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First Committee

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Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): Today, the Committee will, we hope, conclude its thematic discussion on other weapons of mass destruction and then begin discussion of the disarmament aspects of outer space, with a round table on the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Once that discussion is concluded, the Committee will consider the issue of conventional weapons.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Masood Khan, of Pakistan, who served as President of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, held in November and December 2006.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is a simple instrument, only a few pages long. Its prohibitions are clear, succinct, categorical and definitive. But it is an instrument of principle rather than of procedure. It contains no provision for the monitoring or verification

of compliance, no provision for an implementing organization, no details on how alleged breaches should be investigated and no organized means of helping States parties to meet their obligations. Yet the treaty remains an effective barrier against the development of biological weapons.

From 2001 onwards, the future of the BWC as a resilient regime was threatened by the bitterness and rancour of the dispute over a protocol to strengthen the Convention. After many years of work, the effort collapsed in disagreement and recrimination in 2001. Following the dramatic suspension of the fifth Review Conference, in 2001, it seemed possible that multilateral efforts against biological weapons might come to a permanent halt.

Fortunately, that did not happen. First came a period of damage control and resuscitation. At the resumed session of the fifth Review Conference, in 2002, States parties succeeded in putting their differences aside in order to establish a work programme for 2003 to 2005, by which they would work on several specific topics related to better implementation of the Convention. There would be no attempt to negotiate or agree on binding measures, or even on recommendations. Expectations were correspondingly low. And yet, to the surprise of many, the process was a success.

The preparations for the sixth Review Conference, in 2006, over which I had the honour to preside, started in an atmosphere of mistrust, bitterness and rancour. Bit by bit, we were able to change that

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atmosphere into one of empathy and engagement. Uncertainty hung over the outcome of the Review Conference until its last day. My goal as President of the Conference was to enable States parties to transcend the divisions of the past and to set the BWC on its new course. The constructive, practical and realistic manner in which all States parties responded to that challenge, while maintaining their long-standing goals and positions of principle, ultimately ensured the success of the Conference. I would like to thank sincerely all those who participated and contributed to the result, including many of my colleagues attending the First Committee meeting here today.

The Conference conducted a full article-by-article review and agreed on a Final Declaration embodying a common vision for the Convention and its implementation, ending a 10-year gap and resolving many of the issues that had divided States parties. That in itself was a fundamental step forward that will open the way for improved collective action against the threat of biological weapons.

The Conference also agreed on many practical measures, including the following: a detailed new intersessional work programme to help ensure effective implementation of the Convention until the seventh Review Conference, in 2011; specific measures to obtain universal adherence to the Convention; an update of the mechanism for confidence-building measures, foreshadowing a more thorough review in 2011; a requirement that States parties nominate a national point of contact to better coordinate various aspects of national implementation and universalization; various measures to improve national implementation, including of article X of the Convention, dealing with the peaceful uses of biological science and technology; and, finally, the establishment of an Implementation Support Unit for the Convention, addressing a long-standing need for institutional support for the efforts of States parties in implementing both the Convention itself and the decisions agreed at the Review Conferences. The Implementation Support Unit is now operational and is busy preparing for the 2007 Meeting of the States Parties, which will be held in Geneva from 10 to 14 December.

Implementation of the other decisions agreed at the Review Conference is also well under way. The decision to undertake coordinated action to encourage non-members to join the Convention is already bearing

fruit, with four States — Gabon, Kazakhstan, Montenegro and Trinidad and Tobago — having joined since the Conference concluded. The new system for secure electronic distribution of confidence-building measures is already operational, and the measures submitted so far in 2007 are now available on the system. Many States parties have already nominated their national contact points and are in regular contact with the Implementation Support Unit.

The Meeting of Experts, which was held from 20 to 24 August this year, marked the formal commencement of the new intersessional work programme. The meeting considered ways and means to enhance national implementation and regional and subregional cooperation on implementation. National experts from 93 States parties participated, along with international organizations such as INTERPOL and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and regional bodies such as the African Union and the League of Arab States. The result is that experts from across various departments and agencies had the opportunity to share information and experiences. The meeting developed synergies both within and across delegations. Experts, I believe, went back to their capitals to engage with their Governments with a broader perspective, new ideas and greater confidence. Over time, this will help to move the BWC higher on national agendas and will give a renewed impetus to national implementation and regional cooperation activities in many States parties. That is very much the role that these meetings of experts play.

The output of the Meeting of Experts will feed into the Meeting of the States Parties to be held later in the year. We are hoping that the common understandings on national implementation and regional and subregional activities that were evident at our meeting earlier this year will bear fruit, and that we will see effective action to provide real-world measures to tackle the threat posed by biological weapons.

It is my endeavour to create a new synergy among key international organizations and actors dealing directly or indirectly with the BWC. I have invited the Directors-General of the World Health Organization and the OPCW and the Secretary-General of INTERPOL to share their perspectives with the States parties of the BWC and to give them a sense of the important work that their organizations are doing in the areas of disease surveillance, fighting chemical weapons and opposing the threat of bioterrorism,

respectively. It is my hope that we will be in a position effectively to engage even more actors and relevant organizations at that meeting. Again, working on synergies, with the consent of the States parties I am trying to involve representatives of non-governmental organizations and industry more closely in the work of the BWC. We will not work in silos, but in shared open spaces, with each actor playing its unique but supportive role to fight the common threat of biological weapons.

Next year, our work will turn to the important topics of biosafety and biosecurity, as well as to education and awareness-raising. Dealing with the safety and security of biological resources, as well as ensuring that all those involved in relevant activities are aware of the international, regional and national measures that regulate their activities and the principles underpinning them, will go a long way towards ensuring that we continue to enjoy the benefits of biotechnology while being shielded from its dangers.

Addressing those issues will necessitate continued engagement with the scientific, medical, commercial and educational communities. We will have to develop a coordinated approach to the prevention of the misuse of biological science and technology.

I am pleased to report that the BWC is in good shape and ready to confront the challenges it faces. The outcome of the sixth Review Conference has given us a solid foundation for our efforts. We can take some satisfaction from this result, especially in the light of the difficulties and divisions we have experienced in the past.

But much remains to be done: the success of the conference is a means to an end, not an end in itself. All States parties need to continue to work hard to turn words into action, to overcome their remaining differences and to convert their shared vision into reality. I am confident that today the Biological Weapons Convention is poised to make a genuine and significant contribution to reducing the risks of biological weapons being developed or used by any actor, anywhere in the world.

Mr. Perazza (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like at the outset to point out that, on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and associated States, I shall make two statements, one on

biological weapons and the second on chemical weapons. I shall first speak on biological weapons.

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the States members of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela — and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

MERCOSUR and associated States reaffirm our commitment to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and contribute to it with practical and positive measures. We welcome with satisfaction the outcome of the sixth Review Conference that took place in Geneva at the end of 2006. The 155 States parties to the Convention have successfully fulfilled our commitment not to develop, produce, stockpile or retain such weapons.

With this in mind, our region's heads of State, meeting in Guayaquil in July 2002, adopted a declaration establishing the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation. In that declaration, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to prohibit the installation, development, production, possession, deployment, experiment and utilization of weapons of mass destruction of all kinds, including biological and toxin weapons, and their transit through the countries of our region.

MERCOSUR and associated States have also embodied this international commitment in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted at the Special Conference on Security that took place in Mexico City in October 2003, as well as in resolution AG/RES.2107, adopted on 7 June 2005 by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, declaring our region free from biological and chemical weapons and reaffirming through concrete actions the application of the Biological Weapons Convention.

It is important to highlight the efforts undertaken at the sixth Review Conference of the State parties to the Convention on Biological Weapons and its concrete outcome of an intersessional follow-up programme for 2007-2010, as well as the creation of the Implementation Support Unit to provide administrative assistance when dealing with practical aspects of confidence-building measures. We reaffirm the importance of providing the Convention with a verification mechanism with a view to strengthening its implementation and effective compliance with its provisions.

In a world increasingly threatened by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, it is imperative to explore opportunities for cooperation, information exchange and technology transfer with a view to the peaceful use of biological science for the benefit of humankind. We reiterate our commitment to continue working transparently and constructively in all fields in order to contribute to the universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

I turn now to the statement of MERCOSUR and associated States on chemical weapons. MERCOSUR and associated States reaffirm our commitment to the objectives and purposes of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. In this regard, we support its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation and urge continued efforts towards its universalization.

In this regard, we note the increasing participation of States in the Convention. Today, there are 182 States parties, representing 98 per cent of the world population. We congratulate the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on its efforts to achieve the universalization of the Convention and its implementation at the national level. We urge that OPCW continue its work in this direction, and we call on States that are not party to the Convention to become so.

We need greater cooperation and renewed efforts from States parties to ensure effective implementation of the Convention through the development of mechanisms that enhance collaboration by developed countries in creating and promoting national measures and fulfilling the obligations emanating from the Convention. National chemical industries for peaceful uses should also be promoted and developed.

We recently held a high-level meeting to mark the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, with the participation of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Director General of the OPCW, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirfer, among other distinguished individuals. The meeting was an opportunity to highlight the progress made over the past 10 years and to show that, through collective

action, genuine disarmament is possible within the framework of the United Nations.

Our countries do not possess chemical weapons or facilities for their production. We note in this regard that the Convention guarantees the right of States parties to request and to receive assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, and we reiterate our appeal to those countries that possess chemical weapons to comply with their obligations within the time frames laid down by the Convention and to destroy their stockpiles.

Finally, MERCOSUR and associated States reaffirm that the Convention is one of the essential international legal instruments for channelling multilateral efforts aimed at the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism and to the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We shall now suspend our thematic discussion on other weapons of mass destruction so that we can immediately begin the thematic discussion on outer space.

I first call on the representative of Sri Lanka to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.34.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.34, on prevention of an arms race in outer space. For many years, it has been a privilege for Sri Lanka, together with Egypt, to submit draft resolutions on this important issue to the First Committee for the attention of its members and of the international community. In this effort, we have been supported by a large number of delegations represented in the First Committee that have joined us as sponsors, the list of which is too long to read out. It is the firm belief of the sponsors that the thrust and the substance of the present draft resolution represent the general will of the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community.

It has been reiterated many times in the First Committee, as well as in other forums, that outer space is the common heritage of humankind and therefore needs to be recognized accordingly. The awe and respect in which outer space and celestial bodies have

been held by human civilizations from very early times, generation after generation, has led to a general belief that space is touched by the divine and that its serene atmosphere should be allowed to remain peaceful forever. Therefore, it is our desire that outer space, the next frontier of humankind, should remain peaceful for all time, for the benefit of all living beings on Earth.

With the rapid and unprecedented advancements in technology, outer space is now being used extensively for peaceful purposes. Commercial satellites and spacecraft dot this last frontier in large numbers. It is estimated that, by the year 2010, the total number of satellites around the Earth will reach approximately 2,000. Our capacity to exploit space for peaceful purposes is inherently beneficial to human life and to the further exploration of outer space for productive purposes. Consequently, the well-being of human beings will, more than ever before, be linked closely to the peace and tranquillity of outer space.

However, advancements in technology have also led to theories and concepts aimed at the exploitation of space for military purposes. Ideas such as the control of outer space and the projection of power into and through outer space are being discussed. It is no exaggeration to suggest that outer space now has the potential to become the fourth battlefield for human beings, in addition to the theatres of land, sea and air.

However, it would be the greatest folly of the human race to allow outer space to become the next arena for an arms race when most people on Earth live below the poverty line and are affected by multifaceted conflicts and disasters, both man-made and natural. At this juncture, humankind simply cannot afford an arms competition of that nature and cannot allow precious material and energy resources to be squandered for the projection of power or the domination of a new frontier.

Terrorism, which is affecting many corners of the world, is a good reason for the international community to assess how civilian security can be ensured worldwide. We are committed individually and collectively to searching for solutions to combat the abominable phenomenon of terrorism.

However, it is becoming even more evident that a weapons-based approach is not a solution that will ensure human security, in particular in combating terrorism, which is probably the most potent threat to

human civilization at this juncture. In that context, it is becoming apparent that the deployment of exotic weapons or firepower cannot completely ensure the security of civilian lives in our globalizing world. Therefore, taking the arms race into outer space would not only be counterproductive and meaningless, but would also fail to protect human beings on the ground from potent sources such as terrorist groups. Instead, the resources that would otherwise be expended on space-based weapon systems could be best used for the multifaceted and multidimensional tasks required to combat terrorism and protect our citizens.

The deployment of any weapon in outer space could result in a series of possible grave fallouts. It is believed by many that the existing sense of strategic balance could come under strain if outer space should become an arena for new weapons. In addition, the deployment of weapons in outer space could seriously threaten the security of outer space assets and has the potential to harm the Earth's biosphere and to give rise to the issue of space debris.

This is therefore an opportune time for the international community to seriously consider taking focused action to prevent outer space from becoming a battleground for military supremacy rather than an arena for cooperation and stability. It is absolutely clear that taking measures to prevent an arms race in outer space would be more effective, less complicated and less expensive than striving to roll back such a race after it has taken off. There will be a clear peace dividend if we make outer space an arena for cooperation rather than conflict. As a result, the benefits of peaceful activities in space — which are now conducted mostly by a few existing and emerging space-capable States — could be made available to more States at a reasonable cost.

In that context, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.34 wish to introduce it for consideration and adoption by the First Committee. As representatives may observe, the text, like those of the draft resolutions on this topic in previous years, recalls and affirms several international agreements on this subject and understandings reached in several forums with a view to taking further measures to commence negotiations on preventing an arms race in outer space. The draft resolution emphasizes the complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts and stresses the importance of greater transparency in sharing information on all bilateral efforts in this field.

The sponsors of the draft resolution believe that the Conference of Disarmament — the only multilateral disarmament negotiating forum — has the primary role in addressing this issue and in commencing negotiations at an appropriate time with a view to arriving at a suitable multilateral agreement. It is our expectation that the Conference will, sooner rather than later, be able to establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with an agreed and appropriate mandate for that purpose.

In that context, it is unfortunate that long-held understandings on this issue are now under the threat of being rolled back. However, there have been several suggestions for the draft resolution based on the national positions and priorities of a number of States. Taking into account the views of all concerned, in a spirit of compromise and recognizing the long-held general understanding regarding this issue, we have produced a text similar to that of last year's resolution 61/58, with only technical updates. It is the expectation of the sponsors that the draft resolution will enjoy the widest possible support, reflecting the collective will of the international community. We therefore expect that all members of the Committee will be able to support the draft resolution as a manifestation of the general desire of humankind to prevent an arms race in outer space, sooner rather than later.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I now propose that we begin our round table on the fortieth anniversary of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. We have two distinguished guests: Mr. Gérard Brachet, Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and Mr. Magnus Hellgren, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in Geneva.

I welcome them both and, without any further delay, I give the floor to Mr. Gérard Brachet.

Mr. Brachet (France) (Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space) (*spoke in French*): This morning, through a slide show, I would like to report about the progress of work of and prospects for the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), which I have the honour to chair at this time.

As participants know, this month marks the fiftieth anniversary of outer space activities and exploration. Scientific research, exploration and applications for society's needs, security and defence are the main drivers for space activities throughout the world.

This month, on 10 October to be precise, we commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space treaty, which was opened for signature and entered into force in the same year, 1967. However, today, the increasing number of both governmental and private sector actors in space calls for a fresh look at the possible need for rules of the game, or rules of the road, which will help keep outer space a safe place where activities can develop.

The General Assembly created the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1959; the Committee has played a major role in developing the legal framework for space activities.

Let me recall briefly — some participants know them well — the five international treaties that were completed in the context of the Committee and that were subsequently submitted for signature and ratification. The first one, of course, is the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 of which I just spoke. The second is the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, opened for signature and entered into force in 1968. Then we have the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, which was opened for signature and entered into force in 1972. Next is the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, opened for signature in 1975 and entered into force in 1976. The final agreement is rather special: the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which is known as the Moon Treaty. This international convention has thus far been ratified by only 13 countries. We cannot really say that there is international consensus around it, although formally the agreement has entered into force.

The Committee has also formulated and submitted for approval by the General Assembly a number of declarations of principles that obviously do not have the legal force of a treaty or convention, but that provide an important political reference for the conduct of space activities. For instance, the first

declaration, which was adopted in 1963 and which thus predates the Outer Space Treaty, defined a number of basic principles that were incorporated into the Treaty. More recent are: the 1982 Principles Governing the Use by States of Artificial Earth Satellites for International Direct Television Broadcasting; the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, adopted by the General Assembly in 1986; the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, adopted in 1992; and finally, the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, adopted in 1996.

In addition to those declarations, the Committee also prepared for approval by the General Assembly a number of draft resolutions that were designed, generally speaking, to reinforce and, if possible, to clarify aspects of the international conventions. That is the case, for instance, of the fairly recent resolution 59/115 of 10 December 2004, which clarifies the concept of the launching State, a very important legal concept in space law.

This week, I will submit to the Fourth Committee a draft resolution on the methods of implementation of the Registration Convention, and the adoption of recommendations on the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines will be an integral part of the omnibus draft resolution submitted every year by COPUOS to the General Assembly through the Fourth Committee.

As participants know, the problem of space debris is extremely serious. The image on the screen is designed to illustrate the quantity of debris generated by outer space activities over the past 50 years, with a relatively strong concentration in the immediate area of the Earth and near the geostationary orbits. A number to be remembered is that we have now recorded some 13,000 pieces of debris in near space, while the number of active satellites is only 600. That is, the proportion of debris, whether it consists of small pieces or dead satellites, is rather substantial.

The next slide shows the debris in near-Earth orbit, in particular polar orbits, or sun-synchronous orbits with their 95-degree inclination to the equator.

The space debris mitigation guidelines were adopted by the COPUOS Scientific and Technical Sub-committee in February 2007. In June the full Committee endorsed the guidelines, which represent a remarkable example of work to develop a consensus on

a set of rules of conduct for space operations — in this case, rules to limit the production of debris in the future. This was attained by consensus after several years of work, work that had been broadly prepared by the Inter-agency Debris Committee.

I would like to recall one of the recommendations in the text, which I believe will be adopted this year: to avoid the intentional destruction of satellites. We should hope that the adoption of these guidelines will, in the future, discourage the type of experiments that took place at the beginning of this year, which, as some of you know, produced more than 2,000 pieces of debris in the near-Earth orbit, that is, an increase of roughly 20 per cent in that orbit.

Some delegations and experts have suggested that the whole of the Outer Space Treaty, should be reviewed, consolidated, et cetera. The fact is that, today, there is no consensus on this point. In particular, there is no consensus on the idea of re-opening the 1967 Outer Space Treaty; nor is there a consensus, as we have seen, on designing a new international convention.

However, on the other hand — and the work done on space debris brought this out — there is a broadly shared feeling that an approach, based on technical and operational practice would make it possible to develop consensus recommendations and on the basis of such recommendations to agree on a set of rules of conduct that would keep space as safe as possible.

Another illustration of this bottom-up technical approach, is the work under way on the safety of nuclear power sources in space. At present, we have a working group of the Scientific and Technical Sub-committee working closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency. It has formulated a three-year work plan that, in 2010, not that long from now, should lead to a safety framework for all nuclear power sources used in space in the future.

In June of this year, during the COPUOS plenary session, I suggested, as Chairman, that the Committee begin drafting rules of conduct to ensure the safety of space operations, on the basis of a technical approach founded on the experiences of actual operators, whether they be governmental or commercial. This will require further consultation before this can be officially included in the COPUOS agenda. Next year, I think we should be able to make progress on this in order to set up a working group with its own mandate and

programme of work, with a view to achieving an outcome within a reasonable period of time. If this approach were to be agreed to, it would mean that COPUOS could gradually play a key role in establishing a set of rules of the road or rules of conduct for space activities.

However, let me stress once again that such principles need to be realistic and robust and must meet the test of time. To do so, they need to be based on solid technical analysis and the operational experience of the actors, not on a political balancing act that might not take technical realities into account. Let me also recall that such a technically-based approach must be very firmly based on the principles of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and must, in particular, uphold the fundamental principles of the Treaty: freedom of space exploration and utilization as well as non-appropriation of space or celestial bodies.

As members of the First Committee know, COPUOS does not explicitly address the question of military uses of outer space. However, its mandate does cover both military and civilian non-aggressive uses of outer space. It does not distinguish between military and civilian activities, but it does not deal with possible deployment of weapons in space because such questions need to be dealt with by the Conference on Disarmament under the agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

These issues are known to delegations, and they are in representatives' minds when they discuss ideas on additional rules of the road and rules of conduct that might need to be established to ensure that space can continue to be used in a safe manner.

As members know, within the United Nations system there are a number of specialized agencies that play an important role in regulating space activities and in developing applications for space technology. The most important among these is well known: the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which, I might mention, is far older than the United Nations itself, as it is over a century old. The ITU organizes and coordinates frequency allocations as well as orbital slots in geostationary orbit.

The role of the ITU is essential. The World Radiocommunication Conference begins this week; it will deal with basic issues of the utilization of C-band telecommunications satellites. This shows how

important the ITU is in regulating space activities, in the area of telecommunications.

Other United Nations system organizations are also involved in space applications. In particular, I would refer to the World Meteorological Organization, UNESCO, the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. They do not have a role specifically in regulating space activities, but they work to develop applications and thus play an important role in best practices for space activities.

Emergency disaster relief intervention is a good example of the type of work these organizations can be involved in. The slide shows a picture of New Orleans taken on 2 September 2005, just a few days after Hurricane Katrina. Also the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER), approved by the General Assembly in January 2007, is a programme specifically designed by the Office for Outer Space Affairs in Vienna to facilitate access by States to space tools that provide support in cases of natural disaster.

This slide gives an example of a system that is not specifically a United Nations system, but which is closely linked to two specialized organizations, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization. Those organizations play a very important role in monitoring the COSPAS-SARSAT search and rescue system, which was initiated by Canada, France, the then Soviet Union, now Russia, and the United States. That system has made it possible to rescue, to date, more than 20,000 people in distress on the high seas, following aviation accidents or in land-based accidents in remote areas.

Let me say a word about manned space activities. As members know, these were long motivated by strategic considerations and were intended to demonstrate technical capability. Cases in point include the initial Soviet flights, such as that of Yuri Gagarin in 1961, the United States Apollo programme of the 1960s and the early 1970s and, more recently, the flights by Chinese astronauts.

Today, manned space flight tends to be driven by an urge to explore, to go beyond the horizon, in particular here in the United States. I think I can say,

however, that political motivation, which had been the main motivation over the last 40 or 50 years, is still present.

Frequently, we wonder why men and women should be put in space. I think there is a reason — not a particularly rational one, if I may say so. The whole history of humankind has taught us that discovery of new regions, the exploration of new continents, the climbing of the highest mountains, the discovery of polar regions and the exploration of the ocean floor have never been considered complete until men or women have actually made the journey and told the tale. There is thus a human dimension in this type of exploration which is beyond dispute, even from a purely scientific point of view, one could argue that much of this work could be done by robots, which are increasingly sophisticated.

Generally speaking, non-military space activity in the twenty-first century will be driven by two divergent goals. The first is participation in exploration. We see renewed interest in exploration, particularly in the ambitions of the United States programme. We also see this in other areas of the world, particularly in China, India and Japan. What we are going to be seeing is increased exploration, either in cooperation with the United States or perhaps in competition with the United States. In any event, a major element of these activities will be discovery.

The other well-established goal is the development of applications which would be of direct use to human society. Here, let me cite an excellent report issued in 2005 by the Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development, entitled “Space 2030: Tackling Society’s Challenges”. It is a comprehensive document on space applications, and I recommend it.

Of course, beyond these two areas, there could be other genuinely new activities. For example, much has been said about new business opportunities by commercial passenger space transportation, sometimes referred to as “space tourism”. That is a somewhat controversial term, I might add. I personally believe that this activity will be more difficult than some people think, both technically — in particular because of the safety constraints, which are going to be very demanding if you are going to be carrying passengers — and financially, because the market size is not really known.

I think that the use of outer space over the coming century will require additional efforts to establish a legal and regulatory framework, first of all, simply because some of the treaties I cited earlier have not yet been ratified by some countries which have space activities. This is a gap that needs to be rapidly closed. States will also have to implement their international obligations on a national level to ensure that the domestic legal framework properly reflects the obligations undertaken by States. As we have seen earlier, there are some additional points that need to be added, such as space debris mitigation and safety for nuclear power sources and other activities.

I think that the development of rules of conduct is a good approach to making progress in this area. A certain amount of work needs to be done, which is summarized on this slide. An example is the work of the International Academy of Astronautics; I think we may be hearing about other such activities.

In conclusion, I believe that space activity will continue to be most exciting in the twenty-first century, because here it encompasses a surprising mix of strategic considerations, technological challenges, scientific discoveries and, of course, contributions to human society and to sustainable development. I also believe that the United Nations must continue to play a key role, as it has done so far, in defining the international legal framework so as to facilitate the peaceful uses of outer space and encourage international cooperation for the benefit of all.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Brachet for his very interesting, indeed fascinating, statement. He did not leave us in space, but in very specific language, succeeded in giving us the gist of the subject.

I now give the floor to Mr. Magnus Hellgren.

Mr. Hellgren (Sweden): I am very pleased to have been asked to participate in this panel on the disarmament aspects of outer space issues. My presentation will mainly touch upon how the issue of outer space has been dealt with in recent years in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, with particular focus on the 2007 session, during which my country, Sweden, served as one of the Presidents of the Conference.

But before going into the substance of the matter, I would like to take this opportunity to pay a special

tribute to the person who perhaps should have made this presentation had he not moved on to other important tasks within his country's foreign service, namely, Ambassador Paul Meyer of Canada, who this year served as coordinator for the Conference on Disarmament agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and who, with his usual skill and expertise, guided the substantive deliberations on these issues. Perhaps I can ask the Canadian delegation to forward our thanks to Paul.

In Ambassador Meyer's report to the Conference Presidents — which, for those who have not read it, can be found in document CD/1827 — he highlighted, *inter alia*, four points.

First, while there is wide support for existing agreements relevant to outer space security, there is recognition among States that their implementation and universalization could be improved or enhanced. Many States believe that additional measures and/or agreements would help ensure the continued peaceful uses of outer space.

The second point made in Ambassador Meyer's report is that there was considerable interest in the contribution that transparency and confidence-building measures could make in this regard, and several specific proposals were made. It was noted that such measures could be complementary to any eventual international legal instrument regarding the issue of PAROS.

The third point was that elements of a treaty for the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space were reviewed this year in a comprehensive manner.

The fourth point — and I think the previous speaker touched upon this — is that there was wide support among States in the Conference for establishing a dialogue between the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) on matters of common interest.

As I am sure participants have noted, those four points were quite carefully phrased in the report in order to capture the wide variety of views within the Conference in a way that was generally acceptable to all. Of course, they could not give the complete picture of the very substantive, mainly informal discussions that were held in the Conference this year. I will thus try to elaborate a bit further on two of the points,

namely, the proposed treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, and the threat or use of force against outer space objects (PPW) and some of the ideas for transparency and confidence-building measures.

However, first, I would like to say a word on the term "PAROS". The prevention of an arms race in outer space has been a long-standing agenda item in the Conference on Disarmament. Every year between 1985 and 1994, the Conference created a subsidiary body to deal with this issue. Much useful work was done during those years, both on issues related to a possible PAROS treaty and on confidence-building measures. Since 1995, however, it has not been possible to form a subsidiary body on this issue. The debate has continued every year in the Conference plenary, but without any real, substantive progress taking place.

Sometimes the debate has seemed to get stuck on the actual meaning of the term "PAROS". It seems to me that everyone agrees that there is not, at this time, any arms race in outer space. Everyone also agrees that such a race would be highly undesirable. Some argue that there is no current risk of such a race and that we should not attach any great priority to preventing one. Others, on the other hand, attach great priority to early preventive measures, including in the form of a legally binding treaty. Partly in order to move away from this sometimes linguistic and philosophical debate, the discussion in the Conference has of late been focused not on a PAROS treaty, but on a treaty that would prevent the placement of weapons in outer space, the so-called PPW treaty.

What are the key issues involved and arguments made in the informal discussions that were held this year on a possible PPW treaty? I offer my apologies to all those whose views I will not fairly reflect, but I will make the attempt. One issue, for example, that was discussed is where does outer space begin? Some say that it begins at 100 kilometres above the Earth. Others would like it to start where air ends, at approximately 40 kilometres above the Earth. Still others say, "Let's not try to define this. Our friends in COPUOS have tried and have so far not succeeded". Some point out that a strict definition is not absolutely necessary for the purposes of the treaty that is being discussed in the Conference, as long as the treaty would define a space object as an object that is in orbital trajectory,

something that can occur only in what we generally mean by outer space.

Another point that is made is that outer space is already militarized, since there are so many weapons that include space-based components, not least for targeting purposes. So it may be an unnecessary discussion that we are having. That argument is valid, of course; yes, outer space is militarized. But that is why many of us in the Conference on Disarmament no longer not talk about the “militarization” of outer space, but about preventing the “weaponization” of outer space: weaponization is something that has not yet happened.

So, what would the treaty that is being proposed by some States ban? Most argue that it should ban both the placement of weapons in outer space and weapons on the ground aimed at attacking space objects. Since ballistic missiles, for example, are not in orbit and are thus not defined as space objects, the treaty as being discussed today would not ban ground-based missile defence systems, that is, such systems where the strike component is not placed in space.

Another question is what would actually constitute a weapon in space. Some emphasize, rightly, that any space object that can be manoeuvred could be intentionally crashed into another object in space and could thus be viewed as a weapon. Others have a more traditional or narrow view on what a designated weapon would actually be, which is similar to the definition of “weapon” that we use on Earth, that is to say that a car is not a weapon, but a gun is, even though both can be used to kill.

Another question is whether the treaty should ban the development and testing of ground-based anti-satellite weapons or only ban their use. The Chinese test of such a weapon on 11 January this year, which, as participants know, created vast amounts of space debris, was, in fact, intensely discussed in the Conference this year, and this drew attention to the importance of resolving this question in a clear-cut way.

My country is among those that argue for a comprehensive approach. We worry that if we only ban the use of these weapons, the possibility of continued development of such weapons by a few countries — most likely by those that have the most advanced space programmes — would potentially have destabilizing

effects. But that is an issue that seems to draw very varying views among Conference members.

Another issue is whether such a treaty would be verifiable. I recognize that that is a very difficult and technical question, and I would say that the discussion in the Conference on Disarmament this year has shown that much further work is needed before that question can get any satisfactory answer. Some argue that we should start negotiating a normative treaty without any verification procedures and leave this issue to a possible future protocol. Others say that verification cannot be sufficiently effective and that that is a further argument against even attempting to negotiate such a treaty.

Finally there are those who, as in the case of another treaty that we discussed in the Conference on Disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, argue that the verification issue should not be separated from the other aspects of the treaty and that it should be addressed in the course of the negotiations, striving if possible for an effective verification procedure.

I could go on and mention many more issues that need to be dealt with. For example, if we were ever to have such a treaty, we would need to discuss its entry into force provisions, where I believe that serious lessons need to be drawn from the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty experience.

It is fair to say that the discussions this year in the Conference on Disarmament on a PPW treaty have clearly demonstrated that much work and many unresolved issues remain. But I would also say that many delegations are willing to engage in such further work.

Finally, I will move to some remarks on the question of transparency and confidence-building measures, which this year was the other leg of the Conference discussions on outer space issues. Though such measures are often considered more modest than the idea of a legally binding treaty, many today argue that they constitute a more realistic and practical way forward towards the goal of preserving outer space for peaceful purposes. Many specific proposals have been put forward by States and eminent scientific experts. We heard some of them in Mr. Brachet’s presentation earlier: rules of the road, rules of behaviour and the code of conduct for outer space activities. These were discussed this year in the Conference on Disarmament, and it would also be appropriate to mention that they

have also been reflected in the responses of Member States to resolution 61/75, recommended by the First Committee and adopted last year. Coming from a European Union member State, I would of course particularly like to mention the response to this resolution by the European Union, where it proposes the elaboration of a comprehensive code of conduct on space objects and space activities.

The issue of transparency and confidence-building measures highlights, as Mr. Brachet has already mentioned, the importance of close links and cooperation between the Conference on Disarmament and COPUOS, and the importance of maximizing synergies, but also of avoiding duplication. For example, most aspects of a code of conduct could very usefully be dealt with within the legal and technical expertise of COPUOS, and I understand that this is something that will most likely happen. But the result of such technical discussions could also serve as input to the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on transparency and confidence-building measures in the larger framework of preventing an arms race or the weaponization of outer space. I think that there are a lot of synergies, and they should be used to the fullest extent possible.

I will end by looking forward to the 2008 session of the Conference on Disarmament. I want to express at least my own sincere hope, and I hope everyone else's as well, that an early decision can be taken on a programme of work that would include substantive work on outer space issues, along the lines of the proposal put forward by this year's six Presidents of the Conference, the so-called L.1 proposals (see CD/2007/L.1). In my view, the issues are there and the time is ripe.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): That statement was extremely interesting and fascinating. It showed that the Conference on Disarmament is hard at work on very interesting issues that can determine the future of our planet.

We will now move to an informal question and answer period and an exchange of views with the participants in the round table.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We shall now resume our thematic discussion on disarmament aspects of outer space.

Ms. Frost (Canada): I would first like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Hellgren, the representative of Sweden, for his kind remarks. We will endeavour to convey them to Ambassador Meyer.

Canada was pleased to serve as coordinator for the agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space during discussions this year at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The coordinator's report (CD/1827, annex III) noted some preliminary conclusions, including: the need for improved implementation and universalization of existing outer space security agreements; the contribution of transparency and confidence-building measures in enhancing space security; and support for more dialogue between the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) on areas of common interest. The elements for a treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space were also reviewed.

(*spoke in French*)

Practical initiatives continue to be pursued on a range of space issues in various forums apart from the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome the Outer-Space Committee's adoption of the space debris mitigation guidelines. These will unquestionably help us maintain open access to space for all. Useful preliminary work is being done internationally on the question of possible space traffic management guidelines. This is to be encouraged, given the increasingly crowded nature of space and the risks resulting from such increased activity.

Canada supports a range of efforts to increase transparency in space activities so as to contribute to confidence-building efforts. In this respect, for instance, codes of conduct can serve as practical mechanisms to help define best practices and basic rules of the road for outer space.

Overall, we remain convinced of the need to develop an increasingly broad and encompassing concept of space security that addresses not only the weaponization of outer space, but also the broader military, environmental, commercial and civil dimensions of space. Practical steps towards achieving

a common understanding of space security — steps which include realistically attainable objectives — can serve to set in place a foundation for a more comprehensive regime, which may be built in the coming years.

Canada believes strongly that all nations share responsibility for ensuring that continued access to and use of outer space by the global community are not jeopardized by human actions. All States need to accept this common goal in the interests of future generations, or risk bringing the space age to an end when it has really only begun.

Ultimately, the cornerstone of a multilateral architecture for space security would be negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a legally binding ban, appropriate in scope, on space-based weapons. Canada welcomes the contribution that many delegations have made in the discussions to date on what such a negotiated treaty would look like and what it would need in terms of definitions, scope, verification, participation and so forth.

Canada believes that the international community's collective interest in preserving secure and sustainable access to and use of space, free of space-based threats, requires preventive diplomacy as well as discussion. Redoubling our efforts to build mutual confidence and ensure space security is our collective challenge. I am hopeful that our discussions here in the First Committee and subsequently in other forums, including the Conference on Disarmament, will move us closer to meeting that challenge.

Mr. Pataki (United States of America): The public lobby of this building contains a reminder of the first half-century of the space age. Suspended from the ceiling is a replica of Sputnik 1, the first artificial Earth satellite. Today, historians term the 12 years between the launch of the first Sputnik and the first landing of American astronauts on the moon as the era of the space race. In the United States, the Soviet Union's technological coup, combined with the opaque nature of Soviet society, spurred fears of a missile gap. In response, the United States pursued a wide-ranging series of programmes relating to space exploration that included both civilian and military applications.

Although spurred by cold war anxieties, this space rivalry yielded results that proved to be a boon to all humanity. Investments by a number of nations in space research and technology led to new capabilities

for scientific research, communications, environmental monitoring, navigation and remote sensing.

As the world marks the fiftieth anniversary of Sputnik 1, the United States remains committed to continued leadership in peaceful uses of space. The United States also takes pride in its contributions to the efforts of the United Nations to establish and sustain the principle of free access to, and use of, outer space by all nations for peaceful purposes. These diplomatic efforts included the General Assembly's Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space of 1963 (resolution 1962 (XVIII)), which formed the basis for the key precepts of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. These principles helped to bring an end to the cold war era of the space race. They also set the stage for continuing international cooperation in space exploration and applications.

The International Space Station, which will pass 350 kilometres over our heads above New York this evening, is today the centrepiece of humanity's collective desire to explore, work and live together on the final frontier. The United States, Russia, Europe, Canada, Japan and Brazil are pooling their resources and expertise in this collaborative effort, which builds upon years of peaceful cooperation and development.

This philosophy of shared peaceful use and benefit is embedded firmly in the United States national space policy, signed by President Bush on 31 August 2006. This policy firmly commits the United States to the basic principles set forth in the Outer Space Treaty. As we look to the future, the United States anticipates continued hopes for expanded international cooperation as humans return to the moon and plan new exploration ventures.

The need for cooperation was highlighted earlier this year, when China intentionally destroyed its own weather satellite with a direct-ascent anti-satellite missile on 11 January 2007. Experts estimate that the debris created by that test includes more than 2,200 trackable objects and another 33,000 pieces of debris that are greater than 1 centimetre in size but too small to track. Much of the debris will persist well into the twenty-second century, creating dangerous hazards for human space flight and other peaceful activities in low Earth orbit.

The United States hopes that China will be more forthcoming with the international community

regarding the motivations for, and the specific circumstances surrounding, its anti-satellite test. China's test generated international concern regarding the hazards that the test posed for human space flight and other peaceful space activities, and it was conducted without prior notice or consultations with other nations. The anti-satellite test was also conducted in a fashion contrary to debris mitigation guidelines established by two international groups, both of which included Chinese Government space experts.

While we are obviously all concerned about China's anti-satellite test and its other activities, the United States sees no reason for the events of 11 January to prompt an arms race in outer space. Instead, the United States will continue to pursue measures that protect its vital national interests in space, including cooperation with both established and emerging spacefaring nations, while taking those actions that are necessary to protect its space capabilities and to respond to purposeful interference with its space systems.

The United States has been quite open about the basic principles of its space policies. On the very first page of the document setting out our most recent policy, the United States reaffirms its long-standing commitment to the principle of free access to, and the use of, space by all nations for peaceful purposes.

The United States stands ready to work with other nations to extend the benefits of space, to enhance space exploration and to use space to protect and promote freedom around the world. All we ask in return is that other nations demonstrate similar transparency regarding their own intentions in space.

The United States welcomes the recent joint space policy statement by the councils of the European Union and the European Space Agency. We also join our friends in Europe in encouraging other spacefaring nations and regional groups to make their space policies more visible and understandable to other nations, which would lead to a better understanding of their current and planned space activities.

Finally, permit me to address an area that the United States believes to be counterproductive with regard to the interest of maintaining international peace and security in outer space. As we have said repeatedly in this and other forums, the United States believes that discussions regarding the merits of treaties to prevent the so-called weaponization of outer space would be a

pointless exercise. Long experience has shown the futility of attempting to define what constitutes a space weapon or to verify effectively any proposed limitation of such weapons.

Consequently, the United States will continue to oppose the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit access to or use of outer space. We will also oppose vigorously any attempt to create superficially appealing, but inherently flawed, linkages between the pursuit of pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures, on the one hand, and legally binding space arms control constraints and limitations, on the other. One does not necessarily need a treaty to foster good practices and common understanding; rather, one needs good faith and goodwill.

Since the 1970s, five consecutive United States Administrations have come to the same conclusions as to the impossibility of achieving an effectively verifiable and militarily meaningful space arms control agreement. Indeed, separate negotiations during the Carter and Reagan Administrations failed for a variety of reasons, including the inability to agree on the scope of coverage and the impossibility of identifying effective means to verify compliance with any such agreement. It is time for the international community to move beyond unnecessary and counterproductive discussions over the merits of unverifiable treaties and space arms control regimes designed to forestall this chimerical arms race in outer space.

In simple terms, any object orbiting or transiting through outer space can be a weapon if that object is intentionally placed on a collision course with another space object. That makes treaty verification impossible. Given the commonality of technology, the only way to distinguish a co-orbital satellite interceptor from a non-threatening autonomous servicing vehicle is to determine the operator's intent. The best way to determine intent is for national authorities to have a clear understanding of one another's policies and strategies for space activities.

The United States categorically rejects the premise that transparency and confidence-building measures are useful only in the context of preventing the so-called weaponization of outer space. In fact, there are a number of such measures already in place.

The United States also supports non-binding bilateral measures to enhance stability and reduce

uncertainty in the conduct of military space operations. In addition to dialogues on national and defence space policies, bilateral confidence-building activities can occur at the working level. One such example is the forthcoming exchanges between United States and Russian space launch and military satellite movement control specialists. Those exchanges will be occurring as part of a broader set of military-to-military activities under the United States-Russia Interoperability Work Plan.

It is therefore with regret that I must note our disappointment that we were unable to reach agreement with Russia this year on a draft General Assembly resolution to examine the feasibility of new voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures. We had hoped that such a draft resolution could build upon the concrete proposals recently advanced by Russia and the European Union, as well as upon thoughtful suggestions from technical experts in the commercial space sector. Unfortunately, we could not reach agreement on a draft resolution that would have removed what the United States believes to be a false and unacceptable linkage between expert assessments of pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures and efforts to begin pointless negotiations on unverifiable space arms control agreements.

As the world's first two spacefaring nations, and as former cold-war rivals attempting to build a strategic partnership, the United States and Russia understand the value of bilateral measures for enhancing stability and reducing the chance of misunderstandings. We regret the lost opportunity to work together in this area. Nevertheless, we shall welcome new opportunities for substantive discussions on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures with Russia, with other established and emerging spacefaring nations and with experts from civil society.

The United States is a leader in the exploration of outer space, and we believe in strengthening international cooperation for the further use and continued exploration of outer space. We are always prepared to discuss constructive proposals for measures that protect the outer space environment and protect free access to and the use of space for the benefit of all. Our delegation appreciates the opportunity to share the position of the United States on this important issue. I call on all other spacefaring nations to continue this dialogue so that we may

continue the exploration of space under peaceful and cooperative conditions.

Mr. Landman (Netherlands): First of all, I would like to be placed on record as having expressed my thanks and appreciation to the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space — who unfortunately has already left — for his very insightful and interesting introduction to this debate. I would also like to thank my colleague Mr. Hellgren of Sweden for his well-put introduction and his explanation of the state of play in Geneva on the subject.

The Netherlands would like to commemorate the fact that this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of space travel, which, of course, was initiated by the launch of the famous Sputnik. This month, we are also celebrating the fortieth anniversary of space law, for it has been exactly 40 years since the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty, which has served us very well. Thus, this debate is most appropriate and timely.

Clearly, much has happened since. More and more satellites have been launched into outer space, more and more intelligent technology has been developed, and more and more nations have become active in space. In effect, the world as a whole has become increasingly dependent on space activities, that is, on very vulnerable space objects. With this, the importance of maintaining outer space for peaceful activities has increased substantially.

Considering all the technical developments that have taken place in recent decades, it is important to acknowledge that the international instruments available to provide rules and regulations for outer space activities have not developed at the same pace. There are even considerable shortcomings.

Therefore, the Netherlands welcomes the fact that many delegations included the need for enhanced international space security in their statements at this year's session of the First Committee. We wholeheartedly share many of their concerns and would like to underline the need for additional international measures on outer space activities that would strengthen the existing legal framework.

As mentioned in the statement of the European Union presidency during the general debate, the European Union has submitted to the Secretary-General, as requested, its reaction to resolution 61/75,

entitled “Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities”, which is traditionally submitted by the Russian Federation. In that reaction, the European Union introduces concrete proposals aimed at maintaining international peace and security, promoting international cooperation and preventing an arms race in outer space. Among other suggestions, the European Union proposes a comprehensive code of conduct on space objects and space activities that would contribute to filling the gaps emerging in the existing framework.

In the view of the Netherlands, certain steps need to be taken before effective international discussions on a new legally binding instrument concerning international space security would be possible. For that reason, the Netherlands wishes to promote the idea of a code of conduct, or rules of the road, as a stepping stone, focusing on the commitment of States to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict. To that end, States would have to commit themselves, *inter alia*, to refraining from acts, including tests, which could directly or indirectly harm any satellite or other space object.

A politically binding instrument such as a code of conduct would generate a certain degree of additional security in space. It would also positively influence the international climate and the willingness to discuss legally binding international rules regarding outer space activities and security at a later stage. Of course, the support from all spacefaring States is needed to bring such an instrument about and to make it effective.

International space security has become an issue that must be dealt with urgently. That sense of urgency is reflected in the international agenda, as well as in the comprehensive compromise package for a programme of work which is on the table now at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The package allows for substantial discussions on the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in 2008. It could become a crucial step forward, whereas progress in the field of space security in past years has been hampered by the absence of international discussions on the subject.

The Netherlands, for its part, stands ready to contribute to these and other discussions on effective ways forward.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation would like to join those who

have already expressed their gratitude to the participants in the panel, which has set the tone for our discussion. I would also like to express our gratitude to the delegation of the United States for its publicity for the Soviet Sputnik, which is the subject of an exhibit at United Nations Headquarters.

We are indeed observing the fiftieth anniversary of the launch of Sputnik 1, which ushered in the space age. Hundreds of satellites are orbiting the Earth today, and the exploration of outer space is taking on increasing scope and dimensions. There are scientific and practical benefits from such activities, and we see an increasing number of people participating in them. There has been a dynamic development in space exploration, which makes it possible to jointly resolve common problems in the interests of mankind as a whole. A good example of that could be seen in yesterday’s successful landing of Russian and Malaysian cosmonauts.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned about the possibility of the placement of weapons in outer space. Such a step could upset the strategic balance in the world and undermine international stability and security. Space weapons pose a great danger, in particular because of their combat readiness and global coverage. We can foresee grave consequences arising from such new developments in outer space, and we have therefore consistently advocated the prevention of the placement of any types of weapons in outer space and call upon the international community to conclude an arrangement to that effect.

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated at the international Munich Conference on Security Policy, held in February 2007 that

“We cannot afford the appearance of new high-tech destabilizing types of weapons [or of] new areas of confrontation, particularly in outer space. The militarization of outer space ... could trigger unpredictable consequences for the world community of no less magnitude than those that occurred with the advent of the nuclear age”.

President Putin also provided information on a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, jointly formulated by the Russian Federation and China. It takes into account all proposals made by States members of the Conference on Disarmament during the discussion, at the Conference, of the elements of a future international

legal arrangement on that issue. The treaty is designed to fill the gaps in the international outer space law and ban the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against space objects, and would constitute a reliable guarantee against outer space becoming an arena of confrontation.

Consultations are under way with interested partners on the draft treaty. The overwhelming majority of countries have welcomed our proposal, as we heard today. Many States look forward to substantive work in that area. We encourage all countries to participate in that work.

At the current session of the General Assembly, we have once again co-sponsored the draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, to the goals and objectives of which we are utterly committed. As is well known, in 2005 and 2006, Russia submitted a draft resolution to the First Committee on measures to ensure transparency and confidence-building in outer space, designed to consider such measures and to ensure that States Members were able to offer the Secretary-General concrete proposals on such measures that would facilitate peace, security, international cooperation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We believe that the international community's broad support for the resolution at the previous session was a clear indication of and good basis for the further development of multilateral activities in that area.

This year, jointly with its Chinese partners, the Russian delegation will submit a similar draft resolution. We welcome the growing number of sponsors of the draft, which already number 25. Our draft resolution is in line with last year's corresponding resolution. Its basic thrust is to create conditions for further joint study of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space in all their aspects. It invites States Members to continue to submit their proposals on the subject to the Secretary-General. We are prepared to pursue constructive dialogue and cooperation on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space and are convinced that such cooperation would be in the security interests of all countries and enhance international security and stability.

We listened attentively to the statement made by the representative of the United States. As far as the Russian delegation is concerned, we stress our

readiness to pursue cooperation with all delegations, including that of the United States, in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution of such acute problems as the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Mr. Tashibayev (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we welcome the fact that this debate in the First Committee and today's panel discussion are taking place at a time when all humanity is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of space exploration.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is one of the most important and urgent tasks facing the international community. The significance of space to humankind and of ensuring further progress in that area is of great importance. We have become increasingly dependent on space technology. Even now, it is easy to imagine the consequences to our daily lives if space-based technologies were to malfunction, not to mention if space were subject to military activities.

The conquest of space is objectively one of the most significant ways to resolve humankind's global problems, including with respect to energy, information, the rational use of natural resources, the protection of the environment and combating natural disasters. At the same time, the wrong kind of development could turn outer space into a new sphere of military confrontation and lead to new threats to all. Its weaponization could undermine all existing arms limitation agreements and structures, in particular in the nuclear sphere. The emplacement of weapons in space would create military imbalances and an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, potentially provoking other States to produce similar systems in space, undermining the security of all.

The number of countries capable of placing weapons in outer space is steadily growing. Turning space into a potential theatre of military activity could pose a real threat to strategic stability and international security. More than 130 States are currently involved in space activities, either through their own space programmes or through programmes relying on information from space-based sources, including on weapons-related subjects.

However, an arms race in outer space has yet to develop because of a series of international agreements. At present, our real task is to ensure that that remains the case. Space must be a sphere of

cooperation, free of weapons, that humankind can continue to use for peaceful purposes. We have a genuine opportunity to prevent space from becoming a sphere of military confrontation.

We do not want to see military confrontation in outer space. Kazakhstan has no plans now or in the future to build or place weapons of any kind in outer space. At the same time, Kazakhstan, home to the world's first and largest space centre, Baikonur, is actively pursuing a peaceful national space programme, including the construction of the Baiterek rocket complex, which will allow Kazakhstan to enter the world market for space services and gain access to new technologies.

In July 2005, Kazakhstan acceded to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We have also been actively seeking to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which is necessary to the development of our space activities. Although not a formal member of the MTCR, Kazakhstan has adhered to the Regime's principles in its export policy for many years now. We express the hope that, at the next session of the MTCR, Kazakhstan's application to membership will be given positive consideration.

In this new century, up-to-date policies are essential to combating new threats. We need to understand the global threat to humankind as a whole. New challenges must be met with a new, more effective response from the international community. Our task is therefore to make collective efforts to that end. On the other hand, if we fail to do so, and if some countries begin to pursue the weaponization of outer space, other States with the necessary capacity will be persuaded to take adequate countermeasures.

Cooperation in transparency and confidence-building in outer space is the main prerequisite for preventing the real threat of an arms race there. Kazakhstan supports the draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. It has been noted that the number of sponsors is growing, which could presage the first steps towards a comprehensive agreement to prevent the militarization of outer space and to ensure the security of space objects. Kazakhstan is ready to cooperate in that regard with all interested States and calls on all countries to support the draft resolution.

Kazakhstan also supports the Russian Federation's initiative of committing to not being the first to place any type of weapon in outer space. That is a very serious and responsible step. We call on all States, in particular those that have major space potential, to follow suit. Such a first step by each specific State could significantly enhance mutual trust and the motivation to prevent an arms race in outer space until we can agree to a universal document, to the benefit of all States without exception. In so doing, we could avoid in the future having to address the problem of eliminating weapons in outer space and space debris, as has already been noted, the way today we are faced with having to eliminate nuclear and chemical weapons of mass destruction while simultaneously addressing the lack of resources necessary to our sustainable development.

Mr. Li Yang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Over the course of half a century, more and more countries have participated in the exploration and utilization of outer space, and even more have benefited from outer space technology. Our lives have never been so closely connected with outer space as they are today. Peace and security in outer space affect the well-being of people around the world. It is humankind's common obligation to maintain outer space security.

However, since the moment human beings first travelled into outer space, the danger of its militarization and weaponization has continuously loomed over us. The international community has made unremitting efforts to ensure the peaceful use of outer space. The Outer Space Treaty concluded 40 years ago and other subsequent relevant legal instruments constitute the international legal framework for regulating conduct and maintaining security in outer space. They have played an important role in promoting the peaceful exploration and utilization of outer space.

While appreciating the positive role played by the Outer Space Treaty and other legal instruments, we should also understand that, due to the limitation of historical conditions and the development of space technology, the existing legal system regarding outer space has obvious defects and cannot prevent the

weaponization of or an arms race in outer space. It must be pointed out in particular that a missile defence programme is being pursued ambitiously and that, more dangerously, relevant systems are likely to be deployed in outer space. That programme's potential negative impact on international strategic stability and mutual trust among countries is a cause of great concern.

If it is to address that reality, the international legal system regarding outer space should be improved and continuously updated so as to keep pace with the times. Obviously, negotiating and concluding a new legal instrument on outer space that would correct the flaws in the existing legal mechanism is the only fundamental way to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space and to maintain security therein.

The international community has arrived at a common understanding in that regard. For more than 20 years and by an overwhelming majority, the General Assembly has adopted relevant consecutive resolutions requiring the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee and negotiate a new multilateral agreement or agreements on outer space. Over the past two years, the Conference on Disarmament has held fruitful discussions on the issue of outer space. From the political, legal, technical and economic perspectives, parties have further exchanged their views on definition, scope, verification, confidence-building measures and other issues regarding a future legal instrument. It goes without saying that the Conference on Disarmament has met the conditions for addressing the outer space issue substantively.

China supports the launch of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on preventing an arms race in outer space at an early stage, with a view to ultimately negotiating and concluding the necessary legal instrument. To that end, we have always worked actively with other parties. China and Russia have consulted with States concerned on the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects. China sincerely hopes that the Conference on Disarmament can establish an ad hoc committee in that regard as soon as possible so as to start the negotiating process.

At this year's session of the First Committee, the Chinese delegation will co-sponsor draft resolutions

entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" and "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". It is our hope that the two draft resolutions will receive the widest possible support.

I note that the representative of the United States made certain unwarranted comments in his statement on our space tests. The United States has raised so-called concerns over the tests conducted by China. As a matter of fact, it is the United States that has vigorously sought to block the negotiating process on outer space in the Conference on Disarmament. If the United States is truly concerned with security in outer space, it should alter its negative position on outer space as soon as possible and agree to negotiate a new outer space instrument in the Conference.

As it happens, the United States launched a new outer space policy last year, claiming that it was seeking freedom of movement in outer space and maintaining the right to block efforts by other countries to develop outer space activities. That has aroused new uncertainties on the future of outer space security. At the same time, the United States has never stopped developing outer space weapons and is fine-tuning its military doctrine on space stations. The United States has abrogated the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and is intensifying its efforts to develop and deploy anti-missile systems. The aforementioned developments are a cause of concern to the international community.

With respect to space debris, I would point out that the problem has existed for some time. There is currently a great deal of debris in outer space, most of which has no connection to China. According to statistics, there are nearly 10,000 pieces of space debris of diameter greater than 10 centimetres; more than 40 per cent of such debris originated with the United States. It should be noted that the United States is in no position to point its finger at China on this issue.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the problems caused by debris in space. China has participated responsibly in the debris reduction talks held by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We are ready to work with all parties concerned, in the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to explore ways and means to resolve the issue appropriately.

Mr. Chang Dong-hee (Republic of Korea): Let me convey my delegation's sincere thanks to the two panellists, Mr. Brachet, Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and Mr. Hellgren, my colleague from Geneva, for their excellent presentation on the activities and accomplishments, respectively, of the Committee and the Conference on Disarmament.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the launch of the first artificial satellite by the Soviet Union and the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which provides a fundamental regime for international space law. Over the past 50 years, space technology has developed exponentially, to the extent that today's world relies heavily on it for a wide variety of purposes, from meteorology, telecommunications, disaster management and medical research to reconnaissance.

The process of globalization itself depends upon safeguarding the peaceful uses of outer space. Therefore, all nations, space-faring and non-space-faring alike, have a vital stake in ensuring that space remains a common heritage of mankind, and indeed have a responsibility to do so. However, we cannot take the unlimited and safe access to space resources for granted. Radio-frequency spectrums are almost saturated and orbital positions are densely crowded. Satellites and spacecraft are increasingly threatened by space debris and may potentially be targeted by space weapons.

As was pointed out by the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters in its very recent report, space technology, such as weapons of mass destruction (WMD) technologies, is by nature dual-use. Furthermore, as the industrial sector is increasingly involved in space activities, the space environment is rapidly changing. The artificial barriers between civil and military activities in space are already dissolving. Therefore, it is indeed pertinent that the WMD Commission recommended in its report in 2007 that

“[s]tates should adapt the international regimes and institutions for space issues so that both military and civilian aspects can be dealt with in the same context” (*A/60/934, annex I, para. 45*).

In that sense, we look forward to seeing enhanced dialogue taking place among relevant international

forums, such as the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the First and Fourth Committees of the United Nations, and the International Telecommunication Union.

Transparency and confidence-building measures are also highly important elements to ensure multilateral cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space. In that regard, there is an urgent call to build up transparency and confidence among the major Powers when it comes to the use of outer space. We may need to start by seeking to promote universal adherence to the existing agreements and arrangements, such as the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space and The Hague Code of Conduct, and to ensure full compliance with them. The documents of the Conference on Disarmament submitted by some countries, including Canada, the Russian Federation and China, as well as the report of the conference held by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research last April, may provide us with good food for thought to explore ways to enhance transparency and confidence-building.

The Republic of Korea, as a country actively pursuing peaceful space activities, views the potential impact of the proliferation of space debris on the peaceful uses of outer space as a source of great concern. It is not a threat confined to the space-faring nations; there is always a possibility of damage on the ground as well, as was witnessed in the case of the crash of a nuclear-powered Soviet satellite, Cosmos 954, in northern Canada in 1978. In that regard, we appreciate the endorsement by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its 572nd meeting this year, of the space debris mitigation guidelines. The guidelines rightly provide for the avoidance of the intentional destruction of any on-orbit spacecraft and other harmful activities, as well as limiting debris released during normal operations.

My delegation notes the rules of the road or rules of good behaviour, according to the term used by Mr. Brachet, Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Those rules could be developed into legally binding instruments.

The urge to traverse the universe and explore the stars has always been a dream cherished by humankind. Thanks to scientific and industrial developments, we have successfully explored ways to

transform that dream into reality. Now it is incumbent upon us to demonstrate that the pursuit of the peaceful and cooperative use of outer space is in our essential interests. To that end, we have to redouble our efforts towards universalization and more effective implementation of the existing international regimes governing outer space, whilst also in tandem extending their scope and dimension.

Mr. Koleswik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus considers the United Nations system of multilateral agreements on international security and disarmament to be irreplaceable instruments capable, in practice, of harmonizing the international rules of behaviour for all States without exception. We believe that international security is indivisible. It is only in that understanding that we will be able to halt the devaluation of the understanding of the concepts of peace, security, stability and development that are sacred to the peoples of our States and ensure that our world can be truly safe.

Returning to the subject under discussion, we should like once again to confirm our support for the proposal on a draft agreement on preventing the emplacement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against space objects. In that respect, the delegation of Belarus favours the establishment, within the Conference on Disarmament, of an ad hoc committee to discuss the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also call for other measures to be taken to enhance confidence and security in space.

Our country believes that new confidence-building and security measures in outer space should be primarily designed to develop existing international legal instruments. Many States are actively supporting the idea of a code of conduct for States to ensure security in outer space. We frequently hear that absent consensus among the key Powers about the advisability of starting work on a draft treaty on preventing an arms race in outer space, the adoption of a universal code of conduct on confidence and security-building measures in outer space would be the most acceptable alternative.

Our country is involved in a peaceful outer space programme, and we note that a code of conduct would be useful in enhancing safety in outer space. Such an instrument is particularly necessary to ensure greater transparency, to mitigate space debris and to improve

control systems to ensure the safety of the low Earth orbit.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that such instruments would not be legally binding. Hence, we believe that real space security can be achieved only through the adoption of a comprehensive agreement to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. We believe that a real contribution to preventing the weaponization of outer space has been made by the Russian Federation through its moratorium, by which it would not be the first to place any type of weapon in outer space, an initiative that has been joined by other States. In 2005, a similar statement was adopted by heads of State of the parties to the Treaty on Collective Security: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan.

Bearing that in mind, Belarus supports the moratorium on being the first to place weapons in space and believes it should include all States with space-launching capability or space exploration programmes. We believe that a step-by-step strategy on enhancing outer space security can be successful only when all States with space potential refrain in practice from the weaponization of outer space and move gradually towards legally binding instruments that can guarantee a total ban on the placement of weapons in outer space.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We have thus heard the last speaker on the theme of the disarmament aspects of outer space. We shall now resume our thematic discussion of other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Rapacki (Poland): As this is the first time I have taken the floor during a formal meeting of the First Committee, allow me to congratulate you, Ambassador Badji, on your assumption of your high office. This is not the first time that Senegal, through its best diplomats, has shown its deep commitment to the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. We remember our fruitful cooperation with your delegation in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva within the framework of the six Presidents' cooperation platform.

Today I wish to return to the event that took place in this room on 27 September 2007: the high-level meeting on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The meeting was organized by Poland, as the sole sponsor of General Assembly resolutions on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and by the Kingdom of the Netherlands as the host country of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It was attended by almost 40 foreign ministers as well as other senior representatives from over 120 United Nations Member States and the relevant international organizations, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and non-governmental organizations. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Anna Fotyga, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, and Mr. Maxime Verhagen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, who made the opening statement.

The presence of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Director-General of the OPCW, almost 40 foreign ministers and other representatives from more than 120 States confirmed the contribution of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention to enhancing international peace and security. We highlighted the important role to be played by the United Nations in meeting the growing danger of weapons of mass destruction. We are satisfied with the great support expressed by the ministers for multilateralism as a true way to effectively deal with security and non-proliferation challenges and threats.

The meeting was an important disarmament and non-proliferation event during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. The meeting also showed the strong interest of the international community, working at the United Nations, to be actively engaged in strengthening norms and activities to stem the danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In the concluding statement of the meeting, which reflected views we collected during preparations for the meeting, we commemorated all victims of chemical weapons. We reaffirmed our commitment to multilateralism and to the purposes of the Convention and we confirmed that full implementation of and universal adherence to the Convention are fundamental to the achievement of its objective and purpose.

The meeting confirmed the importance of all States that have not yet joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, becoming parties to the Convention without delay. As Ms. Anna Fotyga, the Polish Foreign

Minister, said during the high-level meeting, we hope that the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as successful examples of multilateralism, will serve as good examples for other areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. We also hope that, using such good examples as a basis, we will be able to overcome any stalemate or crisis in that area.

We are also glad that the special meeting took place here in the United Nations. It has to be noted that the meeting was a good example of building synergy between the United Nations and other international organizations dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation. We welcome such cooperation and hope for its further development.

It was always Poland's position that the United Nations should be strengthened in order to deal effectively with the current challenges, with an emphasis on the issues in the field of international security. The high-level meeting was proof that the United Nations remains a crucial institution for developing and supporting multilateral solutions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Last but not least, allow me to thank our Dutch colleagues for perfect cooperation in the preparation of this important event. Our appreciation also goes to the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Rogelio Pflirter, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and their teams for their assistance and support in the organization of the high-level meeting.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, given the momentum that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has achieved in the 10 years since its entry into force, I should like to express our appreciation to Mr. Rogelio Pflirter, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as well as to the other expert-speakers on this theme. This tenth anniversary marks a positive step towards the total elimination of chemical weapons. Our thanks go also to our friends in the delegation of Poland for sponsoring successive resolutions on implementation of the CWC, and to our friends in the delegation of the Netherlands for convening last month's high-level meeting on the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention.

In fulfilling its commitment to play its role in the maintenance of international peace and security, the

State of Qatar signed the 1992 Chemical Weapons Convention in February 1993, ratifying it in September 1997. In an effort reflecting its desire to achieve the goals of the Convention, the State of Qatar has enacted legislation to fully meet its obligations under the CWC, including Law No. 17 of 30 July 2007, on the prohibition of chemical weapons. A national committee on the prohibition of such weapons was also created on 4 October 2004, as a focal point for developing special procedures and measures to coordinate the implementation of the Convention's provisions with the relevant governmental and external actors. The committee has been playing a major role in awareness-raising and education, holding seminars, training sessions and workshops under the supervision of OPCW experts. These have included a regional workshop on legislation and other measures related to the Convention's implementation. Participants in the workshop included experts from States of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Emphasizing a consistent approach of prevention with regard to chemical weapons, we have held several training sessions on protection against chemical weapons for armed forces personnel and supporting security and civilian response agencies. Because we believe in a comprehensive State approach to this issue, we held a special seminar on combating chemical terrorism in order to enhance security readiness for the 2006 Asian Games, held in Doha.

Stressing its interest in the multilateral aspect of implementing the Convention, the State of Qatar hosted the fifth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties to the CWC, held earlier this month in Doha. It was a useful platform for sharing experiences related to the implementation of the Convention's provisions.

With regard to the declarations and inspections required under the Convention, our national committee has submitted its annual declaration regarding facilities, in accordance with article VI of the Convention, as well as its declaration regarding the import and export of chemical materials, also referred to therein. In response to those declarations, the OPCW recently carried out inspections of three State facilities. The findings of those inspections were consistent with the declarations and met the Convention's requirements. The OPCW commended the good organization, coordination and full cooperation among the inspection team, the national committee and those in charge of the facilities.

The State of Qatar regards the CWC as an important component of the global multilateral system for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Threats of the use of such weapons remain a matter of concern. The international community must continue to make realistic efforts to curb these growing threats and to establish chemical-weapon-free zones. It must also stress that all States without distinction should limit their activities, programmes and technologies to exclusively peaceful uses, as stipulated in the Convention. In that context, chemical-weapon States must act to dispose of such weapons in order to preserve the Convention's credibility. We welcome the recent efforts of a number of such States to that end.

In conclusion, we assure the Committee once again that the State of Qatar will continue to support all activities related to the implementation of the Convention, which we regard as among the critical tools of the multilateral disarmament system.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.