and sustainable development.

These weapons, coupled with their unregulated circulation and their irresponsible deployment, are responsible for the most heinous crimes against humanity and war crimes. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan once described a category of these weapons, namely small arms and light weapons, in terms of the carnage they cause, these weapons could well be described as weapons of mass destruction. And, indeed, they are weapons of mass atrocities, particularly in Africa's Great Lakes region.

My delegation welcomes and supports disarmament and non-proliferation efforts on conventional weapons at the regional and international levels under the multilateral framework of the United

Nations. While affirming the inherent right of States to self-defence and the maintenance of territorial sovereignty, as prescribed in international law, we denounce in the strongest way possible the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We support and commit ourselves to implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We welcome the outcome of the third Biennial Meeting of States, held in 2008, and look forward to the upcoming Meeting, to be held here in New York in June next year. We call on participants to draw lessons from the previous meetings, with a view to ensuring a fruitful and meaningful outcome at the next one.

Similarly, we welcome the ongoing negotiations for a global binding instrument to regulate the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. It is the sincere hope of my delegation that the time between now and the diplomatic conference to adopt the treaty, planned for 2012, will be used to ensure that the treaty adequately addresses the diverse concerns of future States parties with regard to production, supply, transfer, acquisition and storage by end-users.

It is imperative that the treaty be inspired by international human rights and humanitarian law. It is also important that it take into account local and regional dimensions, particularly the security dimensions that are necessary for its eventual acceptability and legitimacy. My delegation pledges to participate effectively in the remaining negotiations and calls on other delegations to do the same.

It is disheartening to note that military expenditure is on the rise. My delegation wonders if that is as a result of regional and global insecurity or simply a vicious spiral in the arms race. Be that as it may, we do not believe that that is a rational way forward. It certainly does not make sense to continue on such a course when millions of people are trapped in poverty, when millions of children are dying of hunger or curable diseases, and when commitments made to assist those in the bottom billion in their plight are not met. We strongly call for a review of those priorities.

Tanzania welcomes the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dublin in May 2008. We have signed the Convention and are in the

process of ratifying it. We believe that the early entry into force of this historic Convention, which, among other things, addresses the humanitarian consequences of cluster bombs, will contribute to global peace and security, while also ensuring that victims' wounds are taken care of. We commend the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for committing itself to hosting the first meeting of States parties to the Convention next year. My delegation looks forward to attending the meeting as a fully fledged State party.

In the same vein, we affirm our support for the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines. Tanzania is party to the Convention and continues to discharge its obligations tenaciously. We commend the Government of Colombia for agreeing to host the second Review Conference, in Cartagena next month. We assure the Government of Colombia of our continued support in the process leading to the Conference and of our eventual participation.

In conclusion, we wish to restate our strongly held view that multilateralism, as well as international cooperation and assistance, are pivotal in the disarmament process. We therefore call for continued cooperation and assistance to regional and subregional endeavours, especially in the region of the Great Lakes of Africa and the Horn of Africa, in addressing the consequences of the illicit trade in and circulation of small arms and light weapons, including but not limited to internal conflicts and armed violence, transnational organized crime, the pillaging of natural resources, terrorism and piracy.

**Ms. Mourabit** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and to thank you for the effective and pragmatic way in which you are presiding over this Committee. My thanks go also to the other members of the Bureau for their excellent work.

My delegation is pleased to participate in the thematic debate on conventional weapons. This debate on an item that is closely linked to the issue of the proliferation and the illicit and unregulated trade in light arms, demonstrates the importance accorded to it by the First Commission and the Committee's determination to address it properly.

Morocco remains especially concerned about the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, in particular in Africa. The availability of weapons in Africa is also at the root of ongoing conflicts and of

relapses that have occurred despite the signing of peace agreements and the start of the peacebuilding phase.

My country consistently stresses that the international community must pay very special attention to Africa, which, in spite of its great economic potential and its considerable human resources, still sees its development thwarted. That is why Morocco believes it necessary to strive for the universality of international instruments on certain conventional weapons, in particular the Firearms Protocol of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

Based on that conviction, Morocco was among the first countries to sign the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and two of its Protocols, II and IV. It has indicated its intention to accept to be bound by Protocols I, III and V. The Convention is of paramount importance insofar as it is inspired by the principle of protecting civilians from the effects of weapons and to prevent combatants from undergoing suffering that would be excessive in relation to the military objective. That purpose is stated in the Convention itself, and the Protocols are intended to govern restrictions or prohibitions on the use of certain types of weapons; they cover non-detectable fragments, non-detectable mines, as well as booby-traps and other devices, incendiary weapons and blinding laser weapons.

In that context, Morocco organized in Rabat, in November 2008, jointly with the United Nations, a seminar on promoting the universality of the Convention and its Protocols, aimed at States of the Middle East and Mediterranean region not party to the CCW, with a view to explaining the aims of that instrument and its Protocols, as well as the inherent advantages of their adherence to that Convention.

A review of the existing international regime on the fight against the proliferation of and the illicit trade in small arms shows how vast and fragile that regime is and, at the same time, the importance of stepping up international efforts, whether at the global, regional or subregional levels, so as to eradicate the negative effects of such weapons, which compromise the security, stability and development of States. This legal arsenal aimed at reducing the human cost of the use of small arms and light weapons and optimizing the

chances for development should be complemented by comprehensive and binding international instruments.

However, these norms will not have the desired effects without a determined political commitment on the part of countries that produce, export and import these arms to fully assume their responsibilities by updating and adapting their domestic legislation and by complying with the international obligations that they have undertaken in this area.

In this context, my country believes that any international policy on controlling this phenomenon must be based on a solid international legal system that enables us to put an end to the illicit trafficking of these destructive arms and to identify them in order to trace them in a reliable and rapid manner.

United Nations efforts in this field have yielded significant progress thanks to the 2001 adoption 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 2005 adoption of an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. This international regime must, however, grow to encompass illicit brokering and be strengthened in order to effectively and efficiently curb the uncontrolled circulation of these arms and its impact on international peace and security.

As we await the strengthening of this regime, Morocco believes that implementing these instruments will be a vital contribution to limiting the disastrous effects of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. My country therefore continues to implement these two instruments, despite their voluntary and non-binding nature, and to regularly submit our national reports on the Programme of Action.

In spite of its failure, the first Small Arms Review Conference, held in 2006, indicated the broad consensus that exists on the importance of the Programme of Action and its relevance as an essential basis for international action to regulate the circulation of light weapons.

It is precisely because of this that, in 2008, the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms reaffirmed the importance of regional approaches for the implementation of the Programme of Action,

recommended the organization of regional meetings to combine efforts to implement the Programme of Action and recognized the importance of international cooperation and assistance to achieve the full and effective implementation of this instrument.

Morocco is also following attentively and with interest the ongoing efforts towards an arms trade treaty. My country sees the process undertaken by the Open-ended Working Group to establish common standards for the scope and parameters for a future instrument as an important step and a valuable contribution towards the objective of regulating the circulation of light weapons. It is very clear that this process should not in any way affect the sovereign right of States to procure arms that they need for national security purposes, but should apply only to illicit and uncontrolled transfers of arms that could compromise the security and development of countries.

It is only natural that my country quickly joined in efforts by certain countries, in particular Switzerland, that brought about the June 2006 adoption of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. This initiative, whose relevance has been demonstrated by the growing number of countries that have joined it, is part of the natural continuity of efforts led by the United Nations, particularly through the General Assembly.

The Kingdom of Morocco believes in the indivisibility of the concept of security and remains convinced that violence and development are interdependent in the sense that the former prevents the latter. In this respect, international partnerships must be strengthened so that donor countries, development institutions and disarmament organizations are able to integrate the issue of armed violence into their programmes of action. This will allow us to focus existing strategies on efforts that are innovative, harmonized and appropriate for each situation and that target specific objectives in order to attack the underlying causes of armed violence, prevent it and mobilize and channel the resources necessary for development.

Finally, the need to deal with the issue of light weapons is clearly acute today, as its troubling ramifications include grave global threats such as international terrorism and transnational organized crime. This highlights the urgency with which the international community must provide a global

response to this problem to break once and for all the vicious cycle that links light weapons to security and development.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the United Kingdom to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.38.

**Mr. Duncan** (United Kingdom): I must begin with an apology for the fact that there are no hard copies of my statement available to members. I hope that, by now, the interpreters have a copy, but if not, I will speak slowly, but keeping within your guidelines, Mr. Chairman. The text of the statement will be available on the Internet later this afternoon and, for those on Twitter, via that wonderful new technology.

It is a privilege to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.38, entitled “The arms trade treaty”, on behalf of the co-authors, Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Kenya and Japan.

The co-authors represent a broad cross-section of international opinion, and we have been encouraged in our endeavours over the past three years by the way that the vast majority of the world community has rallied to the cause of those who believe that we must take action to ensure a more effective regulation of the international arms trade. But equally, we have recognized the spirit of positive and constructive engagement by many others who have had doubts and, on occasion, concerns about whether an arms trade treaty was the best way forward and how it would operate in practice.

As many speakers during this thematic debate have remarked, at each stage of the discussion over the past two years we have been able to produce a consensus report to the General Assembly. In this, we owe much to the wise chairing of these discussions by Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina.

The co-authors welcome the new United States engagement and support on this issue, which was highlighted by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a statement on 15 October and in the United States national statement in this forum earlier this week (see A/C.1/64/PV.14).

The draft resolution that the co-authors have put before the First Committee this year reflects a widespread view in our United Nations community that the time for general discussion is over. We must move forward to consider the practical details of an arms

trade treaty and to set out a clear framework for the treaty, giving direction and purpose to our overall goal. In keeping with the very positive discussion over the past two years, the co-authors want an inclusive process, and one that can be supported by all. There will be differences in the negotiation. That is what negotiation is about.

The co-authors are united in seeking a strong arms trade treaty: one that addresses the abuses of human rights and humanitarian law that can result from the lack of effective regulation in the international arms trade. The wider damage caused to sustainable development and to our collective effort to maintain international security and stability are well understood.

We all understand the importance of these issues. The question is not whether regulation of the arms trade should pay due regard to these issues. The question is one of how we can, via an arms trade treaty, ensure that we all live up to those responsibilities and obligations when we authorize individual arms exports from, or transfer arms through, our countries.

As you said before, Mr. Chairperson, an arms trade treaty is not a mechanism for establishing embargos. It is about taking responsible and informed decisions, on a case-by-case basis, through national control mechanisms. The arms trade treaty will ensure that everyone follows the same procedures while retaining national decision-making over individual exports. However, we have resisted efforts to pre-negotiate the treaty via its mandate. We believe that the current draft resolution preserves everyone's position as we move into this next important phase.

There is much work ahead, and we look forward to working as constructively as we have over the past two years. It is the sincere hope of all the co-authors that all of our other colleagues will feel able to support this draft resolution.

**Mr. Somdah** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for your outstanding chairmanship and to pledge to you and the members of the Bureau my delegation's full cooperation and support. My thanks also go to the members of the Secretariat for their valuable assistance. Burkina Faso associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria, respectively, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

Maintaining and strengthening international peace and security has always been a major concern for the international community. At the outset, therefore, I would like once again to say how pleased I am about the historical commitments that have been made this year by most States in connection with disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear arms. We are convinced that consolidating efforts in that regard will lead us steadily towards our ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. However, I wish to dwell a bit on the question of small arms and light weapons, in the hope that the necessary attention will be paid to this issue.

Although weapons of mass destruction and the resulting threats to collective security are at the heart of the concerns of the international community, threats related to the proliferation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons are also acute throughout the world. This type of weapon causes thousands of deaths every year — many more than those resulting from missiles, tanks and mortars in both conflict and non-conflict zones. These weapons are also the essential factor in unleashing and fuelling armed conflicts. They seriously undermine socio-economic development in many States, foster political instability and insecurity and contribute to grave excesses of violence and threats to human rights and international humanitarian law. Similarly, in the context of the fragile peace in post-conflict situations, this phenomenon is also an obstacle to a peacebuilding strategy and to the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

West Africa, which has experienced conflicts and ongoing tension related to the porous nature of its borders, is one of the subregions of the world where the issue of combating small arms and light weapons is extremely important. Out of concern for that situation and the desire to find appropriate answers, Burkina Faso has established a high authority for the control and inspection of arms imports and their use, as well as a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms. As part of the functions of those two agencies, Burkina Faso has initiated a registration process for weapons throughout the country, including at military and paramilitary barracks, so as to create a computerized database to reliably report on the precise status of weapons currently within our national territory. Moreover, an end-user certificate scheme has

also been implemented to create transparency in arms transfers to Burkina Faso.

Those efforts also include ongoing public awareness campaigns targeting those affected that illustrate the harm caused by weapons proliferation. They include effective support from members of the media, in particular the Network of West African Journalists for Integration and Peace, which was established in 2006.

Burkina Faso enjoys the support of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which in 2006 put in place its Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, with the goal of regulating and reducing the proliferation of small arms in the ECOWAS zone. The same is true for the assistance we receive from the Small Arms Control Programme, which is a major asset in managing this scourge as we develop direct links with United Nations entities such as the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge the international community to pursue and intensify its efforts in the area of providing assistance to support States and subregional organizations such as ECOWAS in their fight to control and eventually eradicate the scourge of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

As a party to the main legal instruments on disarmament, Burkina Faso will continue to support all relevant and related initiatives in that regard. We welcome the establishment this year of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty. At the same time, we acknowledge that, given the interests involved, controlling and regulating weapons is a very complex undertaking. Burkina Faso believes that it is crucial to ensure effective security. That issue should prevail over any other consideration, in particular financial or strategic ones. We hope that the fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is scheduled for June 2010, will be an opportunity to consider more vigorous and suitable measures to reasonably curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that it is essential to develop new security doctrines that are

not based on the old ones, to cooperate, act sustainably and take the measures necessary to decisively resolve the chronic conflicts that are the main incentives for the acquisition of weapons, thereby eliminating the sources of insecurity and instability throughout the world, including the growing gap between rich and poor.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to request the cooperation of representatives in keeping order and quiet in the room.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms.

**Mr. McCarthy** (Coordinating Action on Small Arms): I take the floor today to provide Member States with a brief update on the United Nations initiative that I coordinate to develop international small arms control standards. In July of last year, at the third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, the United Nations launched the initiative to develop a set of international small arms control standards that will provide clear and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of small arms control.

In his 2008 report on small arms (S/2008/258), the Secretary-General informed Member States of this initiative. It draws inspiration from, and follows in the footsteps of, previous United Nations initiatives to develop international standards in the areas of mine action — the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) — and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants — the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS). The international small arms control standards that we develop will be framed by the global agreements on small arms that already exist and will build upon the standards, best practice guidelines, model regulations, et cetera, that have already been formulated at the regional and subregional levels.

Similar to IMAS and IDDRS, the purpose of developing international small arms control standards is primarily to enhance the ability of the United Nations to deliver as one on small arms issues, whether they concern legal, programmatic or operational aspects of the problem. As with IMAS and IDDRS, internationally accepted and validated standards on small arms control will also be useful beyond the

United Nations system by providing clear and comprehensive guidance to small arms practitioners and policymakers, whether they work in national Governments, regional organizations, civil society or the small arms industry.

I should stress that these international small arms control standards will not be legally binding or obligatory in any way. Rather, they will provide voluntary guidance within the United Nations system and to other stakeholders where such guidance could be useful, and they will be made available for use, at no cost, to a wide range of relevant actors.

We have now identified the individual standards modules for development, comprising legal, programmatic, operational and cross-cutting issues. We have engaged leading experts as consultants to help us draft first versions of these modules, and we have created an expert reference group, comprising representatives of Governments, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and the small arms industry, to help us review and provide feedback on them. The work that the United Nations has undertaken to date on this initiative would not have been possible without the financial support that we have received from the Governments of Australia, Canada, Ireland and Norway.

We have much work ahead of us. The goal we have set ourselves is to finalize a first set of international small arms control standards in time for the fourth Biennial Meeting of States, in June of next year. To achieve this goal, we will require additional financial support, and I stand ready to provide any interested Government with full details of the initiative and our remaining financial needs.

In conclusion, the development by the United Nations of international small arms control standards aims to support the implementation of existing global commitments. By providing technical guidance on a wide spectrum of policies, programmes and operational activities, the standards will not only enable the United Nations to provide more effective support to Member States on this issue, but they will also provide voluntary technical assistance to Member States on how to go about implementing their global commitments. I look forward to keeping Member States updated on this initiative as it develops.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on the representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

**Mr. Geertsen** (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe): The illicit trade in small arms is among the vital concerns of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE region includes major producers and exporters of small arms and light weapons. Ninety per cent of the illicit small arms and light weapons are diverted from the legal market. Therefore, internationally accepted norms, measures and standards, along with cooperation at the regional and global levels, are essential for establishing effective control over the entire cycle of small arms and light weapons and to stop the diversion.

By adopting the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2000, the OSCE firmly set the issue on its agenda. Since the establishment of this comprehensive instrument for tackling the risks arising from small arms, the OSCE has rigorously worked to implement the adopted commitments and further enhance export controls on small arms and light weapons.

In 2004 and 2008, such measures were further developed through the adoption by the Forum for Security Co-operation of decisions introducing more stringent export controls. Coupled with the endorsement of best practices guides on illicit trafficking by air, a more solid basis for addressing illicit transfers was developed. The creation of mechanisms to address surplus and insecure small arms broadened even more the role of the OSCE to act in support of participating States.

In so doing, the OSCE has accumulated unique operational and managerial experience to successfully manage large-scale assistance projects on small arms and light weapon destruction and stockpile management and security. The OSCE has worked hard to underpin and stimulate initiatives undertaken within the framework of the United Nations. The organization's contribution is vital for global processes of fighting the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, first, by contributing to more effective legislative controls in the OSCE area, and, secondly, by strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We should recall that effective action

at the regional level paved the way for the adoption of the Programme of Action.

In addition to standards-setting, the OSCE works to catalyse international networks for innovative cooperation. The Synergy Conference for Regional Organizations on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action was a case in point. The conference was organized jointly by the OSCE and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in May 2008. The first of its kind, and supported by the United Nations, the Conference brought together more than 30 intergovernmental organizations dealing with issues of small arms control.

Despite the success achieved in putting together comprehensive small arms and light weapons control measures, reality dictates an ongoing need for updating regional, national and global controls. In 2008, the OSCE initiated discussions on the effectiveness of the current measures, which culminated in the decision to hold a small arms and light weapons review meeting. In September 2009, the OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation held the meeting, which produced a number of concrete proposals that will serve as the basis for further work in small arms and light weapons in order to close possible loopholes that enable illicit production, transfer and use of small arms and light weapons.

Finally, the OSCE strives to deepen the dialogue with counterparts from other international organizations, including the United Nations. In this respect, I am pleased to note that the OSCE is planning to hold a meeting in February 2010 on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons by its participating States. The meeting will provide a good opportunity to assess the level of implementation of OSCE and global commitments as preparation for the fourth Biennial Meeting of States, where the OSCE intends to take an active part.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded our discussion on conventional weapons. There is a request to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Given that we have just one meeting today, we would normally offer the opportunity to exercise that right at the meeting's end. However, since we will now be moving to a different topic and will begin the thematic discussion on other disarmament measures

and international security, I propose that, if there are no objections from other delegations, we give the representative requesting it the opportunity to exercise the right of reply.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As usual, the representative of Israel has tried desperately to misinform this Committee and poison its important and noble discussions. His objective was to cover up Israel's daily crimes and violations of international resolutions by repeatedly and monotonously referring to a crisis and by levelling false allegations of claimed transfers of weapons to Lebanon. All this is based on the well-known policy to which Israelis resort whenever they are in a bind, namely, that a good offence is the best defence.

It is no secret to the well-informed observer that those allegations are intended to cover up Israel's continued violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon and of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which was adopted primarily to stop Israeli aggression against Lebanon in 2006. Everybody here knows that all the reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council on the implementation of that resolution have referred to the continued Israeli violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006) since its adoption.

Israel continues to occupy Lebanese territories in Shab'a farms and the Kafr Shuba hills and the northern part of Ghajar village. The Secretary-General's reports further hold Israel responsible for dropping cluster bombs and planting mines in southern Lebanon in an indiscriminate manner. Israel has not handed over maps showing the locations of those cluster bombs and mines. We also recall here that Israel still refuses to hand over maps of thousands of mines planted in the occupied Syrian Golan, which has led to the deaths of so many, including children — 217 deaths to date.

The scandal of eavesdropping devices planted by Israel in southern Lebanon after the aggression in 2006, which were remotely exploded when a unit of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon was passing by, is the best proof of what we are saying.

It is well known that the world's big traders in conventional weapons, especially illicit ones, are retired Israeli officers working for Israeli weapons firms. For decades Israel has depended on what it calls arms diplomacy, as was clearly expressed by Israeli Finance Minister Yaakov Meridor in 1981:

“We will say to the Americans: do not compete with us in South Africa; do not compete with us in the Caribbean, or in any other country in which you cannot be active publicly. Let us do that on your behalf. You can sell ammunition through a mediator, and Israel will be your mediator.”

It has recently become clear that Israeli weapons are fuelling all crises, including, for example, that in the Caucasus, which came close to explosion.

It is obvious that the words of the Israeli representative before this Committee do not correspond with Israel's acts. Israel's involvement in the illicit arms trade, which is internationally known, encourages international terrorism and protects drug gangs and separatist movements throughout the world. It has even reached the point of organizing international gangs, led by rabbis, trading in the body parts of children.

We also recall that Israel has brought terrorism to the Middle East since the 1940s, when it assassinated United Nations staff members and committed hundreds of terrorism crimes in Deir Yassin, Qibia, Kafr Qasim, Jenin and Beit Hanoun in Palestine, Bahr al-Baqar in Egypt, Qana and Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

In addition, Israel violates the sovereignty and security of countries all over the world by using false and real passports issued by some countries that are willing to provide the Israelis with cover to carry out espionage and assassination operations. Israel has even spied on its closest ally, the United States of America, with a view to stealing nuclear and conventional weapons secrets.

The continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories and its use of internationally banned weapons against civilians in Gaza is terrorism at its highest level.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We will now move to our thematic debate on other disarmament measures and international security.

I invite Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, to make a statement. I kindly request that the Ambassador remain within the time limit of 10 to 15 minutes, as suggested in the letter of invitation from the High Representative.

**Mr. García Moritán** (*spoke in Spanish*): In resolution 63/69, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, a report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. The report should take into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the different views expressed by Member States and the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, with a view to taking a decision during the sixty-fourth session. It is therefore an honour for me to present the report (A/64/296).

As members know, the report was prepared between February and July 2009, during which the Group held three sessions. The first two sessions were held in Geneva, from 16 to 20 February and from 27 April to 1 May, respectively. The third was held in New York from 6 to 10 July.

The regular triennial reviews of the Register's operation are, in my opinion, an essential mechanism for assessing achievements, evaluating shortfalls and identifying different ways to better utilize and improve the significance of the Register.

In the course of the three sessions, the Group had the opportunity to exchange a range of views through substantive discussions and to agree on the need to even further improve the Register's significance and on encouraging universal participation. In that regard, everyone agreed and concluded that the Register continues to be an important global confidence-building measure as it helps to minimize the risk of misunderstandings or miscalculations, building an unprecedented environment highly conducive to facilitating bilateral, regional and universal dialogue in that sphere.

To date, the Register is the only global transparency instrument on conventional arms transfers and, therefore, has a recognized important role in preventing the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of such weapons, enhancing trust, promoting stability and strengthening international peace and security. From that perspective, it seems essential to underscore the tremendous international importance of the Register, in particular if we take into account the fact that all the permanent members of the Security Council participate in it and that it embraces countries that are the main arms sellers, such that it

contains information on approximately 90 per cent of all transfers that take place every year.

The agreed report, which we have before us, provides up-to-date data and analyses the information supplied by States. It includes an assessment of the continued and future operation of the Register, in particular identifying regional priorities and taking into account recent technological developments in armaments and military equipment, current security and concerns about war capacity and emerging tactical methods.

In this report, the Group of Experts that reviewed the Register endorses the recommendations of the 2006 Group of Governmental Experts and makes a number of specific recommendations, which include the need to adopt measures to assist Member States to build capacity to submit meaningful and relevant reports, in particular on small arms and light weapons, by making adjustments to the standardized reporting forms. It also encourages efforts towards achieving the goal of universal participation. To that end, some significant proposals aimed at expanding the current categories of conventional arms and at introducing new categories were considered, in connection both with new classes of equipment that are beginning to be increasingly used in combat operations and with a category for small arms and light weapons. However, it should be acknowledged that the Group was unable to reach consensus on the proposals to expand the Register's scope and, consequently, to adapt it to the new political and military circumstances.

In my view, it was not possible to reach consensus in either area owing in part to the limited time allotted to the Group's work, which had significant bearing on the inability to fully discuss those proposals. The final session of the Group of Governmental Experts focused mainly on a compromise proposal to add a new category of small arms and light weapons, which, however, could not find support among all the experts. Regrettably, therefore, without the opportunity for an additional session, the Group limited itself to recommending that the Secretary-General seek the views of States on the introduction of small arms and light weapons as a new category of the Register. It would be good if all Member States could convey their points of view to the Secretary-General in that regard in the future.

Bearing in mind that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation are a serious security concern for many States throughout the world, I believe that, given more time, the Group of Governmental Experts would have had the opportunity to reach agreement on the importance of including that new category.

Today, the international community is facing significant challenges to international peace and security, caused by armed conflicts, the activities of terrorist groups and the illicit trafficking of arms. That is why, in introducing this report as Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts, I reaffirm my belief that it is of the utmost importance to keep the Register permanently updated so that it may effectively address the new threats and pressing risks of the unregulated transfer of weapons, which today is certainly one of the greatest causes of concern for the international community.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements or to introduce draft resolutions on other disarmament measures and international security.

I give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/64/L.50 and A/C.1/64/L.26.

**Mr. van den IJsell** (Netherlands): May I start by taking this opportunity to thank Ambassador García Moritán for his excellent presentation and for his able chairmanship of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

I am taking the floor at this stage to introduce two draft resolutions, one of them on the Register.

I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of, at present, 90 sponsors, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/64/L.50, entitled "Transparency in armaments". The rationale behind the Assembly's resolutions on transparency in armaments, of which the Netherlands is traditionally the main sponsor, is that openness in military matters, in particular transparency in transfers of armaments, contributes to confidence- and security-building among Governments.

Against that background, with resolution 46/36 L of 1991 the General Assembly established the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, through which all Member States can provide annually, on a voluntary basis, data on their imports and exports of conventional

arms. Member States can also make available background information regarding their military holdings, procurement through national production, relevant policies and transfers of small arms and light weapons.

Every three years, a Group of Governmental Experts reviews the operation and further development of the Register. The most recent report (A/64/296) has just been presented to this Committee by Ambassador García Moritán. The recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts are reflected in the draft resolution, which also requests the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to convene the next Group of Governmental Experts in 2012. The draft resolution already enjoys the support of a large number of sponsors from across all regions. While thanking those delegations that have already done so, it is my pleasure to invite other delegations to join: the draft resolution is still open for additional sponsors.

The delegation of the Netherlands expresses the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted with the overwhelming support that similar texts have enjoyed in the past.

Secondly, I have the pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.26, entitled "National legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology". With this biennial text, Member States are invited to enact or improve national legislation, regulations and procedures to exercise effective control over the transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology. Furthermore, States are encouraged to provide, on a voluntary basis, information on their national legislation, regulations and procedures, as well as changes therein, to the Secretary-General.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs has set up a database where all information exchanged pursuant to the relevant resolutions can be consulted. This exchange of information not only contributes to mutual understanding, transparency and confidence among Member States but is also beneficial to Member States that are in the process of developing legislation on these transfers.

The current draft resolution is an update of the 2007 resolution on the same subject (resolution 62/26). Previously, resolutions on this subject have been adopted by consensus. The Netherlands trusts that the draft resolution again meets with the approval of all

Member States and looks forward to its adoption by consensus.

**Mr. Suda** (Japan): Although this is not the first time that my delegation has taken the floor at this session, I cannot but express our deep appreciation for the marvellous leadership of this Committee, Mr. Chairman, that you have exercised over the past two weeks, which has been efficient and generous.

I would like to make a brief statement on the importance of education and public awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation. Over the past year, we have witnessed some historic developments in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. However, the impetus behind this is not self-perpetuating and needs constant nurturing. Japan believes that education and public awareness are integral to promoting and propelling disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and form the long-term basis for any concerted international initiative.

Education on disarmament and non-proliferation should be a two-way communication between civil society and Government. For instance, as I stated in the general debate (see A/C.1/64/PV.3), Japan believes that it has the moral responsibility to exert its utmost efforts to pass on the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to people all over the world and to coming generations. As Prime Minister Hatoyama said at the recent Security Council summit (see S/PV.6191), all world leaders are encouraged to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki and absorb with their own eyes and ears the cruelty of nuclear weapons.

In this regard, every year since 1983, the Government of Japan, under the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme, has invited young diplomats from around the world to those two cities. Thus far, we have hosted almost 700 diplomats involved in that programme.

Furthermore, political leaders and government officials should also receive input from civil society, which is a fertile source of flexible thinking and innovative ideas. For example, delegations could learn a lot from the critical analysis found in *First Committee Monitor*, a newsletter which is published weekly by non-governmental organizations whose members listen attentively to delegations' statements every day.

We also hope that the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, co-chaired by Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi of Japan and Mr. Gareth Evans of Australia, which completed its last meeting in Hiroshima yesterday, will issue its significant report early next year. The Commission will greatly contribute to our work in this field.

Japan, along with 29 other countries, delivered a joint statement on disarmament and non-proliferation education this year at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference. In that statement, we encouraged the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's 2002 report (A/57/168). I wish to re-emphasize the significance of those recommendations and urge all Member States to put them into practice.

At the third session of the Preparatory Committee, in an effort to implement the recommendation of that report to cooperate with research institutions, Japan, together with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the Monterey Institute of International Studies, hosted a seminar entitled "Practical ways and tools to raise public awareness through education and its role in strengthening the NPT". Prominent academics, diplomats, educators, students and atomic bomb survivors — *hibakusha* — took part and put forward their ideas, including the active use of the United Nations Cyberschoolbus website for promoting education in the disarmament context.

In wrapping up my statement, I would like to say that, while education and public awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation are not as headline-catching as nuclear weapon reductions, they can be a way to make various ideas more possible and strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation efforts of the international community. We should thus place greater emphasis on education and public awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation.

**Mr. Perazza** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): For the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and associated States — Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my country,

Uruguay — it is well known that peace is an essential element for the ongoing and developing process of regional integration. In this respect, the States members of MERCOSUR are committed to the strengthening of mechanisms for consultation and cooperation in matters of security and defence.

We thank the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts established by resolution 63/69, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, for the presentation of the report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development (A/64/296). MERCOSUR member States and associated States believe that the Register is the only transparent, global instrument on conventional arms transfers and that it plays an important role in building confidence, promoting stability and fostering international peace and security.

In that regard, we recall that, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report (A/64/296), consistent and universal participation in the Register by all Member States can have a significant impact on the Organization's debates aimed at promoting transparency in military matters, including the global trade in conventional weapons and the fight against the illicit trade in such weapons. Likewise, by providing transparency in conventional arms transfers, the Register helps to minimize the risk of misunderstandings and miscalculations, helping to facilitate bilateral and regional dialogue, foster trust and security among States, and, at the same time, encourage the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

The Group of Governmental Experts that studied the Register upheld the conclusions of the 2006 Group. It made a series of specific recommendations, which include, among other things, the need to adopt practical measures to assist States to build capacity for submission of meaningful reports, in particular on small arms and light weapons, by agreeing to adjustments to the standardized reporting forms. Another recommendation encourages efforts seeking to promote universal participation in the Register, to which end the Group considered proposals aimed at expanding the existing categories and introducing new ones.

Lastly, in accordance with the Group's recommendations, we look forward to the Secretary-General seeking the views of States, in particular on whether the absence of small arms and light weapons

as a main category of the Register had limited its relevance and directly affected decisions on the participation of States in it.

Once again, we point out that, together with the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, the Register is a concrete tool that enables us to increase transparency in the area of conventional weapons acquisitions and to identify possible destabilizing situations.

MERCOSUR and associated States believe that transparency in military expenditures is essential to building a climate of trust among States. A better flow of information on such issues can also help to ease international tension and to prevent conflicts. To that end, our regional group welcomes the decision for the working group responsible for reviewing the operation of and improvement to the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures to begin its work next year.

**Ms. Allen Hilton (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolutions submitted to the First Committee under the thematic cluster on other disarmament measures and international security address issues of great significance. Allow me to focus on three of those that are particularly important to my delegation.

Regarding draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.13, entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation", Cuba reiterates that the quest for negotiated solutions in the multilateral sphere and the need to reach collective agreements are the only way to safeguard international peace and security.

Practice has shown that the goal of disarmament, arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are not going to be achieved by implementing unilateral measures, by promoting negotiated agreements outside the recognized international multilateral frameworks, or through the use or threat of use of force. The stagnation of negotiations in the multilateral disarmament machinery, experienced for some years owing to the lack of political will of certain actors, augments the value of multilateralism. Fortunately, we are beginning to see some initial promising steps. Multilateralism and negotiated peaceful solutions, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, remain the only appropriate way to solve disputes and to make progress towards general and complete disarmament.

Regarding draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.10, on the relationship between disarmament and development, for my delegation it is of utmost importance to reiterate that these two elements are the primary challenges that humankind must address, in particular given the global nature of the deep economic, social, food, energy and environmental crisis that affects us. While the economies bleed, in particular those of developing countries, global military expenditure in 2008 increased by some 4 per cent compared to the previous year, to reach \$1.46 trillion. That harmful trend has meant that, in the past 10 years, arms expenditure has increased 45 per cent worldwide.

At the same time, there are budget cuts to social, education and health-care programmes throughout the world. As a result, to give only two examples, in 2008, the number of hungry people in the world increased from 854 million to 963 million and will surpass 1.02 billion this year. The worldwide number of unemployed could increase to 230 million during 2009.

In that regard, Cuba affirms its proposal for the establishment of a fund administered by the United Nations, to which at least half the current military expenditure would be allocated, with the aim of meeting the economic and social development requirements of needy countries. Likewise, we reiterate our support for the Action Programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which contains the international commitment to allocating a portion of the resources freed through disarmament to socio-economic development.

My delegation would like to underscore the importance of the observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control (see draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.12). Cuba has accumulated vast experience through the adoption and implementation of laws and policies enabling it to observe environmental norms in all processes of social life, including in the various international disarmament and arms control instruments to which it is a State party.

However, the existence of weapons of mass destruction and their continuing improvement is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, to the fragile environmental balance of our planet and to sustainable development for all without distinction. To date, the Convention on Chemical

Weapons remains the only international agreement that includes the verifiable destruction of such weapons and production facilities, as well as measures for the protection of people and the environment. In this regard, the principles and methods relating to the destruction of chemical weapons, which possessor States must bear in mind when they destroy them, are extremely important.

Strengthening the Convention on Biological Weapons is essential to protecting the environment and preserving the biodiversity of our planet. The draft protocol for strengthening the Convention, which was the subject of negotiations some years ago, included proposals for measures for protecting the environment in the implementation of the Convention. The international community should not abandon this goal.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, it is urgent that the Conference on Disarmament open negotiations on a treaty for the total elimination of such weapons, on a definite timetable and under strict international control. An international treaty on nuclear disarmament must include measures for protecting the environment.

**Mr. Aquino** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Charter of the United Nations laid down that the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security should be achieved with the least possible diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

Every year, in this regard, the General Assembly adopts by consensus a resolution on the relationship between disarmament and development, urging the international community to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries. It also encourages the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to make greater efforts to integrate disarmament, humanitarian and development activities.

These appeals are renewed yearly in this forum, but the reality on the ground is otherwise. In 2008, for example, global military expenditures stood at \$1.464 trillion, \$125 billion more than in 2007. This year the amount could increase by around \$38 billion, and everything indicates that this trend will continue.

According to a World Bank report entitled "The cost of attaining the Millennium Development Goals", the cost of halving extreme poverty and hunger is between \$39 billion and \$54 billion, which represents between 2.6 and 3.7 per cent of global military spending. Attaining universal education and eliminating gender disparity in education would cost between \$10 billion and \$30 billion. This represents only between 0.7 per cent and 2 per cent of global military spending. Reducing the mortality rate of children under five years of age by two thirds, and maternal mortality rates by three quarters, would cost, on average, \$25 billion: 1.7 per cent of global military spending. Reducing by half the number of those who have no access to potable water, thus improving the lives of more than 100 million people who live in marginalized areas, would cost around \$21 billion: 1.4 per cent of global military spending.

This is an absurdity that Peru has demanded we end, because we know we should be spending more on saving lives and investing in our societies' development than on weapons. It is clear that in order to deal with the challenges in the field of development, poverty eradication and the elimination of the diseases that afflict humanity, we have to avoid devoting increasing resources to military purposes when they could be spent on development needs.

Peru believes that one way of advancing towards the goal of spending less on armaments and dedicating those resources to development is to encourage confidence-building measures. In this context, we believe that transparency in the area of armaments is a tool that should be strengthened. We therefore urge Member States to respond to the call in resolution 46/36 L and to provide information on their arms imports and exports, as well as on military holdings and procurement through national production, and on related policies. We also urge Member States to cooperate at regional and subregional levels, with the aim of strengthening and coordinating international activities geared towards more openness and transparency in the area of armaments.

Peru also believes that we must make progress in the fields of regulation of the arms trade, military spending, non-proliferation and disarmament, based on universal, multilateral, non-discriminatory and transparent negotiations. In this context, we believe that international cooperation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, dialogue and confidence-building measures

make an essential contribution to establishing friendly multilateral, regional and bilateral relations among peoples and nations. Our primary tool for attaining this objective is negotiation. To that end, we call on States to participate in a transparent manner in negotiations on the arms regulation, military spending, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Peru renews its commitment to participating actively in the negotiation process and making constructive suggestions, as we have been doing in our region. In this regard, President Alan García Pérez of Peru sent a letter to Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Defence of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which has been distributed to the General Assembly as document A/64/367. Peru will continue its efforts to work alongside other UNASUR member States. We hope to their support and willingness to tackle this initiative.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.39.

**Mr. Vasiliev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The rapid development and universal introduction of advanced information and communication technologies (ICT) is one of the most important features of the world today. ICT permeates every area of human activity and creates a global information environment on which depend the political, defence, economic, socio-cultural and other components of national security, as well as our overall system of international security and stability. ICT has opened a new, non-material dimension in the world — a virtual one. This dimension, however, is certainly not without danger; on the contrary, the globalization of information systems that embrace territories made up of a large number of countries has created a completely new situation in the area of challenges and threats in the field of information security.

The peculiarity of virtual threats to international information security consists in that in the event of hostilities conducted via ICT there is no question of the use of weapons in the traditional sense, since ICT mainly makes use of civilian or dual-use technologies. Nevertheless, the scale of these weapons' effects can be comparable to the damage caused by conventional weapons or even weapons of mass destruction.

It is possible to speak of a triad of threats. It is not only individual criminals and criminal groups who can make use of ICT; terrorists, extremist organizations and States can also make use of them for hostile political, military, economic and other objectives, creating threats to national, regional and international security.

In seeking a better understanding of threats to international information security and collective ways and means to address them, Russia introduced the issue of assuring international information security at the international level in 1998. Through 2005, draft resolutions entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" were regularly adopted by consensus by the General Assembly on the initiative of the Russian Federation.

On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly, at its sixtieth session, adopted resolution 60/45, which authorized the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts on international information security on the basis of equitable geographical representation. The Group's mandate was to continue to study existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them. In 2010, after the completion of its work, the Group will draft a draft report of the Secretary-General on the results of the research to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

In our view, the international community must reach a common understanding of the urgent problems related to international information security in order to ensure that the work of the 2009 Group of Governmental Experts on international information security is successful and productive. Currently, mankind actively recognizes the important and urgent problems related to international information security. In this connection, we consider that an exchange of views and United Nations best practices on international information security, to be held during the course of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, would be an extremely important step in developing measures to ensure and support international security and stability.

The Russian Federation, together with a group of co-sponsors, is once again introducing a draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of

international information security” (A/C.1/64/L.39), for the consideration of the First Committee. Its text is nearly the same as last year’s resolution. The only substantive difference is the addition of a new paragraph 5, which sets a November 2009 date for an organizational meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts and proposes three substantive meetings in 2010, in accordance with a schedule agreed upon with the Office for Disarmament Affairs. We call upon all Member States to support this draft resolution and join in sponsoring it.

**Mr. Malzahn** (United States of America): This afternoon, the United States delegation will make statements on two draft resolutions, the first one on transparency in armaments and the second on verification and compliance.

Let me take a few moments to outline the view of the United States on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The United States has been a strong supporter of the Register and the transparency in armaments initiative since resolution 46/36 L established a multi-step process to operationalize a voluntary register of conventional arms transfers. The Register was intended to help prevent the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, in order to promote stability and strengthen international peace and security, taking into account the legitimate security needs of States and the principle of undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments.

By any measure, the Register has been a resounding success, establishing a global norm of transparency and accountability in military matters and reinforcing civilian control of the military. During its 16 years of operation, more than 170 States have participated in the Register at least once, 142 States have participated three or more times, 101 have participated at least seven times and 50 have participated every year. Annual participation has ranged from 90 to 126 States. Still, by reporting on both imports and exports, the Register has captured the vast majority of the international conventional arms trade in the Register’s seven categories. Even though some States may not participate in a given year or may have never participated, the Register captures transfers involving many of them.

Groups of Governmental Experts convened by the Secretary-General have conducted periodic reviews of the Register’s operation, and they made

recommendations on its further development in 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009. The first two Groups of Governmental Experts concluded that the Register’s existing seven categories adequately covered the weapons of most concern to the international community.

However, the 2000 Group concluded that the Register did not address the security concerns of the States around the world whose security is threatened by the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons rather than by destabilizing accumulations of weapons in the Register’s seven categories. A series of regional and subregional workshops held between 2001 and 2005 confirmed that the issue of participation was closely linked to relevance, as many States were unwilling or unable to report to a Register that was not relevant to their security concerns. Those workshops revealed overwhelming support for increasing the Register’s relevance by having it address transfers of small arms and light weapons.

This propelled the 2003 and 2006 Groups of Governmental Experts to make substantive changes to the Register. The 2003 Group added man-portable air defence systems and lowered the artillery threshold from 100 millimetres to 75 millimetres, and it opened the door to voluntary reporting of transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The 2006 Group of Governmental Experts opened the door further on SALW by agreeing to an optional standardized form for reporting SALW transfers and recommending that States in a position to do so report such transfers to the Register.

Unfortunately, the recently concluded 2009 Group of Governmental Experts failed to continue this effort to increase the relevancy of the Register. Although it agreed to a report, that report does not reflect either the broad discussions covered during the three sessions held in Geneva and New York or the closeness of an agreement to add an eighth category to cover SALW. The 2009 Group of Governmental Experts had started off well, with its first two sessions conducting a healthy and vibrant review of the Register’s operation. Consensus seemed to be forming around a proposal to add SALW to the Register, as the Group’s traditional opponents to adding SALW stepped aside.

Unfortunately, on the last day of the third and final session of the 2009 Group of Governmental

Experts, a single expert chose to block a proposal to complete nine years of discussion and six years of detailed proposals by adding SALW as an eighth category. The refusal of that expert to join consensus was a surprise and a significant disappointment. In our view, this was a significant missed opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations Register. The failure by the 2009 Group of Governmental Experts to address the security concerns of the States that traditionally do not report to the Register has undermined the traditional effort by the Group to promote universality of the Register.

For my country's part, we hope that States will excuse this failure and participate in the Register. In an effort to set the stage for the 2012 Group of Governmental Experts on the Register, the 2009 group agreed to a recommendation that the Secretary-General seek the views of Members States on the question of whether the failure of the Register to include SALW directly affected some national decisions on participation. We urge all members to provide their views on this subject. We hope and expect that the 2012 Group of Governmental Experts will use this as the starting point for resuming its discussion on SALW: the discussion which was broken off this year.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I shall now yield the floor to my colleague.

**Mr. Liebowitz** (United States of America): In Prague six months ago, President Obama reaffirmed the long-standing commitment of the United States to the overarching objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the underlying purpose of the work of the First Committee — namely, to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. He outlined a number of steps that the United States would take towards this goal and encouraged other States to join us in this endeavour. Among the steps which President Obama outlined were two of fundamental relevance to today's thematic debate.

First, he committed the United States to negotiate and put into effect verifiable bilateral and multilateral nuclear arms control agreements to reduce drastically the level of nuclear armaments, stop the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons, and establish a global prohibition on nuclear explosions by aggressively pursuing United States ratification of the

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its entry into force.

Secondly, President Obama called on all States to comply with their obligations and to hold other States accountable for their actions, stating that “we need real and immediate consequences for countries caught breaking the rules”. Otherwise, to paraphrase the President, if nations can break the rules with impunity, or even relative impunity, we could reach the point where the centre — that is, the observance by other States of their arms control and non-proliferation obligations — no longer can hold.

The importance of effective verification to the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons cannot be overstated. Our Canadian colleagues are to be commended for placing this topic once again on the agenda of this body. On 15 August 2007, a Panel of Government Experts submitted to the General Assembly document A/61/1028, a report on verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. That report reaffirmed that verification is a useful tool for strengthening international peace and security. Verification measures can advance the goal of a world without nuclear weapons by building confidence among nations and enhancing transparency. Most important, effective verification enables compliant States to confirm that their partners also are complying with their treaty commitments.

That is why it is so important that all States strive to establish appropriately robust and effective verification measures in bilateral and multilateral arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements. It also explains why States must continue to work to improve national and collective verification capabilities, to assist appropriately other States in such endeavours, and to insist upon the full implementation of those verification tools and measures found in existing agreements. For our part, we are considering proposals for the verification of a fissile material cut-off treaty and working closely with our Russian colleagues to incorporate effective verification measures into our follow-on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. We also are continuing to work with and assist others, including through the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the implementing organs of existing treaties, to meet their relevant arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament commitments.

Regrettably, the implementation of agreed verification measures alone is and will continue to be insufficient to facilitate the achievement of a world without nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction. As President Obama stated in Prague, “we go forward with no illusions. Some countries will break the rules”. Therefore, he continued, “we need real and immediate consequences for countries caught breaking the rules”.

President Obama’s call for consequences when any nation breaks the rules is a call that the Security Council, the General Assembly and this body have endorsed on numerous occasions. Most recently, on 24 September, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1887 (2009), which recognized the important benefits to international peace and security of compliance and of appropriate and effective measures to deter, detect and respond to non-compliance. The Council demanded that parties comply fully with their obligations under relevant Council resolutions and find early negotiated solutions to their non-compliance. It also called upon States to take steps to strengthen their implementation of and compliance with existing obligations, and encouraged States in a position to do so to assist those in need to meet their obligations.

This body and the General Assembly, through resolutions 60/55 of 2005 and 63/59 of 2008, have called upon all United Nations Member States to take concerted action, in a manner consistent with relevant international law, to encourage, through bilateral and multilateral means, the compliance by all States with their respective obligations under non-proliferation, arms limitation, disarmament and other such agreements. Those resolutions also called on States to hold those not in compliance with such agreements accountable for their non-compliance, in a manner consistent with the Charter of the United Nations. Those same texts further encouraged efforts by States, the United Nations and other international organizations, pursuant to their respective mandates, to take action, consistent with the Charter, to prevent serious damage to international security and stability arising from non-compliance.

Holding States accountable for their violations strengthens not only confidence in the integrity of the agreements that have been violated, but also in the prospects for progress towards a safe, secure world free of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, failure to hold States accountable for

their actions undercuts not only the integrity of agreements, but also the prospects for future progress. Further, it enables continued and perhaps broadened non-compliance, which can increase the threats to regional and global stability.

If States genuinely seek — as our delegation believes that most do — the peace and security of a world free of nuclear weapons, then, as President Obama stated in Prague, “rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something. The world must stand together to prevent the spread of these weapons.”

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of India to introduce draft decision A/C.1/64/L.21.

**Mr. Rao** (India): It is widely recognized that scientific and technological developments can have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needs to be maintained and encouraged.

Science and technology are of vital importance for fulfilling the development aspirations of developing countries, which need access to scientific developments and new technologies. International cooperation in the use of science and technology for peaceful purposes should include the transfer and exchange of technology.

It is important that the international community follow closely scientific and technological developments that may have a negative impact on the security environment and on the process of arms limitation and disarmament. Science and technology can also contribute to verification of relevant disarmament and non-proliferation agreements.

The international transfer of sensitive technologies and high technology with military applications should be effectively regulated, keeping in mind the legitimate defence requirements of all States. National regulations and export controls should be strengthened and effectively implemented. Relevant international agreements in this field should be implemented in a manner designed to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of State parties to those agreements.

The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament is an important and dynamic subject that affects the interests

of all. There is thus need for dialogue and cooperation among Member States to find a viable forward looking approach taking into account current trends and possible future directions.

India has therefore submitted a draft decision contained in A/C.1/64/L.21, entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", by which an item of the same name would be included in the agenda of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and expresses the hope that the First Committee will endorse this draft decision by consensus.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last statement in the thematic discussion on other disarmament measures and international security.

Before we begin our panel discussion on regional disarmament and security, I wish to inform delegations that the full set of draft resolutions under consideration by the First Committee is now available.

We shall now begin our panel discussion on regional disarmament and security. I would ask speakers to respect the time limit of 10 to 15 minutes.

I shall now suspend the meeting for the panel discussion and an informal question and answer period.

*The meeting was suspended at 12.25 p.m. and resumed at 1.05 p.m.*

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded our work for this morning.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*