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Seventy-second session

First Committee

9th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: In accordance with our programme of work, we will begin with the traditional exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions and the presentation of reports.

I shall now suspend the meeting to enable us to consider this topic in an informal setting, in keeping with the established practice of the Committee.

The meeting was suspended at 3.10 p.m. and resumed at 3.30 p.m.

Mr. Mahmaminov (Tajikistan): First of all, I would like to congratulate the Chair of the Committee and other members of the Bureau on their election, and express my delegation's support for their activity during this session.

The strengthening of the multilateral mechanisms of control over weapons, disarmament and non-proliferation is key to maintaining global security and stability. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important component of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and of the strengthening of regional and international peace and security. As one of the universal instruments to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the establishment

of zones free of nuclear weapons ensures that in vast areas of our world numerous States have undertaken the obligation not to transfer or accept transfers of nuclear or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as to exercise control on those processes. The countries that constitute such zones have also pledged neither to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, nor to receive any assistance in their manufacture.

The entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on 21 March 2009 was an important milestone that marked the establishment of such a zone in my region, by which the countries of Central Asia have made a significant contribution to the strengthening of regional and global security. In that regard, we attach special importance to the acceleration of the ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which was signed on 6 May 2014 at the margins of the third Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We hope that the security space around our area will continue to expand so that one day our entire planet can become a nuclear-free zone.

We attach much importance to the efficient implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We actively call for a Central Asia that is free from the threat of mines, the strengthening of cooperation in the field of humanitarian demining, and the speedy enforcement of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

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The Republic of Tajikistan has joined the world community in expressing its concerns in connection with the nuclear test in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that was conducted on 3 September, and considers that such actions represent a serious threat to international and regional security. In that context, the Republic of Tajikistan supports the ongoing efforts to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula with political and diplomatic means, and calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to strictly implement the relevant norms of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Mr. Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. De Macedo Soares (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean): On behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), I offer you, Mr. Chair, our congratulations on your election to conduct the work of the First Committee. You are already demonstrating that you will lead us to very good results. I also extend our greetings to the members of the Bureau and the secretariat and thank them for their dedicated work.

Allow me to extend our warm congratulations to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on its well-deserved awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize. In fact, one of the first — if not the first — Nobel Peace prizes on the question of nuclear weapons was awarded to the chief negotiator of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexican Ambassador Alfonso García Robles.

During the current year, we are commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The invention of nuclear-weapon-free zones represented a breakthrough in the direction of solving the problem of nuclear weapons. It was conceived, proposed, negotiated and brought to reality during one of the worst phases of the Cold War. The idea proved to be so successful that it was expanded to four other regions, encompassing today a total of 115 States.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are not only a legal and political innovation, but also a practical and political success. The five treaties bearing such colourful names as Tlatelolco, Rarotonga or Pelindaba have never been transgressed and represent a moral and political

patrimony. That is enough reason to commemorate them. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are a dynamic reality. Starting in 1967, we established five zones within the next 39 years. That means that it is possible to go further, enlarging their number to include the Middle East and other areas. The increase in the number of nuclear-weapon-free zones is inversely proportional to the danger of a nuclear holocaust.

Among the achievements brought about by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean has been ensuring full compliance with the obligations contained in the Treaty. Moreover, it has been an element of convergence that has made possible a growing involvement of the region in the debates and negotiations concerning the question of nuclear weapons. This year, for example, two declarations that were carefully drafted and discussed were adopted unanimously by our 33 member States. The first was on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, on 14 February, and the second on 26 September — the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The region also reacted, by means of a communiqué, to the latest nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The active participation of Latin American and Caribbean States was equally noted in the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was conducted by a most distinguished diplomat from Costa Rica, Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez.

At this point, I would like to refer specifically to interpretative declarations made by some of the States parties to the additional protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The negotiators of the Treaty solved, by means of those protocols, the intractable problem of ensuring the observance of the Treaty by specific extraregional States. Those include the five States that, at that moment, possessed nuclear weapons and the States internationally responsible, *de jure* or *de facto*, for territories within the limits of the geographical zone established in the Treaty.

Some of those States made interpretative declarations when signing or ratifying the protocols. That was replicated in the case of subsequent treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. The issue has been one of concern for States belonging to those zones and other States. Numerous General Assembly resolutions, the concluding documents of

the review conferences of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other documents have expressed concern over the matter, asking for the modification or withdrawal of those declarations.

In recent years, the governing bodies of OPANAL have been looking at this question anew. Some parts of the interpretative declarations constitute clear reservations, as defined in the law of treaties. The Treaty of Tlatelolco does not admit reservations. In that connection, those parts of the interpretative declarations amount to a breach of the obligations that have been assumed by States parties to the additional protocols. A conclusion has been reached that the specific problems identified could be solved through negotiations.

Not everything in the interpretative declarations causes problems. For decades, the appeals made for review or withdrawal of the declarations went unheeded. Having identified the specific points that constitute reservations, it is possible to negotiate a solution. Proposals were addressed to two of the four States concerned. That new approach could bring a satisfactory solution.

The momentum reached this September with the adoption of a legally binding instrument to prohibit the only weapon of mass destruction that is not yet banned provides the impetus to sustain the effort to reach nuclear disarmament — a goal embedded in the resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)). The Committee can be assured that OPANAL will be leading that effort.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Bamya (Palestine): On behalf of the State of Palestine, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chair of the First Committee. We are proud to have an Arab country chair this important Committee for the second year in a row.

We seize this occasion to express our appreciation for all the efforts undertaken by Algeria in its capacity as Chair of the Committee last year. Allow me also to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We wish them every success in their duties.

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (A/C.1/72/PV.2).

As a State party to several disarmament conventions and core international humanitarian law conventions, the State of Palestine underlines the vital articulation between disarmament and international humanitarian law. Key international humanitarian law principles include the principle of humanity, the principle that the right of parties to an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited, the rule of distinction, the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks, the rules on proportionality and precautions in attack, the prohibition on the use of weapons of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, and the rules for the protection of the natural environment.

The greatest possible breach of those principles derives from the existence and potential use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, with their indiscriminate short-term and long-term effects. Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are complementary and equally essential to ensuring international peace and security. There is no substitute to the total elimination of nuclear weapons to save us from the existential threat that is posed by such weapons. That is why the State of Palestine is proud to have participated in and contributed to the elaboration of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That landmark and historic treaty should be ratified by all.

We seize this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to all participants in the negotiating conference for having decided by consensus to allow the State of Palestine and the Holy See to participate with equal rights, including the right to vote. Palestine exercised that right to vote in favour of the adoption of the Treaty and was among the first States to sign it on day one. We seize this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

We deeply regret the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to reach a consensus on the final outcome document. That constitutes a setback for efforts to advance the full implementation of existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament commitments towards the fulfilment of article VI of the NPT.

Twenty-two years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and seven years after the adoption of the 2010 Action Plan on the Middle East, we

have a responsibility to act to bring into being a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East—a prospect that is needed now more than ever. Israel continues to illegally develop a nuclear arsenal, and refuses to renounce it, to accede to the NPT without precondition and to place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards, thereby single-handedly blocking the prospect of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

However, the State of Palestine has decided to commit itself to upholding all prohibitions enacted in relation to weapons of mass destruction, including the prohibition to develop, produce and otherwise possess, acquire, stockpile, transfer, directly or indirectly, such weapons, as well as the prohibition to assist, encourage or induce anyone in any way to engage in any of the prohibited activities under the relevant legal instruments.

While not yet a party to the Arms Trade Treaty, Palestine fully endorses and supports the underlying principles behind the conclusion of the Treaty, its object and purpose and the prohibitions it formulates.

Palestine also underlines our shared and collective responsibility to preserve and protect the spaces that belong to all humankind: outer space, the seabed, the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, and cyberspace. Ensuring that those are safe and secure spaces dedicated to research and development and our collective human advancement is essential to promoting international cooperation and safeguarding international peace and security.

Allow me to go off script for a moment. We have heard a lot of talk about nuclear deterrence in these meetings. It is interesting that nuclear deterrence is of such importance to international peace and security, and that in the view of some, by elaborating the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we have undermined international peace and security. One has to wonder why we elaborated a prohibition treaty on chemical weapons, which have deterrent power? Why did we prohibit biological weapons, which also have deterrent power? We prohibited them because of their indiscriminate nature and their inhumane effects, and nuclear weapons are just as inhumane and indiscriminate and therefore should have been banned.

The countries that have nuclear weapons possess an arsenal of other weapons that also have deterrent power,

although perhaps without the capacity to obliterate the planet. Nuclear weapons should have been the first weapons of mass destruction to be prohibited because they are the most destructive, but we chose to take the long path through the NPT for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

But despite the progress that has been made in this context, nearly 50 years after the entry into force of the NPT and over 70 years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki we have a responsibility to act. Today, after all this time, the world is still not yet free of nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear conflagrations is almost at an all-time high. We believe that this is not an acceptable situation.

This is not about who possesses nuclear weapons and whether they are our friends or foes. For us, this is not only about Israel illegally developing its nuclear arsenal. This is about our deep belief that the existence of these weapons is incompatible with international law, and we do not wish to see the nuclear threats that materialized in the past to do so again in the future. Inspired by the hibakusha and the victims of nuclear testing, we were driven to act and we hope that this will contribute to moving towards the total elimination of these weapons in the near future.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Personal Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Mabongo (International Atomic Energy Agency): On behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. I also wish to congratulate, on behalf of the Agency, all other members of the Bureau on their election.

Last month, the IAEA concluded the sixty-first regular session of its General Conference, preceded by the Board of Governors. I would like to briefly highlight some of the outcomes of those meetings that are of significance to the First Committee.

A resolution on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of IAEA safeguards, adopted by the General Conference, acknowledged the IAEA safeguards as a fundamental component of nuclear non-proliferation by providing assurance that States are complying with their obligations under relevant safeguards agreements and helping to create an environment conducive to nuclear cooperation. The

IAEA draws conclusions independently, verifying the correctness and completeness of declarations made by States about their nuclear material, activities and facilities. As stated by the the United Nations Secretary-General in his message to the latest IAEA General Conference, this work “is an integral contribution to international peace and security”.

Safeguards agreements are currently in force with 182 States, of which 174 are non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with comprehensive safeguards agreements. However, 12 States parties to the NPT have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency, as required by article III of the Treaty. For these States, the IAEA cannot draw any safeguards conclusions. We therefore continue to urge all remaining NPT States parties to conclude safeguards agreements as soon as possible.

The number of States with additional protocols in force now stands at 130. The implementation of an additional protocol significantly increases the ability of the IAEA to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements. The IAEA encourages all States to bring additional protocols into force.

The IAEA has continued to verify and monitor the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented, and Iran is now subject to the world’s most robust nuclear verification regime. The IAEA continues to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement. Evaluations regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran continue. In our view, the JCPOA represents a clear gain for nuclear verification.

The nuclear programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is a matter of grave concern. The IAEA is working to maintain its readiness to return to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea when political developments make this possible. In that regard, a Democratic People’s Republic of Korea team has been formed in the IAEA Department of Safeguards. The aim of such a team is to enhance our ability to monitor the nuclear programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, maintain updated verification approaches and procedures, remain prepared for the

Agency’s possible return to the country, and ensure the availability of appropriate verification technologies and equipment.

The IAEA helps member States to fulfil their responsibilities with respect to nuclear safety by developing safety standards that may be used as the basis for national regulations and by providing a variety of services upon request, including expert review missions. The lessons learnt from the Fukushima Daiichi accident have now been incorporated into IAEA nuclear safety standards, ensuring that they become part of global safety practice. Nuclear safety should continue to be a priority for all Member States.

Furthermore, in September the Board of Governors adopted the Nuclear Security Plan 2018-2021. The IAEA will continue its work as the global platform for strengthening nuclear security and combating the threat of nuclear terrorism. In relation to this, the IAEA will host the International Conference on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities from 13 to 17 November in Vienna.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the IAEA continues to play a critical role in ensuring that the benefits of nuclear technology are shared globally, that peaceful nuclear activities are conducted safely, and that the international community is provided with a credible framework for curbing nuclear weapons proliferation.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Head of the Arms Unit of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ms. Lawand (International Committee of the Red Cross): This year has seen extraordinary achievements in efforts to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, and major milestones in key treaties prohibiting or limiting the use of certain weapons due to their unacceptably high human costs. These achievements have been possible thanks to the courage, determination and concerted action of involved Governments, international organizations and civil society, including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) wholeheartedly congratulates on being awarded this year’s Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of the tireless and successful efforts of civil society to ban nuclear weapons on the basis of their catastrophic humanitarian consequences. This gives hope and should inspire renewed action to address the humanitarian consequences of certain weapons.

On 7 July, the International Committee of the Red Cross warmly welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by 122 States at the conclusion of the negotiation conference mandated by the General Assembly. We are grateful that the Treaty's preamble stresses the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in this historic achievement, alongside that of the United Nations, civil society and the hibakusha. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an essential and long-awaited step towards the universal goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Recognizing their catastrophic humanitarian consequences, the Treaty clearly and comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons on the basis of international humanitarian law. It recognizes that any use of nuclear weapons would be abhorrent to the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience. It contains strong commitments to assisting the victims of the testing and use of nuclear weapons and to remediating contaminated environments. It provides pathways for adherence by all States, including those that possess or are associated with nuclear weapons.

Although the Treaty will not make nuclear weapons immediately disappear, it reinforces the taboo against their use and is clearly a disincentive for their proliferation. It is a concrete step towards fulfilling the long-standing international obligations and commitments in nuclear disarmament, notably those of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains at the centre of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament framework.

ICRC commends those States that have signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons since it opened for signature three weeks ago. We urge others to be on the right side of history and to adhere to it without delay. ICRC appeals to the States unable to join the Treaty at this time, including nuclear-weapons possessors and their allies, to urgently take measures to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, pending the fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations.

With rising regional and international tensions, the risk of nuclear-weapon use by accident, miscalculation or intent has increased sharply to levels not seen since the Cold War. That is profoundly disturbing. It should compel nuclear-weapons possessors and their allies to urgently implement their long-standing commitments

to reducing nuclear dangers, including those made in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Those include decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons with a view to ensuring that all are removed from high-alert status.

Risk-reduction commitments also include diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. The President of ICRC, Peter Maurer, has proposed that risk-reduction efforts could provide a common ground for dialogue between the States that adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and those not yet ready to join it. Regardless of their views on the ban Treaty, all States should acknowledge that any risk of use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. We know based on the evidence that even a limited nuclear exchange would cause unspeakable human suffering and have long-lasting and irremediable global repercussions. Preventing the use of nuclear weapons is of vital interest to all States and, indeed, a humanitarian imperative.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which has been a remarkable success. Today, all but five States are party to the Convention, and thanks to the dedicated work of possessor States parties, supported by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, 95 per cent of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been destroyed, bringing us closer to the CWC promise of a world free of those horrific weapons. ICRC congratulates the Russian Federation on having recently completed the full destruction of its chemical weapon stockpiles.

The absolute prohibition of the use of chemical weapons is a norm of customary international humanitarian law binding on all actors, be they State or non-State. On the whole, the prohibition has been widely respected, also thanks to the near-universal status and faithful implementation of the CWC. The recent and repeated confirmations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and in Iraq are an aberration that must be condemned by all States in the strongest terms, as must any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere. How the international community reacts to violations of the prohibition of chemical weapons is critical to upholding the norm and ensuring respect for the law.

While new scientific and technological developments hold great promise for humankind, their use as a means of warfare may entail significant humanitarian consequences. ICRC welcomes recent proposals in the context of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and here in the First Committee on ways to address new developments in science and technology, including their implications for existing norms of international law prohibiting or limiting the use of certain weapons.

It is undisputed that any new technology of warfare must be capable of being used, and must be used, in strict compliance with international humanitarian law. However, the challenges for international humanitarian law compliance raised by autonomous weapons and cybercapabilities, and more fundamentally their profound implications for the future of warfare, lend urgency to international debates on those new means of warfare in particular. We invite delegations to consult the full version of the statement of ICRC, available on PaperSmart, for our views on autonomous weapons and the hostile uses of cyberspace, as well as our views on explosive weapons in populated areas and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its signing.

In the minutes remaining, we wish to focus on responsible arms transfers. Indeed with brutal wars raging in different parts of the world — wars in which ICRC, as a front-line humanitarian actor, is witnessing ever-increasing suffering from indiscriminate attacks and even direct attacks against civilians, hospitals and humanitarian workers — there is an urgent need for responsible arms transfers. States that support parties to armed conflicts by supplying them with weapons have a special responsibility, as they are providing the means by which international humanitarian law violations may be and are being committed. They must use that leverage to ensure respect for international humanitarian law by the parties they are supporting. That includes ending arms transfers when serious violations are manifestly occurring or otherwise where there is a clear risk that they will be committed.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) provides a blueprint for action to reduce human suffering by all States involved in the arms supply chain, and ICRC calls on all States that have not yet done so to ratify or

accede to the ATT. States must also take the practical measures that they have committed to under other instruments, such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we urge States to seize the opportunity of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action next year to consider synergies with the ATT, including best practices to prevent the diversion and illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to promote transparency and accountability in arms transfers.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Mr. Roseberg Guerrero (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly and to assure you and the officers of the Committee of our full cooperation.

It has been 21 years since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature with the aim of finally ending nuclear test explosions in all environments. The value of the CTBT is underpinned by a science-based verification regime capable of monitoring and detecting signs of nuclear explosions. Data collected by the International Monitoring System (IMS) is transmitted through the International Data Centre in Vienna to all CTBT signatories. With the addition of data products reviewed by the analysts with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, all States are thereby empowered to come to an informed conclusion about the nature of any suspicious event.

The system has proved its effectiveness on several occasions in recent years. Most recently, on 3 September, about 130 IMS stations contributed to the analysis of an unusual seismic event in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Data and data products were shared with States well within Treaty timelines, and a technical briefing was held mere hours after the event. With a magnitude of 6.1, the event of 3 September was significantly larger than earlier such events recorded by the International Monitoring System. That highlights once again the urgent need for the international community to put in place a verifiable legal ban on nuclear testing as soon as possible. Not only would that protect the investment that Member

States have put into the Monitoring System — now well in excess of \$1 billion — but it would be a practical and achievable step towards a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

It has been heartening to hear so much support for the entry into force of the CTBT expressed by delegations to the Committee. However, eight remaining States listed in annex 2 to the Treaty have yet to complete their ratification procedures before that will come to pass. As recognized in the final declaration of the tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT held on 20 September here in New York, moratoriums are no substitute for a legally-binding treaty with strong and proven verification.

It is hoped that the nuclear test of 3 September and the enduring tensions and security challenges will serve as an impetus to take action.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the list for the general debate.

The Committee will now listen to statements by the representatives of non-governmental organizations. I request that speakers make their statements brief, and no longer than four minutes. In keeping with the Committee's established practice, I shall now suspend the meeting to enable us to continue in an informal setting.

The meeting was suspended at 4.15 p.m. and resumed at 5.20 p.m.

The Chair: I shall now call on those delegations that have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would remind all delegations that the first statement in right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes and the second statement to five minutes. The Committee has four speakers remaining on the list from yesterday for the second interventions. We will hear those speakers first.

Mr. Al-Hajri (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will not clarify what has already been made clear with respect to the repeated invalid and false accusations levelled against my country by the representative of the Syrian regime. However, I should like to stress once again that regardless of repeated attempts to mislead and distract the attention of the international community, the truth will remain unchanged. The provisions of international law and international humanitarian law will be implemented, and justice for the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Syria will be served.

The State of Qatar reiterates its position, which is based on the Charter of the United Nations and the international law, in support of the legitimate claims of the Syrian people to freedom, dignity and self-determination.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor again to exercise my right of reply in response to the charges made by the Syrian representative yesterday (see A/C.1/72/PV.7), specifically the charges that the United States is behind the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other terrorist groups operating in Syria. Those charges are simply ridiculous. On the contrary, it is the regime, through its oppression of the Syrian people and crimes against them, that has made Syria an incubator for terrorism. I once again call on the regime in Damascus to end its chemical weapons attacks against its own people. Let me also make clear that the regime will not escape justice for its crimes. The regime and its accomplices will be held accountable.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the Turkish regime made a statement yesterday that was full of lies and hypocrisy (see A/C.1/72/PV.7). As usual, in a miserable attempt to cover up its violations of international resolutions, the Turkish regime levels accusations against other countries. The Turkish regime violates all of its international obligations, especially in terms of disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. As those present know, the Turkish regime is disseminating nuclear weapons on its territories, in blatant violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the same time, it violates the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by providing terrorist Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and affiliated terrorist organizations with toxic chemical materials.

Moreover, the regime allows terrorist groups to conduct toxic chemical tests on its territories, especially in the city of Gaziantep, which is known today as the Turkish Tora Bora. The regime is also transporting terrorists to Syria and supplying them with arms, equipment, munition and intelligence. My delegation therefore asks the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigation Mechanism and the Security Council to give us the results of the investigations that we asked for regarding the sarin that was found in the custody of 12 terrorists on Turkish territory. Why is it

that the Turkish regime freed those terrorists and what happened to the sarin?

Regarding what was said by the representative of the Sheikhdome of Qatar, I would remind him that the academic Mustafa Al-Misfir, who is known to be very close to the Sheikhdome of Qatar and is considered its media advisor, has said that Qatar would use chemical weapons to abolish the tribal mob in Qatar. The Sheikhdome of Qatar therefore threatens openly to use chemical weapons. So we would ask the United Nations, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Security Council what they are going to do in response. Everybody knows that the Sheikhdome of Qatar is one of the largest financiers of terrorism in the world. Long ago, we told the Security Council and the Counter-Terrorism Committee that Qatar was involved in supporting and financing terrorism. Some countries have begun to demand that it stop funding and supporting terrorism.

Regarding what was said by the representative of the United States, I would like to tell him that those letters and notes are available, and he can read them. They were issued by an official of a previous Administration in the United States. Mrs. Hillary Clinton said that. We did not. Syria has fulfilled all its obligations pursuant to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, while the United States, with all of its capacity, has to date refused to eliminate its chemical stockpile and continues to demand extensions the latest of which is to 2023. The policy of the United States towards my country is erroneous. We demand that this policy be changed.

Both last year and presently, we have mentioned that terrorists had got hold of napalm. Napalm is American-made and available to the armed terrorist groups on the Syrian territories.

Mr. Pye Soe Aung (Myanmar): My delegation takes the floor to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of Bangladesh this morning (see A/C.1/72/PV.8).

With respect to the displaced persons at the border, the Minister for the State Counsellor's Office

of Myanmar recently visited Bangladesh. As a result, Myanmar and Bangladesh authorities have agreed to set up a working group for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons, on the basis of the 1993 agreement between the two countries. The efforts of the working group are in progress. The Home Affairs Minister of Bangladesh shall also visit Myanmar for further cooperation.

At a time of such cooperation, the allegations of some delegations concerning the laying of mines to prevent the return of displaced persons is not only unconstructive, but it also does not help in resolving the issue at hand. However, Myanmar will continue to cooperate in the spirit of good-neighbourliness with all regional and international partners to address the issue of displaced persons.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I exercise my right of reply to the representatives of some countries, as well as to the observer of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for their irrelevant remarks towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to make one thing clear. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's has developed and positioned its nuclear deterrence in exercise of its legitimate right to safeguard its sovereignty and existence and to deter the nuclear threats and attacks of hostile forces.

The Chair: The Committee has thus concluded the general debate segment.

Tomorrow, the Committee will begin the second phase of its work, namely, the thematic discussion on specific themes and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee.

Let me take this opportunity to remind all delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions to the Secretariat is Thursday, 12 October, at noon. Delegations are urged to adhere to this deadline to enable the Secretariat to process the documents in a timely manner, which will ultimately expedite the collective work of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.