



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

## First Committee

4<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 11 October 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Llorentty Solíz . . . . . (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

#### General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

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

I also want to remind delegations that I count on their cooperation in limiting statements to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 13 minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations. To assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, we will continue to use a timing mechanism whereby the red light on the speaker's microphone will begin to blink when the time limit has been reached. As necessary, I will remind speakers to conclude their statements in our collective interest. I encourage representatives with longer statements to deliver an abridged version and to provide the full text of their statements on the PaperSmart web portal. I would also like to encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable pace to allow for proper interpretation.

(*spoke in English*)

Before I move on, I would like everyone to look to the left, where we have a group of young men and women. I would like to welcome the presence of the Youth Champions here in the gallery, who will observe our work in the First Committee this morning, which I

think is a very good reminder about why we are here. The task of our generation is to deliver a safer and better world to the next, and some representatives of that generation are here. On behalf of the Committee, I welcome them.

**Ms. Mansfield** (Australia): The Australian delegation would like to congratulate you on your election, Mr. Chair, and to assure you of our strong support for your work, including through our role as a Vice-Chair. The issues considered by the First Committee are of acute complexity and reflect the challenges of today's international security environment. We must all support and protect the international rules that underpin stability and prosperity and enable cooperation to tackle those global challenges.

Australia strongly encourages States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to continue to respond promptly and effectively to those who challenge the Convention and its implementation. The States parties to the Convention have demonstrated their resolve to hold accountable those who use chemical weapons by ensuring that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) can take on an attribution capability, including with a global reach. Australia welcomes the fact that the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team is now operational. We encourage all parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to focus on ideas likely to attract consensus ahead of the next Review Conference of the parties to the Convention, in 2021.

Australia remains committed to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We will invest

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our energies in practical endeavours that take account of global security realities and stand the best chance of delivering. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has delivered and continues to do so. The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which will mark the Treaty's first half-century in force, will be a time for its States parties to come together and build on our common interests in strengthening the NPT, since those greatly outweigh our differences. With our cross-regional partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, Australia will spare no effort in seeking outcomes at the Review Conference that support the NPT's bold vision. We welcome the forward momentum in the progressive approach to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The consensus reports of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament (see A/74/90) and the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (see A/70/81) pave the way for next steps. The further universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) sends a strong message that nuclear testing is intolerable. We encourage States to sponsor this year's draft resolution on the CTBT. Nuclear risk reduction has received deserved attention as views converge on the importance of immediate measures that can be taken pending the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Australia joins other nations in seeking permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, including the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's repeated missile launches. Such provocations do nothing for peace and stability and are a clear violation of various Security Council resolutions. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to choose the path of dialogue, and we commend the commitment demonstrated by the United States and the Republic of Korea, in particular, to continuing talks with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Turning to Iran, Australia remains supportive of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) but is deeply concerned about Iran's decision to reduce its compliance with the arrangement. While we look to the

JCPOA's participants to address that issue, we continue to urge Iran to return to full compliance.

Australia continues to support the implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty, particularly in our region. We welcomed the decision on gender and gender-based violence agreed to at this year's Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, especially given its strong link to the women and peace and security agenda. We encourage all States that are not yet party to the Treaty to look at it afresh, noting that it does not impinge on a State's right to regulate and control conventional arms within its territory. New or emerging technologies with implications for global security present new challenges regarding the regulation of their development and use, and that is why Australia values the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons as the most appropriate forum for addressing those questions, especially for formulating additional guiding principles on lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Australia works with its international partners to uphold the rules-based order online just as we do offline. The international community has agreed by consensus that existing international law and agreed norms apply to State behaviour in cyberspace. Yet a number of actors continue to use cyberspace as a platform for undermining global peace and stability. Australia welcomes the opportunity to advance discussions on those critical issues through the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the concurrent sixth Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security.

Australia remains committed to the preservation of the domain of outer space as a secure, safe and sustainable environment for the benefit of all. To meet that, we will continue to support balanced and practical measures to strengthen norms of responsible behaviour and the international rules and laws for space.

In these challenging times, Australia underlines the importance of ensuring that the United Nations disarmament machinery operates to its full potential. Accordingly, we champion the full and effective participation of both women and men in international security forums. During our 2020 presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, we will work actively

on coordinating to ensure productive outcomes and purposeful continuity between Presidents. As Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, we regretted the blocking of a substantive session this year. That must not be repeated.

Across all of these fields, Australia remains committed to playing its part by working constructively and collaboratively towards our shared goal of enhancing global security and stability through the First Committee's important work.

**Mr. Ugarelli** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my delegation's pleasure at seeing you leading the work of the First Committee, Mr. Chair, and by reaffirming our resolute support to contributing to a successful session. We also extend our thanks to Ambassador Ion Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania, for his outstanding work as Chair of the Committee at its previous session.

Peru is a peace-loving country with a long tradition of promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which is why we are party to all the relevant international regimes, participate in all multilateral forums and work to implement effective control of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives. In that connection, we participated actively in the work of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We believe firmly that its effective implementation will contribute decisively and directly to preventing and combating the flow of arms into illicit markets and thereby significantly reducing the serious consequences of that illegal activity. Peru maintains a firm position of support for the strict and coherent control of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, as well as being committed to promoting sustainable security and a culture of peace as a means of reducing and preventing armed violence and its negative impact on society.

Peru would also like to reiterate its steadfast commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We consider it essential to continue working in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner with a view to the adoption of legally binding instruments related to the marking, registration and

tracing of these weapons in order to prevent them from being diverted to illicit markets.

Peru is firmly committed to the global efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we support the strengthening and universalization of legally binding multilateral agreements in this area with a view to ensuring international peace and security. However, we have recently noted with deep concern the violations of non-proliferation regimes, particularly those concerning nuclear and chemical weapons, and the challenges they are facing. That was the context that led us to be one of the first States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, because we believe that the use or threat of use of such weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a serious violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

Peru will continue to support and promote the adoption of necessary measures aimed at curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of distribution. Within that framework, and since the launch of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we have expressed our commitment to the destruction and non-proliferation of this type of weapons. That is why we are deeply concerned about the recurring use of toxic chemicals as weapons in incidents recorded in Syria, Malaysia, Iraq and the United Kingdom. We reiterate our condemnation of these incidents and call for the perpetrators of such criminal acts to be brought to justice. We also support the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and therefore urge the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under article VI of the Treaty and adopt concrete measures in that regard.

We also want to express our deep regret at the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We urge the Russian Federation and the United States to resolve their differences through dialogue and reach new agreements based on the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency.

Consistent with our principled position on the non-proliferation regime, we are deeply concerned about the serious threat to international peace and security represented by the nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter

of the United Nations, the nuclear-non-proliferation regime and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We therefore stress that North Korea should renounce its programmes and related activities completely, verifiably and irreversibly. Until then, the Security Council's sanctions must remain in force and be strictly enforced by all States. We also hope that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran will not continue to be eroded and that all the parties to it will uphold their commitments.

Turning to the disarmament machinery, my delegation believes that reactivating the Conference on Disarmament is a priority, as this forum should be the negotiating body par excellence of multilateral agreements in matters related to disarmament and arms control. My country urges all members of the Conference on Disarmament to show greater political will by adopting and implementing a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. The need to commence negotiations on a treaty banning an arms race in outer space must be urgently addressed. Peru deplores the fact that the Disarmament Commission, an important forum for deliberation in the field of disarmament here in New York, has not held its organizational meeting or the substantive sessions of the two Working Groups on the main agenda items agreed on for the current three-year cycle. We urge States to set their differences aside and resume substantive discussions next year. Peru will continue to work constructively with delegations to advance the preparations for the 2020 session.

In today's context, new and rapidly proliferating technologies are modifying current conflicts and creating new challenges to international humanitarian law and human rights law, as well as the maintenance of international peace and security. That particularly applies to the unmanned aerial vehicles that are used as a weapon of war by covert armed forces and non-State actors. Peru considers it crucial that the use of unmanned aerial vehicles be regulated by the international community and we therefore advocate for a transparent and inclusive multilateral process that focuses on international discussions about their transfer, proliferation and use.

Finally, I would like to conclude by reiterating Peru's unwavering commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which is why I want to express my delegation's full support to you, Sir, and to doing the best we can to contribute to the work of the

First Committee in order to achieve our goals. We wish you every success in your chairmanship.

**Mr. Wróblewski** (Poland): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee during the General Assembly's seventy-fourth session. We wish you every success in fulfilling your important function and would like to assure you of the Polish delegation's full support and cooperation.

Poland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), and I would also like to highlight several issues in my national capacity.

In our view, what makes this session of the First Committee more important than its predecessors is the need to use such international forums to confront and counter the rising tensions on the global stage. Deepening differences should not prevent us from seeking common ground and solutions, if possible, and Poland is ready to engage constructively in dialogue with all its partners in order to ease tensions. It goes without saying that our priority for the immediate future is absolutely clear. Since its entry into force in 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and as such an essential part of the modern collective security system. The current international geopolitical challenges, which have not abated since last year, underline the important role of the Treaty and the need to uphold and strengthen it. The NPT helps to ease tensions and build confidence between States. As the international community, we therefore have to do our utmost to deliver at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. As Chair of the Main Committee II of the Review Conference, we feel a special responsibility to succeed in that demanding task.

The global arms-control system has unfortunately continued to deteriorate. That has been exemplified by the situation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The erosion of that significant element of the European security architecture constitutes yet another challenge to our security. The Russian Federation bears the sole responsibility for its demise. We deplore the fact that the authorities in Moscow have shown no willingness and taken no demonstrable steps



to ensure the INF Treaty's effective, verifiable and transparent implementation.

We believe firmly that lasting peace on the Korean peninsula can be achieved only through peaceful means. We are concerned about the fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has made no progress in taking the visible steps that are needed to ultimately achieve its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and renunciation of all other programmes of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, its recent launches of ballistic missiles undermine trust and are contributing to a deteriorating security environment on the Korean peninsula. In that context, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with all the relevant Security Council resolutions, return to full compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) without further delay.

Regarding another regional issue related to global security, we have noted with concern the steps taken by Iran to reduce its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as highlighted in the recent report of the IAEA (see A/74/287). Poland, like the European Union, supports the JCPOA as an important agreement for curbing nuclear proliferation. However, full compliance by Iran with the JCPOA is the only way to guarantee its comprehensive implementation. Poland supports a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament centred on the NPT and the system of relevant international institutions and agreements. In that context, we welcome new initiatives aimed at invigorating the disarmament process on the basis of a realistic approach.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles, especially those capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, remains a serious challenge to international peace and security. In 2017 and 2018, Poland chaired the work of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, the major instrument for transparency and confidence-building measures in this area. Now that our time in The Hague Code troika has ended, we are ready to share our experience with Norway, the new Chair.

As we have done in previous years, Poland will present a draft resolution to the General Assembly

on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We remain convinced that our efforts in that area are now more important than ever. Despite the undeniable successes that have been achieved in curbing the proliferation of chemical weapons, the threats and challenges related to their use remain real and cannot be neglected. Poland is deeply concerned about the fact that despite prohibition measures, chemical weapons have been used around the world in recent years in Iraq, Malaysia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom. We strongly condemn those acts and demand that the perpetrators be held accountable. Against that background, the General Assembly should maintain a strong, united and unambiguous message about the support of the whole international community for respect for the integrity of the CWC and the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Emerging and disruptive technologies enable new methods and means of warfare, raising fundamental questions that cut across traditional concepts of international relations and international law. From a security perspective, there are concerns about the potential of new weapons to destabilize security relations and increase unpredictability, which may be the case with hypersonic weapons or anti-satellite systems, for example. There are concerns about new technologies' potential to be used to conduct malicious activities that fall short of the traditional thresholds for the use of armed force, as has been shown by recent examples of hybrid warfare. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of technology-related challenges, existing legally binding instruments may not be adequate to respond to them. We should rather look for more pragmatic solutions, starting with increased transparency and confidence-building measures.

As a responsible State that upholds the international rules-based order, Poland recognizes its role in safeguarding the benefits of a free, open, and secure cyberspace for future generations. The States Members of the United Nations have increasingly coalesced around a framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We strongly support ensuring greater accountability for States in cyberspace in order to discourage irresponsible behaviour.

Poland attaches great importance to the work conducted within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). That is why this year we took on the responsibility of chairing the work on the CCW's Amended Protocol II. We

also believe that this Convention remains the most appropriate forum for examining new developments in weapon technologies. We greatly appreciate the work done in 2019 by the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, including the adoption of its report (CCW/GGE.1/2019/3).

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period from 2018 to 2019, we have worked continually to promote responsible export policies and physical security and stockpile management for small arms and light weapons. We are also committed and engaged with regard to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, which Poland considers an important instrument of international humanitarian law. Long before we became a State party to the Convention in 2012, we delivered assistance to post-conflict recovery areas and contributed to alleviating the humanitarian problems caused by unexploded ordnance and landmines through our engagement in missions abroad, particularly those under the auspices of the United Nations and the European Union.

Since 2015, Poland has regularly financially supported the activities of the United Nations in Gaza, which we believe help to improve the safety of the population of Gaza and will contribute to the elimination of development barriers in the long-term. The full version of my statement will be available online.

**Ms. Estrada Girón** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair. It is an honour for us to have a member of the Latin American and Caribbean Group chairing the First Committee, and I can assure you that you can count on my delegation's full collaboration in ensuring that the work of the Committee is conducted effectively.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the States members of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Today we have an international situation that is characterized by threats to peace and frequent terrorist acts. In addition, there is a climate of uncertainty around the high risk that weapons of mass destruction may fall into the hands of non-State actors and the possibility that a new nuclear incident could occur. Spending on arms continues to increase, while it is clear that our resources for fighting hunger, poverty and disease are inadequate. Moreover, the nuclear-weapon countries are

improving their weapons, and some nuclear Powers are withdrawing from international treaties. We regret the suspension of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the limited scope of the New START Treaty. Those realities serve only to reveal a lack of commitment to fulfilling nuclear-disarmament obligations.

In view of that, the work of the Committee must once again firmly take up the principles that it was founded on and work to advance effective, action-oriented decision-making that reflects the will of the international community by strengthening the application of multilateralism as the only way to achieve peaceful and sustainable societies. The very first resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)) emphasized the importance of the goal of the elimination of all atomic weapons, which are capable of causing mass destruction. Guatemala is firmly committed to our shared goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and strongly supports general and complete disarmament. For that reason, we are proud to be a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the first to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region and which has also served as an example for the creation of other, similar zones. Since it was established it has served to remind the nuclear Powers of our countries' rejection of the very existence of those deadly weapons.

My delegation reiterates its deep concern about the threat that the existence, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons pose to humankind, as well as their potential humanitarian and environmental effects. The only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their prohibition and total elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner according to a clearly defined timetable. Based on those principles, we welcomed the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which constituted a milestone and a firm step towards nuclear disarmament. We are a signatory to the Convention and currently in our final phase of its ratification. We want to emphasize our position that the Convention complements the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and strengthens its three fundamental pillars.

We have participated in three preparatory meetings for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which will take place seven months from now. That is why we stress that the discussions and outcomes in

the preparatory meetings should be beneficial to the Review Conference, ensuring that we can transform our commitments into the concrete actions that are increasingly urgent and vital to the disarmament architecture. In view of that, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to comply in good faith with their obligations under article VI of the Treaty by eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in their security and defence doctrines and policies and ending their qualitative improvement and development of new types of such weapons. We also believe that it is crucial to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and urge the States of that region to participate actively and in good faith in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November.

We reaffirm our firm condemnation of any kind of nuclear test by anyone, anywhere, and we call on the eight countries listed in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to accede to it as soon as possible. We also call for advancing the work on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which would prohibit the production of fissile material and ensure the removal of any that has been stored, thereby eliminating the material needed to produce nuclear weapons. On a separate note, my delegation is concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, bearing in mind that it could turn into a situation of military confrontation, which would contravene the Charter of the United Nations and international law and have devastating consequences for human life.

One of my Government's main priorities is the security of its citizens, which has historically been severely affected by armed violence. That scourge is exacerbated by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which undermines people's protection as well as their physical and moral integrity. It is also unquestionably detrimental to the creation of an environment that promotes comprehensive and sustainable human development. We believe that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a legitimate instrument that can help States effectively regulate the international arms trade by providing clear limitations and preventing States from deviating from them. We believe that the success of the ATT depends on the good faith of States in effectively implementing each and every one of its provisions. That includes producing, exporting and importing countries. We consider that the additional

measures proposed at the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty with regard to States whose financial contributions are in arrears to be unnecessary and distorted. Above all, we must take into account that this is a young Treaty that should be focused on concrete steps towards the effective regulation and control of the illicit arms trade. My country believes that the measures sought with regard to those States are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Treaty, especially if we are seeking to universalize it.

My delegation welcomed the report (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3) that resulted from the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We were particularly pleased with the document's consideration of the subjects of munitions, gender perspectives and the Programme of Action's complementarity with other relevant instruments, as well as the way it highlights the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We would also like to point out that the fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty will be taking place in November, and we call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty. The danger that those weapons and their humanitarian consequences pose is palpable today thanks to all the uncleared mines that continue to pose a risk to innocent civilians.

New artificial-intelligence technologies are another issue that we cannot ignore. In that regard, we believe that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is a suitable forum for further work on that issue, especially with a view to formulating an instrument that prohibits autonomous lethal weapons, also known as killer robots.

Finally, Mr. Chair, I would like to reiterate that you can count on my delegation to work to ensure the success of the Committee.

**Mr. Al-Dobhany (Yemen)** (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the First Committee during the General Assembly's seventy-fourth session. We feel sure that your competence and efficiency will enable the Committee to succeed in its work, and we want to assure you of our full support and cooperation in helping to make this session a success.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Yemen reiterates its commitment to the principles and objectives of disarmament, international security and nuclear non-proliferation. The acquisition and development of nuclear weapons are a threat to regional and international peace and security. We therefore support all initiatives to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and establish zones free of weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the Middle East, which is experiencing instability and insecurity thanks to the imbalances that exist between its stakeholders and to nuclear activities that are not subject to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Every Arab State has acceded to the NPT and all have stressed that they are fully prepared to adopt measures to create a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Israel continues to refuse to join the NPT and put its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. In an approach that serves only to maintain the instability and the possibility of an arms race in the region, Israel has also rejected all international initiatives to achieve the universalization of the NPT as well as nuclear disarmament in the Middle East.

In that context, my country welcomes the forthcoming Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546 and chaired by Ambassador Sima Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations. We hope that all the countries concerned will actively participate in that Conference in order to arrive at a binding treaty that strengthens stability, security and peace in that region and the world.

We are meeting this year as my country continues to suffer in an armed conflict that has now lasted five years, due to a coup d'état by terrorist militias that are supported financially, militarily and logistically by Iran. That support comes in the form of ballistic missiles and drones, as well as land and sea mines, weapons that have not only killed Yemenis but are also threatening its neighbours and the security and stability of the region and the entire world. Yemen became a signatory to the Ottawa Anti-Personnel

Mine Ban Treaty in 1997, and although we got rid of our stockpile of those horrific weapons, the deadly Houthi militias subsequently produced and set up 2 million mines and explosive devices all over many of the areas of Yemen that were under their control and then withdrew from those areas, leaving thousands dead and injured, including women and children. Those weapons have paralysed Yemenis' movements in their own country. The Yemeni army, working with Saudi Arabia's Masam landmine-clearance project, has cleared more than 300,000 mines in my country. We hope that the international community will put pressure on the militias and their supporters to ensure their commitment to international resolutions and laws and to stop laying mines and launching missiles. We also call on the international community and the specialized agencies to support the Government of Yemen's mine action rehabilitation and awareness efforts.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, my country underscores the importance of implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, especially since such weapons are increasingly falling into the hands of armed militias and terrorist groups, which ends up prolonging wars, worsening ongoing conflicts and decreasing the chances of achieving peace and security in Yemen and our region.

In conclusion, we look forward to the success of this important session and would like to assure the Committee of our continued cooperation in achieving our common goals and objectives in a world of peace and security.

**Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is always a pleasure to see you chair our work, Sir, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election. I am certain that with the experience and patience you have already displayed during the start of the session, we will succeed in achieving our goals for it. I shall now speak in English.

(*spoke in English*)

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain our highest priorities. As a State party to the main treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction, Algeria strongly believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Based on our long-



standing principled position regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, Algeria therefore calls for its full and speedy implementation, as well as the full, non-discriminatory and balanced implementation of its three pillars. We also call on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under the Treaty and urge all parties outside the NPT to join it without delay or conditions.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is also a significant asset that can contribute to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is now almost two thirds of the way to attaining the 50 ratifications it needs to enter into force. We should therefore intensify our collective efforts to accelerate that process. By the same token, as a contributor to the adoption of the Treaty and one of its first signatories, last month Algeria announced its intention to ratify this important instrument as soon as possible.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a measure for preventing the development of nuclear weapons whose implementation is long overdue. It is deeply regrettable that it has still not entered into force despite the fact that 23 years have passed since it was opened for signature. At this juncture, I want to make a special appeal to all the countries that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT, especially the annex 2 States, and to ask them to do so as soon as possible. In its capacity as co-Chair, with Germany, of the CTBT's Article XIV Conference for the next two years, Algeria will spare no effort in working to achieve the CTBT's entry into force as soon as possible.

As we are all aware, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones all over the globe has significantly contributed to strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation norms. In its own geographic region, Algeria contributed to the adoption of the Pelindaba Treaty, establishing the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which celebrated the tenth anniversary of its entry into force this year. My country, among the first African States to ratify the Treaty, calls on the remaining States to sign and ratify its three annexed protocols. In that context, my delegation welcomes the General Assembly's adoption in December 2018 of decision 73/546, convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in

accordance with the decisions adopted by the States parties at the 1995 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. The Conference, which will convene for the first time next month, seeks to negotiate and conclude a legally binding good-faith treaty on the establishment of such a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Concerning other instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, Algeria believes that the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention are relevant components of the international legal architecture and calls for their effective implementation. We also call for fostering further international cooperation to enable the transfer of chemical and biological technologies, especially for the benefit of developing countries.

The United Nations disarmament machinery continues to deteriorate. The Conference on Disarmament is still suffering from a lack of political will, the principal reason for the regrettable deadlock in the Conference. In that regard, we urge Member States to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. My country, which will assume the first of the 2020 rotating presidencies of the Conference on Disarmament next year, hopes that Member States will join the efforts to make positive progress on its work during this session. Algeria is also seriously concerned about the Disarmament Commission's inability to convene its organizational and substantive sessions in 2019, and hopes that by both addressing the underlying issues and avoiding any politicization of its work, the Commission will hold its substantive sessions in 2020 in a formal setting so as to fulfil its mandate.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime and a major concern for my country. In that context, we were pleased with the outcome of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and look forward to the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, to be convened in June 2020.

With regard to its Mediterranean policy, based on the principles of cooperation, good-neighbourliness and mutual respect, Algeria will be honoured to submit to the First Committee and the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, as in previous years, the annual draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region". In that

regard, we will be counting as usual on the support of all Member States for the adoption of the draft text.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that 2020 presents a golden opportunity for making the practical gains we need to ensure the continued viability of the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Finally, my delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

**Ms. Benítez Lima** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to warmly congratulate you and the other members of your Bureau on your election to lead the First Committee. We wish you success in your work and assure you of our delegation's support. In order to respect the time limit, I will read an abridged version of my statement and make a full version available.

Uruguay, as a pacifist and non-nuclear-weapon State, once again reaffirms its unwavering commitment to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and to arms control in general. The mere existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a latent but all-too-real danger to the security and survival of humankind as a whole. We are very concerned about the fact that such dangers are even more imminent today, which means that we must step up our efforts to defuse possible threats without losing sight of the ultimate objective of the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons in an irreversible, verifiable and transparent way without preconditions or reservations, and within a multilaterally agreed time frame.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, we affirm our legitimate interest in receiving unequivocal and legally binding guarantees from nuclear-weapon States that they will not use or threaten to use such weapons. We want to stress how catastrophic the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are and the importance of maintaining an approach based on international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We are concerned about the stagnation in States' compliance with their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and by some countries' continued

practices of modernizing their nuclear arsenals and increasing their military expenditures, a trend that could be seen as a new arms race.

We deplore the fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force. We call on those States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force to sign and ratify it without further delay.

Uruguay was one of the first countries to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We view this instrument as a crucial tool for achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, since it closes an existing legal gap and does not oppose or impede the application of article VI of the NPT. We recognize the importance of implementing all three fundamental pillars of the NPT — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We defend the right to the scientific and technological development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and to conduct research into it, on a basis of transparency, the application of safeguards and compliance with internationally accepted levels of security. We commend the role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency and its work on technical cooperation and technology transfer for peaceful purposes. We acknowledge the importance of concluding a treaty on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, which should be multilateral, international, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable.

We believe that the total elimination of chemical and biological weapons should also be a priority for the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The use of such weapons constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law that we cannot permit. Given that measures adopted at the national level should reflect the obligations undertaken by States at the international level, we urge those States possessing such weapons to fulfil their obligations, including by eliminating their arsenals.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons transcends national borders and therefore cannot be resolved by any one State acting alone. Uruguay is a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, has ratified the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and supports the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent,

Combat and Eliminate Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the application of the International Tracing Instrument. In our view, reducing the availability of and access to firearms is an integral component of the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and we therefore believe that their production, stockpiling, storage and protection must also be given consideration, in addition to problems relating to ammunition. In the light of the fact that women and children suffer most from the use of small arms and light weapons, gender-related issues and the rights of these vulnerable groups should be given special attention.

We are seriously concerned about the fact that armed conflicts are being waged in urban areas, which are also being targeted in the use of explosive weapons, inflicting ever greater harm on civilian populations in terms of deaths, injuries and displacement. In addition, there are the so-called ripple effects of attacks and the collateral damage done to essential infrastructure. Uruguay participated in the Regional Meeting on Protecting Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas held in Santiago de Chile in December 2018, and supported its final communiqué, which, among other things, underscored the importance of promoting greater respect for international humanitarian law and of developing effective measures to prevent attacks on hospitals and schools. We also participated in the Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare, held in Vienna in early October.

We must focus on preventive diplomacy. Mutual confidence-building measures are central in that regard. We must put a stop to the dynamics of distrust, which exacerbate risky situations. We call on experts, technical advisers and political decision-makers to consider new measures to build trust and promote transparency among States. That is a necessary precondition for making progress on disarmament negotiations in an atmosphere of good faith and mutual respect.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at its current session.

I would like to preface my statement with a brief response to what the representative of the United States said yesterday (see A/C.1/74/PV.3). The Chinese delegation was appalled by his remarks, which were replete with jaundiced ideological bias and anachronistic

sentiments. We categorically reject the baseless accusations that were made about China. The light of justice shines on undimmed in the hearts and minds of global citizens. The international community bears collective witness to the United States' perversities in international affairs, in defiance of norms and reason. Its unfounded accusations cannot write off China's positive contributions to international security and disarmament or cover up the serious damage done to international peace and security by the United States' violation of multilateral agreements and withdrawal from them, as well as its unilateral bullying.

The world is undergoing change on a scale not seen for a century. The international security situation has become increasingly complicated and unsettling, and international arms control and disarmament processes have reached a crossroads and are facing a series of significant challenges.

To start with, the United States, in a desperate attempt to gain security supremacy over others, is continually lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons and turning outer space and cyberspace into new battle grounds. Such acts have severely undermined global strategic stability and increased the risk of nuclear war. Secondly, withdrawal-ism is running rampant. The United States has scrapped the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The future of the New START Treaty remains uncertain, and the international security landscape is plagued with unprecedented uncertainty. Thirdly, by breaching its commitments and exerting maximum pressure, the United States has continued to escalate the Iranian nuclear issue and push tensions in the Middle East to the breaking point. Fourthly, the double-edged sword of technological developments is becoming increasingly visible. The military application of new and advanced technologies is having a profound impact on global security, giving rise to ethical and legal concerns.

In a speech at the Palais des Nations in Geneva in January 2017, President Xi Jinping of China expounded on the vision of building a community of a shared future for humankind, and called on all countries to embrace a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable concept of security. By outlining a solution to the current global security and development challenges, President Xi's initiative dovetails with Secretary-General António Guterres's Agenda for Disarmament.

In that regard, I would like to further elaborate on China's positions and proposals. First, we must firmly uphold multilateralism and maintain and further develop the multilateral arms control system. Given the current circumstances, all States should be firmly committed to maintaining the authority and effectiveness of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and working towards positive outcomes at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty. We support the convening in New York in November of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction. In the meantime, it is vital that we strengthen the implementation mechanism of the Chemical Weapons Convention and mitigate the politicizing tendencies in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. China strongly urges the United States to effectively implement its Treaty obligations by destroying its existing stockpiles of chemical weapons as soon as possible.

China has always been an active supporter of and participant in the international arms-control process. To date, we have joined more than 20 multilateral legal instruments relating to arms control. A few days ago, China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, informed the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.9) that China has initiated the domestic legislative process for its accession to the Arms Trade Treaty, in a clear demonstration of China's sincere determination to foster multilateralism, participate actively in global arms-trade governance and translate into action the concept of a community of a shared future for humankind. China has consistently fulfilled its international non-proliferation obligations by establishing a full-fledged non-proliferation export-control mechanism. Non-proliferation should not be exploited as a tool for creating obstacles to the peaceful application of science and technology. We are strongly opposed to the so-called coalition of caution on high-tech export controls, motivated as it is by great-Power competitive intentions on the part of the United States.

Secondly, we must maintain global strategic stability and move nuclear disarmament forward sequentially and step by step. China deeply regrets the United States' withdrawal from the INF Treaty and firmly opposes its attempts to deploy intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region. The true purpose of such moves is to seek military and strategic advantages that could

harm international nuclear-disarmament processes and threaten regional peace and security.

In the current circumstances, we believe that all States should abandon any sort of Cold War mentality and work together to maintain stability and a strategic balance and to reduce the risk of nuclear war. All nuclear-weapon States should emphasize the vital notion that nuclear wars can never be won and must never be fought. They should pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, take measures to reduce the role of such weapons in their national security policies, and provide effective security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. As the State with the largest and most advanced nuclear arsenal, the United States should work to meet its special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament in earnest by responding to Russia's call for extending the New START Treaty, while also substantially reducing its gigantic nuclear arsenal and creating conditions conducive to enabling other nuclear-weapon States to join multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. Until the United States reduces its arsenal to the level of China's, any accusations it may make about China's military strength are as hypocritical and hollow as they are feeble and futile.

The white paper on national defence in a new era that China issued in June affirms that China will continue its unwavering pursuit of an independent foreign policy focused on peace and a defensive national defence policy. It will never engage in any form of arms race, it will keep its nuclear capabilities to the minimum level required for national security, and it undertakes not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or in any circumstances and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. China has displayed the greatest possible transparency in its nuclear strategy and exercised great restraint in its development of nuclear forces, which in itself is a major contribution to nuclear disarmament.

Thirdly, we must resolve proliferation issues through political and diplomatic means. Given the complexities of proliferation-related issues, they can be properly resolved only through dialogue and cooperation. Attempts to use unilateralism and inordinate pressure to impose demands on others while ignoring their legitimate concerns will only make the issues more complicated and intractable, and that serves no State's interests.



The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a multilateral agreement endorsed by the Security Council and the only viable solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. China will work with all the parties concerned to stay on a course aimed at resolving the Iranian nuclear question through political and diplomatic means, resolutely opposing unilateral sanctions and indirect control by the United States, and getting the Iranian nuclear issue back on the JCPOA track without delay.

**The Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): Unfortunately, I have to be strict with all delegations and must ask the representative of China to conclude his statement.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has always been firmly opposed to the weaponization of outer space and the potential of an arms race there. We are deeply concerned about the attempts by the United States to dominate outer space. We call on the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate and conclude as soon as possible a legally binding international instrument based on China and Russia's draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. China is firmly opposed to the United States' practice of abusing national security as a pretext for obstructing the development and cooperation of information and communication technology.

**Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to state that we fully share the views voiced by the previous speaker, the representative of the People's Republic of China, our nearest neighbour and strategic partner. We particularly deplore the position of our American colleagues, who have clearly lost even their diplomatic skills and have reached a point where they are not only undermining international agreements but have begun to physically hinder our work, having decided for some reason that they can ordain which of us may come to our Headquarters here in New York and which may not. Such discrimination is completely unacceptable, and we will continue working to ensure that the Secretariat addresses the issue as quickly as possible. A striking difference between the positions of Russia and China and those of the United States and the countries of the West is that we never change our principled approaches, we never deviate from the norms of propriety in international relations, we do not repudiate our obligations and we do not undermine international agreements. Since I believe that an absolute majority of Committee members are well aware of Russia's

constructive approach, which is designed to ensure equal and indivisible security for all States without exception, I will not read out my prepared statement today but will make a printed version of it available. I will simply dwell on a few of the key points, focusing only on the facts.

We are all now aware that as long ago as the 1990s Washington had decided to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, destroy the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. At the same time it eliminated its only national entity in this area, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. It was thus at the turn of the new century that a kind of destructive aberration occurred in the Washington psyche. If that destructive trend continues, we will soon find ourselves in a situation in which the First Committee will have nothing to discuss. There will be no INF Treaty, no New START Treaty, no BWC or CWC. The result is that United States is undermining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and even the dialogue on a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction while it is placing nuclear weapons on the territory of other States and continuing to train its non-nuclear partners in the use of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) itself is seriously threatened. We have to agree that the prospects are extremely worrying.

That is why Russia continues to insist on the realization of our constructive initiatives, which are supported by all the countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and all the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, that is, the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations. And it is those countries that represent the future of global development.

Let me briefly walk us through a comparison of our main proposals. We propose strengthening the NPT rather than destroying it, as the United States is doing. We propose refraining from placing nuclear weapons on the territory of other States and training non-nuclear States in conducting nuclear strikes, as the United States does. We propose extending the New START Treaty rather than repudiating this one

remaining legally binding agreement on nuclear disarmament, as the United States is trying to do. We propose a moratorium on the placement of short- and intermediate-range ground-based missiles rather than expanding it, as the United States is doing now that it has dismantled the INF Treaty. We propose ensuring the CTBT's immediate entry into force rather than refusing to ratify it and preparing a test site to resume nuclear testing, as the United States is doing. We propose starting a dialogue on a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction rather than blocking it, as the United States is doing. We propose the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme rather than blatantly violating obligations under it and punishing those who are implementing theirs, as the United States is doing. We propose prohibiting the placement of any weapons in outer space and the use of force of any kind in outer space rather than fuelling an arms race in outer space, as the United States is doing. We propose strengthening the BWC rather than undermining it, as the United States is doing, after refusing to submit to verification and installing its military biological facilities all over the world.

I could go on, but unfortunately do not have enough time. In general, we are heartened by the fact that Russia's constructive proposals are supported by an absolute majority of Member States. The only thing that baffles us is that our European colleagues, who once loudly proclaimed their tradition of a principled stance on international affairs, have essentially given away their sovereignty in cowardice and are sitting with their tails between their legs, not daring to contradict instructions from Brussels and Washington even in areas where they are utterly contrary to their national security interests. We all need a positive agenda. As we all know —

**The Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I must ask the representative of the Russian Federation to conclude his statement.

**Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will conclude with a few final remarks. I propose continuing our discussions in the First Committee on a positive note on condition, of course, that the host country of the United Nations does not take the cowardly and unlawful step of preventing us all from accessing our shared Headquarters.

**The Chair** (*spoke in Spanish*): I want to apologize for the delays that I understand occurred in the interpretation into Arabic. This will be corrected.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to take a moment before giving the floor to Mr. Cho Tae-yul, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations. I have been informed that this will be the last time he will speak in the First Committee, as he will soon be leaving New York. Those of us who have had the privilege of meeting him all know that he is a kind person, a good friend and an excellent diplomat. I therefore want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to his outstanding contribution to the United Nations and its purposes and principles. He will be greatly missed.

**Mr. Cho Tae-yul** (Republic of Korea): Thank you very much indeed for your kind words, Mr. Chair. I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session and to assure you and the members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support for the success of the Committee under your able leadership.

The current international disarmament and non-proliferation framework, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention in particular, is one of the greatest achievements of the rules-based international order and multilateralism and has contributed significantly to the cause of international peace and security. It has not only enabled access to advanced technology for peaceful purposes while constraining malicious proliferation but has also enhanced predictability and stability in security relations among States. Today, however, that rules-based international security is under threat, and we are even witnessing a rollback of hard-won achievements of the past through such actions as the use of chemical and biological agents by both State and non-State actors, the erosion of the landmark nuclear-arms-control agreement, and a massive conventional arms build-up in many parts of the world, to name just a few dangerous trends, which we must put a stop to.

The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force and the twenty-fifth year of its indefinite extension, is a golden opportunity to show the united desire of the international community

to support multilateralism and prove that the work of the NPT community is genuinely contributing to a better and safer world for future generations. We firmly believe that the NPT should continue to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and that given the differences in security environments between countries and regions, a step-by-step approach is the right path towards nuclear disarmament and a world without nuclear weapons. We also strongly support ensuring the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty by the annex 2 countries in order to bring it into force, as well as the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible.

Just a week ago, working-level nuclear talks between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea resumed in Sweden, as their leaders had agreed in Panmunjom on 30 June. The one-day talks produced no tangible results, and the gaps between the two sides are still wide. But we should not let ourselves be misled by unhealthy pessimism. As the United States emphasized, a legacy of 70 years of war and hostility on the Korean peninsula cannot be overcome in the course of a single Saturday. We sincerely hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with its commitment to denuclearization in view, will remain engaged in dialogue with the United States so that progress can be made sooner rather than later on the negotiations. For its part, the international community must continue to work together to maintain the hard-won momentum for dialogue as we seek a negotiated solution to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear problem and work to establish permanent peace on the Korean peninsula. As President Moon said in his address to the General Assembly last month (see A/74/PV.3), peace on the Korean peninsula is inextricably linked to peace around the world.

Emerging technologies call for our joint efforts in the areas of outer space and cybersecurity. We take note of the work done in 2018 and 2019 by the Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space and hope to continue the work on this issue in order to ensure a safe and secure space environment. We also welcome recent developments with regard to cybersecurity, such as the launch of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, which held its first meeting last

month, and the agreement to establish another group of governmental experts later this year. We sincerely hope that the two groups can have productive and meaningful outcomes by capitalizing on their complementarity. The Republic of Korea will actively participate in the Open-ended Working Group process with the aim of reaching a consensus outcome.

The Republic of Korea has submitted a new draft resolution this year, on youth empowerment and engagement, as part of its contribution to championing action 38 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. The empowerment of young people in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation is significant not only for securing diversity but more importantly for nurturing young experts who will lead our collective efforts in the future. It is my sincere hope that the draft resolution we will introduce will create new, positive momentum for discussions on disarmament that have been polarized and at a standstill for quite some time. I would like to invite all member States to join in this endeavour and become sponsors of the draft resolution.

*Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

The Republic of Korea is also organizing two side events on the theme of export controls, one on 8 October, entitled "Export control in practice", and the other on 14 October, launching an online training course on Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which will be co-hosted by Japan, the United States and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. It is part of our efforts to share our experiences and best practices on the implementation of export controls and to provide assistance in capacity-building and education. The Republic of Korea, which is a member of all the existing multilateral export-control regimes and one of the leading countries in the field, is committed to working with the international community to strengthen international cooperation on export controls.

I would like to conclude on a personal note. As the Chair kindly mentioned in giving me the floor, this is in fact the last meeting of the First Committee that I will attend, as I will shortly be leaving New York after a three-year tour of duty that concludes the 40 years of my diplomatic career. It has been a great pleasure for me to work with all our colleagues on building and sustaining peace around the world, and serving as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2017 was a special

honour and privilege for me in that regard. I wish all my colleagues all the best in their continued endeavours.

The Acting Chair: I too would like to say that it has been a great pleasure and honour working with the representative of the Republic of Korea and to wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

**Ms. Pylvänäinen** (Finland): In addition to the statements made by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Sweden, on behalf of the Nordic countries, I would like to highlight a few key issues from our national perspective.

Much has already been said about the difficult backdrop to our meeting this year, and rightly so. These are indeed trying times for arms control and disarmament and for multilateral cooperation in general. One particularly fitting description of our current predicament is the one that the President of the General Assembly used when he spoke of a “trust deficit” as a key concern for the world today (A/73/PV.87, p.2). Almost nowhere is this more evident and more dangerous than in the area of arms control. Building trust, or rather rebuilding trust, must therefore be the main aim of our deliberations this year. Strengthening the international arms-control architecture requires trust and confidence among States, assurance that agreements are complied with and accountability where that is not the case. It requires strong multilateral institutions and effective national implementation, supported by international capacity-building efforts. Advancing on all those fronts is our shared responsibility and one that should guide all our work this autumn.

What are the most urgent steps that we should take? In nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, our focus must be on ensuring a successful Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The discussions at the third Preparatory Committee in May were useful for clarifying delegations’ positions. In this session of the First Committee, we should continue efforts to identify common ground and areas for further work in the light of the Review Conference next year. For progress in nuclear disarmament, new and innovative thinking is desperately needed. Finland is pleased to be a participant in both the Stepping Stones initiative and the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament dialogue. We also welcome the increased attention given to nuclear risk reduction. We have supported the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on risk reduction

and are pleased to be hosting a side event with the Institute and other partners on the topic next week.

In an increasingly volatile environment, the predictability and stability that effective arms-control instruments can bring is more important than ever. The New START Treaty, with its comprehensive transparency mechanisms, is a case in point. We call on the United States and Russia to extend it as soon as possible, which would provide the time needed for dialogue on new arrangements, including on non-strategic nuclear weapons. Strengthening cooperation on nuclear security is also essential. Nuclear terrorism, for one, is a challenge that we must tackle together. Having served for the past two years as international coordinator of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, we are more convinced than ever of the value of the type of practical, hands-on cooperation it promotes. We encourage all countries that are not yet members to join it.

Regarding chemical weapons, our most urgent priority is upholding the norm against the use of chemical weapons and ensuring that those that violate it are held to account. The first step towards accountability is attribution. Since last year, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has diligently implemented the task assigned to it of identifying the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons, and has done so in a professional, impartial and objective manner. For this, the dedicated OPCW staff deserves our full support and respect. Instead, we have witnessed deliberate attempts to undermine the integrity of the OPCW as a whole. That is simply unacceptable. Without strong institutions there can be no effective implementation of our treaties. By undermining the independence of treaty organizations, we undermine the treaties themselves. Going forward, it is our duty to ensure that the OPCW has the support and resources needed to implement its mandate in full. But even then, the final responsibility for achieving accountability rests with the Security Council. We have yet to see the Council fully shoulder that responsibility.

Highlighting the importance of conventional arms control was one of the many merits of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament last year. On conventional arms, our task is clear. It is to ensure the effective implementation of commitments made under the various instruments in that area. International assistance is often essential in that endeavour. Finland is pleased to be cooperating with UNIDIR on weapons



and ammunition management and supporting the valuable work of non-governmental organizations and civil society on small arms and light weapons, including by funding the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation. We welcome the launch later this month of the new Saving Lives Entity Fund and look forward to contributing to its work in the future.

Five years after its entry into force, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has already proved its worth. Promoting its national implementation and universalization remain key priorities. With more than 100 States becoming party to it so far, the progress on universalization has been remarkable. China's recent announcement that it is aiming to accede to the Treaty is particularly welcome. We hope that it will encourage other major arms exporters and importers to join, in the region and beyond. The ATT is also playing a pioneering role with regard to gender-based violence. We are very pleased that the importance of combating gender-based violence and mainstreaming gender are increasingly highlighted in the implementation of other arms-control instruments, as this is a key part of implementing our commitments under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

Finland has engaged actively in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Our aim is an effective normative framework for such weapon systems to be adopted by consensus by all parties to the process. It is an ambitious aim, but one that Finland will fully strive for. The 11 guiding principles agreed on by the Group of Governmental Experts are an excellent basis on which States can now begin building a practical outcome. As the only game in town, the Group is the appropriate forum for negotiations on this extremely complex topic. We support a new mandate for it, as proposed in August, with the clear aim of achieving concrete results by 2021. With patience and flexibility on all sides, we will be able to reach an outcome that all parties can commit to. We should strive for nothing less.

With our overall objective in mind — that is, strengthening the rules-based international system and the institutions that work to uphold it — we look forward to working with the Chair and all delegations to make this session a success.

**Mr. Aryasinha** (Sri Lanka): At the outset, Sri Lanka would like to join other delegations in congratulating Ambassador Llorentty Solíz, Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and the other members of the Bureau on their election, and to wish them every success in the work ahead. I also want to thank the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for the unwavering support that they have shown in seeking to realize our global disarmament objectives.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

As we move towards the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations next year, it is an opportune time to take stock of the achievements and challenges before us. The high-level segment of the General Assembly concluded last week with a clear message from the States Members of the United Nations on the need to adhere to multilateralism in our collective quest for shared solutions to issues of development and international peace and security.

The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will take place next year in an uncertain international environment. We attach priority to promoting and fully complying with the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) without further delay, as well as to respecting its three pillars, which are integral to global efforts to strengthen international peace and security. The threat of nuclear weapons remains more critical than ever and is the greatest of those currently facing humankind. Their testing or use could result in the most catastrophic consequences for life on our planet. Sri Lanka has remained steadfast in its commitment to non-proliferation and its opposition to nuclear weapons. In that regard, we underscore that the NPT should remain the cornerstone multilateral agreement for disarmament. We were among the first States to sign the NPT, in 1968, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in 1996, and we supported the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017.

It was under Sri Lanka's chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement that a call was made for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to

disarmament, and Sri Lanka introduced resolutions 32/88A and B, which led to the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, held in 1978. We made that call in view of the slow progress in disarmament at the time. Some four decades on, the disarmament situation regrettably remains bleak and we seem to have reached an impasse, which must be addressed as soon as possible. We strongly support the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and call for its effective implementation. We also call for taking practical steps towards establishing zones free of weapons of mass destruction and building on existing such zones, especially in regions where those zones have not been created.

As a country that has experienced nearly three decades of separatist terrorist conflict, including most recently the extremist terrorist attacks on Easter Sunday earlier this year, Sri Lanka is aware of the devastation and destruction caused by small arms and light weapons and the illicit trade in such weapons, which enables non-State actors to easily access and acquire them illegally.

As part of its post-conflict development and reconciliation, Sri Lanka has been focusing on being mine-free by 2020 and moving forward on humanitarian disarmament, with the Government working together with the United Nations and a number of mine-clearing non-governmental organizations and local organizations. It should be noted that our army was responsible for nearly 90 per cent of the mines cleared, enabling internally displaced persons to be speedily resettled and the areas in question redeveloped. As a result, in December 2017, Sri Lanka became the 163rd country to accede to the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines. Just a few months later, in March 2018, we became the 103rd State party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, despite the fact that we have never used such weapons, although we have been falsely accused of that by some parties in cheap and erroneous propaganda efforts.

As a demonstration of our commitment to disarmament, we were honoured to preside in November 2015 over the Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Having initiated State-level discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems during our presidency, which paved the way for the establishment in 2016 of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging

technologies in lethal autonomous weapon systems, we support the ongoing discussions within the framework of the Group of Governmental Experts and encourage the continuation of those processes. In September Sri Lanka also presided over the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, having led the preparatory and coordinating process during the previous year, assisted by the Coordination Committee.

We must also ensure that outer space is free of conflict, and it is imperative that we prevent any militarization or weaponization of space. For those reasons, for more than two decades Sri Lanka and Egypt have been pleased to submit an annual draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". We are seeking support again this year for that important draft resolution, which Sri Lanka will have the honour to introduce in the thematic cluster on negotiating a multilateral instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Sri Lanka would like to reaffirm the vital importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. In Sri Lanka's statements in the CD we have sought to highlight the ways in which the international and regional strategic landscapes are becoming increasingly constrained, which more than ever underscores how important it is to ensure that the CD gets down to its substantive task of addressing those challenges through the negotiation of disarmament treaties. Sri Lanka has consistently contributed to that end, most recently during its term as President of the CD in 2018, when a breakthrough was achieved through decision CD/2119, which rallied all the members of the CD together in agreeing to establish five subsidiary bodies to commence substantive work on all the items on its agenda. It is noteworthy that this was achieved in spite of the challenging global environment, in which, on the one hand, some parties raised concerns regarding the CD's current relevance, and on the other, many reiterated how urgent it was to break the current impasse. At the time, addressing the high-level segment of the CD in February, Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed the decision, observing that "I believe the Conference is off to the best start in nearly two decades, and I look forward to building on this new momentum".

It is unfortunate that the difficult task of achieving consensus and momentum that began with decision CD/2119, the naming of the subsequent coordinators

of the five working groups and the valuable work undertaken pursuant to the decision could not be further advanced. Under different presidencies during the first half of 2019, the members of the CD attempted to make progress by submitting two draft programmes of work and two draft decisions aimed at facilitating substantive deliberations through subsidiary bodies, which were discussed at length. Yet the stalemate continued until the end of the CD's 2019 calendar year.

As the CD commences its 2020 session under the presidency of Algeria, our fellow member of the Group of 21, it is hoped that serious practical measures will be initiated to break the deadlock and move forward on substantive negotiations on critical issues. That would also send a positive signal to the 2020 NPT Review Conference, which must get off to the right start and send the right signals through a convergence of political will if it is to be successful. In that context, Sri Lanka sees value in returning to the consensus that produced the Conference's decision CD/2119 and hopes that it can serve as a tool to bridge the existing gaps and bring the CD closer to fulfilling its mandate. We would like to encourage constructive presidential consultations and coordination aimed at bringing about meaningful progress in the work of the CD so as to prevent a repeat of the unfortunate situation that it has been facing in recent months. I assure the Committee that Sri Lanka stands ready to extend its support to any practical measures and proposals for efforts to return the CD to substantive work.

**Mr. Hassan** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to congratulate the Chair on presiding over the work of the First Committee and is confident in his ability and that of the Bureau to lead the Committee's work successfully, including on the issues that are most important to Egypt.

We fully align ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States, and my own country, Egypt, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

The disarmament and non-proliferation regimes are facing increasing challenges that increase the burden on us to review the implementation of our disarmament commitments and require that the United Nations address them objectively and comprehensively

so that its efforts are focused on directly maintaining international peace and security in all its work. The most serious challenge is the obvious deterioration of the security environment at both the regional and international levels, including certain great Powers' rollback of their commitments to the multilateral system, the start of a new arms race, a rush to develop nuclear arsenals and their delivery systems, competition in the area of information and communication technologies and artificial intelligence, and a push towards an arms race in outer space. That is an unwinnable race that can lead only to the deterioration of security internationally and create more risks that destructive wars may be waged, whether intentionally or not.

Egypt is deeply concerned about the rollback of nuclear-disarmament efforts and the failure to achieve universality for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to implement the commitments agreed on at successive NPT Review Conferences, particularly those regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the 1995 Review Conference, which represents an integral part of the Treaty's indefinite extension. In that regard, Egypt welcomed the General Assembly's adoption at its seventy-third session of decision 73/546, which requested the Secretary-General to hold a conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We emphasize that the Conference should lead to arrangements for the region reached freely and by consensus, providing an important and historic opportunity to implement agreed commitments through dialogue and negotiation without singling out any particular country of the region. Egypt looks forward to seeing all stakeholders take part in the Conference in good faith, particularly since this long overdue forum is aimed at establishing a stable and sustainable security regime in the Middle East that can tackle the security concerns of every country in the region. We are confident that all our partners will support such a conference based on their pledges, commitments and credibility in the area of the maintenance international peace and security. In addition, we feel it is extremely important to unite our efforts to make the 2020 NPT Review Conference a success.

With regard to emerging security threats, we want to reiterate how important we view the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space. Egypt looks forward to

holding negotiations leading to the adoption of a legally binding instrument that addresses the existing gaps in this area by banning the deployment of any offensive or defensive weapons in outer space, as well as armed attacks on satellites and the development of weapons designed specifically to target objects in outer space. We also welcome the progress made through the discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, set up pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/250, on identifying the comprehensive and balanced elements that should serve as a basis for negotiations on such an instrument.

Given the increasing importance of information and communications technology as a vital component of all States' strategic facilities for stability and security, Egypt strongly advocates for the development by the United Nations of binding rules designed to achieve equitable security for all and prevent cyberspace from being transformed into an arena for conflict and aggression. We also look forward to the success of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/27, and hope that its concrete progress will be commensurate with the threat posed to international security by the malicious and harmful use of such technologies.

In conclusion, we would like to assure the Committee of our readiness to fully cooperate with the Chair in order to achieve positive results at this session, in line with Egypt's interest in achieving the progress we want on the issues of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, while supporting United Nations efforts in this important area that can help to promote shared security for all. In that context, we reiterate our hope that the First Committee will adopt a programme of work by consensus as soon as possible, which will enable it to perform its tasks effectively and address many delegations' concerns. That can be achieved through proper implementation of the commitments under the host country agreement through the appropriate channels.

**Mr. Nimchynski** (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election.

We consider the First Committee to be probably the most effective universal mechanism in the current disarmament toolbox. Ukraine reiterates its consistent adherence to a multilateral approach in this area, and we stand together with States that are prepared to contribute to strengthening the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), since recent trends have shown that we need to take measures to prevent its weakening. I want to remind the Committee that in August we lost the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, another cornerstone of the global arms-control regime. We are deeply concerned about the possibility that its termination could lead to an increased build-up of nuclear and conventional missiles that would have a destructive impact on security in Europe.

Ukraine is a vivid example of the ineffectiveness of the security assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States in exchange for their decision to get rid of powerful nuclear arsenals. The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances of 1994 tied Ukraine's denuclearization politically to respect for its international integrity on the part of the nuclear Powers, but Russia's continued violation of that commitment will not encourage proliferators to take steps towards nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, it could contribute to seeing nuclear deterrence as a remedy for both nuclear and conventional military threats.

Ukraine continues to support the development of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and calls on all NPT States parties that have not yet done so to conclude and strictly implement comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency and to conclude and put their additional protocols into effect. Ukraine's implementation of its safeguards is carried out in strict conformity with international law, the IAEA Statute and the agreement between Ukraine and the IAEA on the application of safeguards based on its Additional Protocol. As a result, all the nuclear facilities and material in Crimea continue to be covered by the Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol. We support the IAEA's stable and coherent approach, which has reliably proved that it can never be used for insolent attempts to recognize any change in the status of Crimea. We would like to point out that any efforts by Russia to extend its jurisdiction under the 1985 agreement between the IAEA and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics over the nuclear



facilities and material in Crimea will be deemed null and void.

Reiterating its support for a multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation, Ukraine underlines the importance of universalizing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. Ukraine also recognizes the key role of conventional arms-control instruments, including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

The illicit trafficking of conventional arms is fuelling global terrorism and conflicts and constitutes a serious obstacle to peace, security, stability and development. Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, using regular military armed forces with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition, has significantly harmed the existing system of conventional arms control. In that context, it is extremely worrying that in 2019 the Russian Federation has continued its massive transfers of military equipment to eastern Ukraine, thereby deliberately destabilizing the situation in our country and completely ignoring the international community's calls for effective control. Moreover, the Russian footprint in Crimea in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea is threatening. We are seeing Russia gradually turning the Black Sea area into a military playground, with occupied Crimea converted into a heavily militarized fortress.

In that respect, I would like to remind the Committee of General Assembly resolution 73/194, on the problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The resolution condemned the ongoing temporary occupation of that part of the territory of Ukraine and urged the Russian Federation, as the occupying Power, to withdraw its military forces from Crimea and end its temporary occupation of Ukraine's territory without delay. I want to stress that in itself the presence of Russian troops in Crimea is contrary to the national sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and undermines security and stability not only in Ukraine but in its neighbours and far beyond. If we fail to

address that challenge now, the militarization of Crimea may have far-reaching consequences for security, not only in the Black Sea area but in the whole of Southern Europe and North Africa, as well as the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

We gather each year in the First Committee to bring to the table the most pressing issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. Our modern security system is vulnerable and indivisible, which means that even small regional issues can have a global meaning and a strong impact on distant States. Only joint efforts and strong political will can minimize the impact of the existing threats and challenges posed by weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

In conclusion, on behalf of my delegation, I hope that the Committee can work productively in order to contribute to achieving the honourable goal of making our world safer and more secure.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): Let me first congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the Bureau of the First Committee. The Committee can count on Norway's support and cooperation throughout its deliberations.

Norway is fully committed to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That can be achieved only through the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of those weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of our efforts on disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear power. Norway is working for the full implementation of the NPT. We welcome the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative launched by the United States. We also underline the importance of promoting measures aimed at reducing the risk of nuclear weapons being used. Nuclear disarmament verification is important if we are to make progress. The Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament agreed on a consensus report in April (see A/74/90), and the Group's Chair will present the report and details of its work to the First Committee on 18 October. One of its conclusions is that verification is essential to the process of nuclear disarmament and to achieving a world without nuclear weapons. To underpin our efforts at the United Nations, Norway remains strategically engaged in the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. More work is needed, and Norway will

therefore submit a new draft resolution on nuclear-disarmament verification for which we will seek the support of all States Members of the United Nations.

Norway advocates the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) constitute the global standard for verification, enabling the IAEA to ensure compliance with obligations under the NPT. The nuclear weapons and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remain unacceptable. Only a political solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula will be sustainable, and we stand firmly behind Security Council resolutions on the matter. The steps that Iran has undertaken to reduce its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action are a source of serious concern. We urge Iran to reverse its steps and to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA. We regret that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty has come to an end owing to Russian non-compliance, and we urge the United States and Russia to extend and expand the New START Treaty.

We remain deeply concerned about the Syrian regime's continued possession of chemical weapons. The report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission on the incident in Douma concluded that an attack using chemical weapons had taken place. We strongly support the work of the Investigation and Identification Team to establish responsibility for that atrocity. We are appalled by the recurrent use of chemical weapons in recent years and reiterate our view, which is that any breach of the global norm against the use of such weapons is unacceptable. The Biological Weapons Convention remains a crucial pillar of our global disarmament architecture, and we are concerned about its difficult financial situation.

Cyberspace is the backbone of our global infrastructure. Secure and stable digital networks are also a matter of global and national security. Our dependence on digital technologies has created new vulnerabilities. We all face serious threats to our critical infrastructure, economies and democratic institutions, and we welcome the increased attention that the United Nations is paying to such matters. We must ensure that the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security

and the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security complement each other. Both processes must build on the achievements of previous Groups of Governmental Experts and ensure a continued commitment to international peace and stability in a manner that guarantees the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Norway is proud to hold the presidency of the fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Twenty years after its entry into force, the Convention continues to be an important tool for protecting people from landmines. It has established a strong norm, and our ambition is to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. We intend to use the Review Conference as an opportunity to draw renewed political attention to the Convention's life-saving role, and we urge all States parties to contribute to a strong outcome.

We must combat all irresponsible and illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. The Arms Trade Treaty is gaining ground and has established fundamental norms for responsible trade. We underline the importance of including a gender perspective in all arms-control efforts, and we have set a strong example during our presidency of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

As an active and consistent partner working to enhance our common future, Norway is pleased to be chairing The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. The Hague Code of Conduct is a multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument concerning the spread of ballistic missiles. So far 140 countries have subscribed, and we are working for the universalization of the Code of Conduct.

**Mr. Auväärt** (Estonia): Let me first congratulate you, Madam, on her election to the Bureau of the First Committee at its seventy-fourth session.

While aligning ourselves with the statement by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), we would like to highlight some specific issues in our national capacity.

We are concerned about the fact that the international security environment has been deteriorating and tensions growing in recent years. The threats we face today are serious and complex. In this uncertain situation, we should make a collective effort

to preserve and strengthen existing institutions and the non-proliferation and arms-control architecture. The effectiveness and viability of the non-proliferation, arms-control and disarmament regimes require that rules are followed and agreements fully complied with, implemented and enforced by all parties.

As we approach next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we must do our utmost to uphold and further reinforce the role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a major multilateral instrument of international security. Since its entry into force in 1970, the NPT has been a cornerstone of our global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Estonia shares the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and continues to advocate for pursuing a progressive approach in a realistic and responsible way. To that end, Estonia supports the commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on a fissile material cut-off treaty. In that context, I would like to voice our strong wish to take part in future negotiations, and we reiterate the request that Estonia has been making since 2001 to participate fully and equally in the work of the CD.

Estonia regrets that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force. We support all international efforts to that end and urge all States, particularly annex 2 countries, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. We have also noted with concern that the proliferation of ballistic missiles, especially those capable of delivering nuclear weapons, remains a serious challenge. We believe that the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and The Hague Code of Conduct play an important role in preventing such missile proliferation, and that the inclusion of Estonia and every EU member in the membership of the MTCR would strengthen it and international non-proliferation efforts generally.

It is a matter of great concern for Estonia that in the past few years some States have disregarded long-standing core principles of international law and violated their international obligations. The fact that there have been recurring incidents in recent years involving the use of chemical weapons has gravely undermined the universal prohibition against such acts. It is vital that we maintain and further advance the global norm prohibiting chemical weapons and

enhance the effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We consider it extremely important that at its special session in June the Conference of States Parties to the CWC decided to improve the capacity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to identify perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons and to develop a universal attribution mechanism. We welcome the establishment of the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team and commend its Technical Secretariat for the progress made so far. We look forward to the Investigation and Identification Team's first report, and we call on the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with it. Estonia also supports efforts conducted within the framework of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has been a key instrument for strategic stability, nuclear non-proliferation and arms control for the past three decades. Russia has developed and fielded a missile system that violates the INF Treaty, and we deeply regret that Russia has not addressed the serious concerns that have been repeatedly expressed about its non-compliance with the Treaty.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's missiles and nuclear-weapon programme continue to violate Security Council resolutions and threaten global peace and security. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations and to take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Until it does so, all countries should strictly enforce existing sanctions. Estonia also continues to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the long-term mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments. We are deeply concerned about the measures that Iran has taken since July that are inconsistent with its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, as reported by the Director General of the IAEA. We urge Iran to reverse those activities, refrain from any further steps and cooperate fully with the IAEA.

Estonia has continued to contribute to humanitarian demining and mine action. That includes support to the United Nations Mine Action Service, as well as to humanitarian projects in bilateral and international frameworks. At the twentieth anniversary of the Ottawa Convention, we expect the fourth Review Conference

of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty to review the progress on its goals for 2025 and to create positive momentum for the further universalization and improved implementation of obligations under the Convention. We also support the efforts to universalize and strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Where emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems are concerned, we believe that the CCW is the most appropriate forum for such discussions, bringing together as it does the right expertise. Estonia welcomed the outcome of its 2019 session, in particular the agreement on the 11 guiding principles and the two-year timeline leading up to the 2021 Review Conference.

Estonia welcomes the opportunity to further advance global understanding regarding the framework of international stability in cyberspace within the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. In our view those two processes should develop in a complementary manner, proceeding from the agreed consensus on the reports of the previous Group of Governmental Experts. The existing norms of responsible State behaviour that have already been agreed on, together with international law, regional confidence-building measures and capacity-building mechanisms, provide the structure that we need for a framework for stability and safety in cyberspace, something that we cannot achieve without an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach. Estonia remains committed to promoting an open, free and secure cyberspace for all in which the application of international law, fundamental freedoms and human rights are protected online.

In conclusion, Estonia is determined to contribute to global efforts to strengthen international law and a rules-based order and to the implementation of existing disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation instruments. The fact that we are about to take a seat on the Security Council as a non-permanent member for the period from 2020 to 2021 demonstrates Estonia's long-term commitment to taking on greater responsibility for the promotion of international peace and security.

**Mr. Yeleukenov** (Kazakhstan): I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election, Madam. My delegation is ready to

fully support the First Committee in ensuring that its work is constructive and effective.

Having taken its own path to denuclearization, Kazakhstan firmly believes that disarmament is the most effective measure we have for confidence-building. It is the foundation for achieving global peace and ensuring stability and security. The obvious lack of progress in that area and a general decline in trust resulted in Member States' decision in 2017 to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in a vivid demonstration that the majority of non-nuclear-weapon States are becoming increasingly impatient and are pressing for acceptance of the urgent need to seriously address the gaps and imbalances in the existing nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. On 29 August, Kazakhstan became the twenty-sixth Member State to submit its instrument of ratification of the Treaty. We are glad that other like-minded States have picked up that momentum and that the Treaty has now been ratified by 32 countries. We hope that the rest of the 122 supporting States will also confirm and translate their position in practice and make the prospects for establishing a legal ban on nuclear weapons a reality.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should complement the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially in its ultimate goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan calls on the nuclear Powers that have pledged to make efforts to eliminate their nuclear weapons in accordance with article VI of the NPT to take practical steps and effective measures to that end. The nuclear-weapon-possessing States that have remained outside the NPT should join it without any preconditions and as non-nuclear States. We believe that no State should pursue its national interests and security at the expense of other, peace-loving countries. In general, Kazakhstan will support any initiatives that can help to achieve common ground between nuclear and non-nuclear States in the run-up to the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We believe that voluntary moratoriums on nuclear testing such as the nuclear Powers have observed cannot serve as an alternative to a legally binding document such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and that the CTBT's entry into force as soon as possible is essential to the effective implementation of the NPT.



We welcomed the final report (see A/74/90) of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, in which Kazakhstan's expert also took part. In the past decade the political environment has changed, and not for the better. In the wake of the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, there are major concerns that the extension of the New START Treaty is at great risk. We join others in urging Russia and the United States to make every effort to preserve that last remaining disarmament agreement.

Kazakhstan attaches great importance to strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones by addressing the issues and challenges that they face. In Nur-Sultan on 28 and 29 August, together with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, we organized an international seminar on fostering cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones. It has helped to consolidate all the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones by uniting their positions and reinforcing their role in nuclear disarmament. Banning nuclear weapons and creating new zones are key priorities for Kazakhstan, and they are important items on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and its action plan. This year Kazakhstan is serving as coordinator of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which is marking its tenth anniversary. Ours is still the last such zone to have been established, and we therefore hope that further measures strengthening the interaction between the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones will help to consolidate the efforts to establish new zones, particularly in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

Kazakhstan supports the continued implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to which we made a practical contribution by facilitating the dialogue on it through meetings held in Almaty. We urge all the parties to the JCPOA to show responsibility and fully implement their obligations under the Plan.

Kazakhstan has steadfastly advocated for denuclearizing the Korean peninsula, and we are ready to share our experience on how we dismantled our own nuclear-testing infrastructure.

Terrorism remains a particularly urgent threat against a backdrop of rapidly developing scientific and technological achievements. We must all cooperate closely if we are to prevent such attempts. In that regard, the initiative put forward three years ago on starting

negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism is becoming increasingly relevant. The development of lethal autonomous weapon systems is also a particular source of concern. Such systems have the potential to challenge the most basic principles of both international law and international humanitarian law. It remains to be demonstrated whether it is possible for an autonomous weapon system to comply with the three fundamental principles of international humanitarian law — proportionality, distinction and precautions in attack. We will continue to be guided by the initiative of Kazakhstan's first President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has been urging the international community to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2045, when we will mark the centenary of the United Nations.

Humankind should take advantage of every opportunity to carry forward the momentum for disarmament wherever it already exists and to generate new impetus where it is needed, in order to achieve a safer and more secure world for all.

**Mr. Saleh Azzam** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election to lead the work of the First Committee during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. It is an honour for Lebanon to be a member of the Bureau and to work with them to achieve the results we all want. We would also like to thank the delegation of Romania for its wise leadership of the work of the First Committee during the previous session. The Committee can count on Lebanon's support on its path to a successful outcome.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.3).

Arms in all their forms continue to pose a major threat to international peace and security in our world today. Over the past two decades, weapons-related problems have only proliferated, and we are also seeing both emerging and traditional cross-border challenges caused by the technology revolution and globalization.

Weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a grave threat to global peace and security. The biggest challenge in that regard is the decline in recent years of efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. Instead of seeing progress towards the full elimination of nuclear

weapons, we are witnessing conflicts based on strategic influence among nuclear States that have negatively affected their commitments in this area. There has been a return to rhetoric justifying the possession and development of such weapons based on a purely national security perspective that fails to consider human security in general.

In the Middle East, Israel continues to defy international law and the parameters for nuclear non-proliferation. Backed by various great Powers, it is still blocking every effort to establish a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, there is one important positive development that we can point to that has occurred since the original delay in the implementation of the decision taken at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I refer to General Assembly decision 73/546, which called for the holding of a conference to negotiate the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction under the auspices of the United Nations. Lebanon congratulates our sister nation of Jordan on being chosen to preside over the November Conference, and we urge all the invited parties to participate in a spirit of responsibility and commitment. In the run-up to the historic 2020 NPT Review Conference, we stress that so far the decisions of the NPT Conferences since 1995 have yet to be implemented in a way that realizes their goals, including the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The international community must exert pressure on Israel to return to the international negotiating table, join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and subject its nuclear facilities and programmes to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Conventional weapons continue to pose a serious threat to national regional and international peace and security, and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to be a major stumbling block in efforts to build and sustain peace. They also lead to economic challenges. Lebanon has fulfilled its commitments in line with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects by updating and implementing the relevant national legislation, as can be clearly and transparently seen in Lebanon's national reports on its implementation of the Programme of Action. In that regard, I have the

honour to inform the First Committee that on 9 May we submitted to the United Nations the instrument showing that Lebanon has joined the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), thereby becoming the 102nd State party to the ATT. This is an extremely important step in our efforts to address the threat of conventional weapons. I am also pleased to be able to reaffirm Lebanon's commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are a State party to the Convention and played a major role in its adoption following our painful experiences in the wake of the cluster munitions left by Israel's wanton act of aggression in 2006. We must work together to end the funding, production, stockpiling and use of such dangerous weapons in order to save innocent people from their deadly threat and ensure the universalization of the Convention.

Lebanon is experiencing changes in the light of the technological revolution, which is producing new and emerging security issues such as the possibility of an arms race in outer space and challenges to cybersecurity. During its previous session, the General Assembly established two mechanisms for addressing cybersecurity challenges, the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. Lebanon welcomed the launch of the work of both mechanisms and urges them to work in complementarity and cooperation in order to improve and foster security in cyberspace so as to serve the interests of all States and peoples. We are also pleased to inform the Committee of an important development in this area in Lebanon. On 29 August, in a specific and important step towards promoting cybersecurity in Lebanon, my Government adopted a national cybersecurity strategy in line with its efforts in the digital arena aimed at establishing an e-Government.

In conclusion, disarmament remains a key item on the international agenda. Its diverse and complex issues are at the core of our international peace and security concerns. However, we should keep in mind that the maintenance of international peace and security is not an isolated goal but is rather organically linked to other goals in other areas, such as sustainable development and the protection and promotion of human rights. We therefore reiterate our belief in the importance of

maintaining a comprehensive and humane approach to the goal of disarmament.

**Mr. Ghafoor Mohamed** (Maldives): My delegation would like to warmly congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their election and to assure them of my delegation's full support and cooperation as they steer the work of the First Committee.

One of the core purposes of the United Nations, as set out in the very first Article of the Charter, is to maintain international peace and security and eliminate threats to peace by peaceful means. Global disarmament and non-proliferation must therefore remain integral to the work of the United Nations as we seek to promote peace, prosperity and the resolution of conflicts through dialogue and mediation. The work of the international disarmament regime relies on the global community cooperating in the spirit of multilateralism, on good faith and trust among parties and on the promotion of respect for the international order. It is our collective responsibility as the States Members of the United Nations to work together for the betterment of humankind, given that even the smallest of countries in this interconnected world can be affected by conflicts around the world.

The Maldives enjoys a strong record on disarmament and non-proliferation. We have never sought the knowledge required to produce any category of weapons, nor do we intend to stray from our path of peaceful coexistence. We are a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, among other agreements, and are proud to announce that just last month we signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Maldives also acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty during this year's treaty event. Those recent ratifications and our record reflect our belief that security and strength are achieved not through weapons of war, but through investment in our people and environment and by reducing poverty, investing in sustainable development, guaranteeing fundamental human rights, strengthening democratic processes and increasing our resilience to the effects of climate change. It is for that reason that the Maldives continues to believe that in order to achieve truly durable peace, we must adopt a holistic approach to peacebuilding and expand our focus beyond the traditional discourse on security and disarmament.

*The Chair returned to the Chair.*

The Maldives would like to emphasize the way in which sustainable development must be central to our work on disarmament, non-proliferation and peacebuilding. As the Secretary-General highlighted in his Agenda for Disarmament, released last year, the link between peace and development is clear and well established. Disarmament is a necessary precondition for sustainable development and the promotion of human rights. Likewise, durable and successful development is a key tool for the prevention of conflict. We also believe that durable peace depends on treating non-traditional and emerging threats to international peace and security as serious concerns. They include threats such as climate change, transnational organized crime, terrorism and violent extremism, all of which increase instability and the likelihood of conflict. We must adjust to the changing nature of the threats to international peace and security, and we believe that the Committee could address those non-traditional and emerging threats in a more holistic manner.

Finally, the Maldives calls on all States to continue to work together to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. We want to take this opportunity to encourage States that have not yet ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to do so as soon as possible so that it can enter into force. We would like to reaffirm our belief that disarmament and non-proliferation will make the world safer, more prosperous and better prepared to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is critical that we continue to view disarmament, non-proliferation and peacebuilding in a broader sense and prioritize that shared responsibility as a matter of the utmost urgency.

**The Chair:** I shall now call on delegations that have asked for the floor to exercise their right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first statement is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to exercise our right of reply in connection with yesterday's statement by the representative of the United States (see A/C.1/74/PV.3). We heard a very eloquent statement that was extremely revealing in terms of understanding the approaches of the United States to ensuring international security and addressing the most difficult issues in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. It creates the impression that the United States is the only country in the world concerned about the state of affairs in this

key area of international security, and that the United States alone is working to build a new arms-control and non-proliferation system. In the Russian Federation's statement today we cited the facts that show that this has no relation to reality.

The only thing we have to add to what was said is that for decades the United States has been continually building up its offensive military capabilities, developing the infrastructure needed to deploy its military forces anywhere in the world, expanding its military budget to astronomical proportions, forcing its allies to increase their military expenditures, constantly modernizing its armed forces, honing their combat skills, developing new means and methods of warfare and adapting its doctrinal documents accordingly. It is no secret that the United States long ago divided the world into parcels and assigned a corresponding military command to each of them. There is not a single region of the world without United States military bases and a powerful presence capable of invading or wiping out any country in a matter of hours. The United States has long viewed the world through gun sights, keeping every country, without exception, in a constant and unrelenting state of tension.

We were shocked not merely by the tone of the United States representative's statement but by its basic message. What we were hearing, in a new interpretation, was that long-forgotten line about reconsidering dividing lines. Evidently this was the cherry on top that the United States has been saving specially for the First Committee. Such proclamations not only take us back to the era of the Cold War, they contradict Washington's declared position on addressing issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. On the one hand, the United States is expressing its willingness to engage in dialogue with Russia and other States and its intention to do so in a constructive way. On the other, it is in fact shutting down any such possibility and hurling unfounded, unsubstantiated and sometimes absurd accusations at us, using rhetoric that not only goes outside the bounds of diplomatic propriety but is in total contradiction to the spirit of intergovernmental relations, based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

There were positive moments in the United States delegation's statement. One of them was a reference to the close link between disarmament and democracy. We would like to ask our United States counterparts a question. How should we all view the United States,

a country that has declared that it will place weapons in outer space, launched programmes to expand its nuclear-missile capabilities and taken destructive action to bring down the existing international arms-control and disarmament system and thereby undermine the foundations of international security? How can we interpret all of that as being linked to democracy? Sadly, according to the logic that was presented to us yesterday by the representative of the United States Department of State, we cannot consider the United States to be a fully democratic State. Given the historical experience of the past few decades and the events in a number of countries that the United States has initiated and participated in directly, there is reason to question the democratic nature of political power in the United States in general.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply. I would first like to start with comments made yesterday (see A/C.1/74/PV.3) by the representative of the Al-Assad regime, who comes to this body every year and makes ridiculous charges that no one believes. Yet he continues to make them. I will be very brief about Syria. We have not forgotten the Al-Assad regime's repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people. It will be held to account for its crimes, which are in clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Syria is also in non-compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) because it has built a clandestine plutonium reactor. Once again, it can deny day after day that it has not taken any actions against its own people with regard to chemical weapons, but the entire world knows that is nothing but a lie.

Regarding the comments earlier today by the representative of China, who accused the United States of acts of bullying, I would like to ask China's neighbours in the region who the real bully is. It is not the United States. It is China. He made a reference to the chemical-weapon stockpile of the United States. As I said last year and the year before that (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), the United States is on track to eliminate its entire chemical-weapon stockpile by 2023. Regarding the Chinese representative's comments on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, China has been free to build up its own INF-range missiles unconstrained by any arms-control treaty. That is why the Committee will continue to hear the United States urge China and Russia to join us in trilateral



negotiations towards nuclear disarmament. With regard to the issue of outer space and the promotion of the so-called draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, that is a flawed treaty, as we have said many times. It is not verifiable, and it is not in the interests of the United States or its partners.

Finally, with regard to Russia, my Russian colleague's rhetoric reminds me of the propaganda of Soviet times. I hope it is not taking us back to the future. The representative who spoke this morning said that the United States is physically blocking the work of the First Committee. We all know it is Russia that is blocking the work of the Committee, plain and simple, and it should end that activity. Russia claims that it complies with norms of international behaviour. Meanwhile, it has been redrawing borders in Europe by force, disrupting democratic elections, violating the INF Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and repeatedly carrying out cyberattacks around the world. The list goes on. Russia's behaviour is threatening and dangerous. The Russian representative also said that the United States was not in compliance with the NPT or raised questions about our compliance. That is just categorically ridiculous. The United States is in compliance with all of its obligations under the NPT.

Lastly, I would like to make a few points that I think encompass the concerns that the United States has about the growing cooperation between Russia and China. For decades, the United States has worked to reduce the number and prominence of nuclear weapons in world affairs. Russia is now moving in the opposite direction instead, by developing new nuclear weapons coupled with dangerous policies that increase the risk of nuclear escalation in a crisis. Furthermore, China's expanding nuclear arsenal, combined with problematic foreign and security policy choices, is increasing the risk of nuclear crises. Its nuclear capabilities, combined with a demonstrated willingness to use military power to change borders, undermine the liberal democratic order established in the wake of the Second World War. There is no need to take my word for it. Ask Ukraine and Georgia. Having violated a series of its arms-control and European security commitments, Russia represents a constant threat and is engaged in ongoing campaigns to destabilize its neighbours, all while diversifying its nuclear arsenal to include new weapons such as a nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed underwater drone and a nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile.

China has benefited from the fact that the two largest nuclear Powers remain constrained by arms-control agreements, as I mentioned earlier. China has amassed a vast ground-based intermediate-range missile arsenal designed in part to realize its ambitions to establish regional dominance in Asia. It is also close to establishing a nuclear triad. At the same time, it is working to at least double its nuclear arsenal over the next decade and has dismissed United States calls to engage bilaterally on nuclear risk reduction, let alone join trilateral arms-control talks. We need a new era of arms control in which both Russia and China are at the negotiating table and demonstrate that they are willing to reduce nuclear risks rather than heighten them. Arms control can help decrease the chances of misperception and manage strategic competition among States. The United States calls on allies and partners to help persuade Russia and China to change course, cease impeding progress and come to the table.

Finally, it is quite interesting to hear Russia questioning whether the United States is a democracy. It is just absurd, and I cannot even dignify it with a response, other than to say that the United States is clearly a democracy and Russia is not.

**Mr. Jang Il Hun** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): In response to the statements made today by the representatives of various Western countries, including Australia, Poland and Norway, my delegation condemns their one-sided and biased approach to our missile launches. As I said yesterday (see A/C.1/74/PV.3), our missile launches are part of routine self-defence activities conducted in the face of the growing military threat posed to us by actions that include the joint United States-South Korea military exercises and the introduction and deployment of the latest military equipment, such as F-35A fighter planes, in the southern part of the peninsula. In such circumstances we cannot afford not to strengthen our national defence capabilities, which include missile launches. Western countries would do well to abandon their bad habit of criticizing others rather than taking an impartial position on any issues they raise.

As for sanctions, they do not help to solve the problem. Sanctions serve not for troubleshooting but for troublemaking. If the countries that are calling for the thorough implementation of sanctions continue to make trouble, they should take full responsibility for the consequences that may arise. We are not obsessed with lifting sanctions, but we will not tolerate any

infringement under the pretext of sanctions of the sovereignty of our country or our people's right to development and existence.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I responded to yesterday's statement by the United States (see A/C.1/74/PV.3) in my previous statement today. I do not intend to take up the First Committee's precious time by rebutting the United States' groundless accusations. Having listened to the statement that the United States representative just made, however, I want to once again highlight a few points.

China is not a party to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. We do possess land-based intermediate-range missiles, which are all based on Chinese territory and are all for purely self-defence purposes. They do not pose any threat to any country. I want to emphasize that they pose no threat whatever to the United States. We therefore have no clue as to why the United States sees China's intermediate-range missiles as a threat to it. However, we have also noted that after its withdrawal from the INF Treaty, the United States openly declared that it intended to deploy intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region — that is, on the doorstep of the countries in my region. So who is in fact the bully in our region? We certainly have our own views about that. I want to once again emphasize that any United States deployment of intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region, which is China's neighbourhood, represents a provocation against China. Accordingly, in defence of its own interests, China must perforce come up with the necessary responses.

My second point relates to the obligations undertaken by the United States under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We all know that the CWC clearly stipulates that all States parties should destroy their existing chemical weapons within 10 years of the Convention's entry into force. The United States has repeatedly exceeded the time limit for the destruction of its weapons. Nevertheless, we are heartened to learn that the United States has decided to destroy its stockpile of chemical weapons by 2023 — that is, 20 years after the time limit established by the Convention. We hope that this time around the United States will finally and truthfully honour its commitment.

I explained China's position on trilateral negotiations in my statement this morning. China has been exercising maximum restraint in the development

of nuclear weapons. We do not know what kind of nuclear-weapon reduction treaty the United States intends to discuss with us. Does it intend to bring its nuclear-weapon stocks into line with China's current levels? If that is the case, we are more than willing to have that discussion.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am once again exercising my right of reply, but I will try not to take up too much of my colleagues' time.

The United States is constantly talking about a new arms-control system. But what are we encountering right now? We are seeing a situation in which, based on the will of one State that ignores the views of the vast majority of the member States of the international community, steps are being taken to destroy the existing system of treaties and regimes in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Why? Apparently the United States' has one simple motive, which is that the existing system just does not suit Washington because it seriously limits its global ambitions. A logical question then arises: if the United States does not want to, is not prepared to and cannot implement its obligations under existing agreements, and if it is exiting these agreements and taking steps to destroy them, what guarantees do we have that under a new system of arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements, the United States will muster the political will to adhere to them and comply with its obligations? As we see it, the current situation shows that there are no such guarantees.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Committee has grown accustomed to hearing claims, lies and fabrications by the representative of the United States Administration every year. In case he had not noticed, he has just reiterated those claims, lies and fabrications.

The media, particularly the United States media, announced that the United Nations had been informed of an Israeli nuclear test in the ocean in the 1970s and not done anything. If that proves anything, it proves the involvement of the United States Administration in the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Everyone knows that the United States has been hindering, and continues to hinder, the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, with the aim of protecting the possession by the Israeli regime of nuclear, chemical

and biological weapons. Is it not curious that the United States, a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a country that has used nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, is levelling accusations against other countries? I am stating undeniable historical facts here.

With regard to non-proliferation, the United States is in violation of the NPT by virtue of its deployment of nuclear weapons in five NATO countries and in the regional waters of a number of countries, including in the Mediterranean sea. The United States, as a depository of the Treaty, should be strongly committed to it.

Could anyone forget the invasion of Iraq and its catastrophic consequences for the entire region? Could anyone forget that previous United States Administrations spent \$50 million, under the pretext of liberating Syria, to train terrorists who later formed the terrorist groups Al-Nusra and Da'esh, which, as everyone knows, use United States weapons? Current United States foreign policy is based on the use of terrorist organizations. It is developing clandestine biological-weapons programmes in more than 25 countries. In addition, it has not yet rid itself of its chemical-weapons stocks and continues to request one extension after another with a view to retaining these weapons and with no intention of getting rid of them, as it uses them in clandestine biological-weapons programmes.

The United States has been involved since the outset in directing terrorist organizations to use chemical weapons in my country. We have grown tired of the lies and fabrications told by the representatives of the United States, which everyone knows are aimed at bringing about regime change in other countries.

My country has submitted several letters to the Security Council, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) in which we included extremely important information to the effect that experts from the United States and other countries had assisted terrorists in the transfer of toxic and chemical weapons into Syria and from one region under the control of one terrorist organization to another region under the control of another group. We have provided

information that shows the presence of United States chemical experts in Syria who are training terrorist organizations in the use of such chemical weapons.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I will be very brief.

I will first respond to the Chinese representative. We really do not have a good idea of the size of China's arsenal. It says that it is small, but there is not much transparency, so I would encourage China to think about transparency on this question.

Regarding the Indo-Pacific region and China's build-up of weapons, I would recall a promise that was made to a former United States President a few years ago by Chinese President Xi Jinping, when the former American President asked, are you militarizing the South China Sea, and the reply was "no". I think that no more needs to be said about that today.

With regard to Russia, with regard to the issue of existing treaties, there is no problem with the treaties themselves; the problem is that Russia has been in violation of them. That is the problem.

With regard to Syria, finally, the Syrian representative can continue to come here and regurgitate his usual lies, but let me assure him that his regime will be held accountable for the crimes committed against the Syrian people.

**The Chair:** We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. Before we adjourn, let me remind delegations once again that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close at 6 p.m. today. All delegations interested in taking the floor should make every effort to inscribe themselves on the list before the deadline.

The next meeting of the First Committee will be held Monday, 14 October, at 10 a.m. in this conference room. We shall continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items, and I appeal to all delegations to be punctual in order to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*