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Provisional

President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve/Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium)

Members:

China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Dominican Republic	Ms. Luna
Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Maas
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Niger	Mr. Aougi
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Gonsalves
South Africa	Ms. Marais
Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Ms. Norman-Chalet
Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

Non-proliferation

Supporting the Non-proliferation Treaty ahead of the 2020 Review Conference

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation

Supporting the Non-proliferation Treaty ahead of the 2020 Review Conference

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: I would like to congratulate the Belgian presidency on convening this meeting and building on last year's initiative by Germany. The Council's continued attention to nuclear weapons and to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular, are testament to the role of both in international peace and security.

It is entirely fitting that this organ consider the achievements and the future of the NPT. After all, the NPT is a pillar of international peace and security. Few multilateral treaties, let alone security treaties, can lay claim to the record of success that the NPT can. For 50 years now, it has provided collective security benefits to all its States parties. It remains an enduring example of the value of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation measures as supporting pillars of international peace and security, no matter the climate of the day.

The Treaty continues to successfully constrain the proliferation of nuclear weapons through a verifiable safeguards system that is almost universally subscribed to. We should not forget that at the time of the NPT's negotiation, it was estimated that by 1975 there could be some 20 nuclear-armed States. The success of the NPT should not be taken for granted.

In addition to the legally binding disarmament commitments under article VI of the Treaty, the NPT

has also functioned as a de facto negotiating forum for nuclear disarmament. It has produced important confidence-building and transparency measures, including an unequivocal effort to totally eliminate nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament.

The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT — marking both the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force and the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension — presents both a symbolic and a practical opportunity. It is the perfect occasion to celebrate the NPT's many achievements and the role that it has played in making the world a safer place. It is also an opportunity to ensure that the Treaty remains the lynchpin of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and continues to enhance all States parties' security.

Failure to secure a successful outcome in 2020 would not doom the Treaty or the non-proliferation regime. It would, however, serve to undermine the value that so many United Nations Member States place on it and, in turn, devalue the review cycle as a way to strengthen not only the implementation of the NPT, but the regime as a whole. It could further entrench divisions within the Treaty, with long-term ramifications. Consequently, I continue to encourage all parties to approach the Review Conference with a spirit of flexibility and a willingness to engage in real dialogue in order to create an atmosphere conducive to success.

Success at the Review Conference faces many challenges, not least of which are the varying definitions of what success entails, as well as the geopolitical context in which we find ourselves. We cannot skate over the fact that the world is a very different place than it was in 2015, let alone in 2010 — the last time a Review Conference produced a forward-looking outcome document.

Relationships among States — especially nuclear-weapon States — are fractured. So-called great-Power competition is the order of the day. Division, distrust and a dearth of dialogue are increasingly the norm. The spectre of unconstrained nuclear competition looms over us for the first time since the 1970s. We are witnessing what has been termed a qualitative nuclear arms race — one based not on numbers, but on faster, stealthier and more accurate weapons. Regional conflicts with a nuclear dimension are worsening and proliferation challenges are not receding.

Having said that, I do not believe that the issues necessarily preclude success at the Review Conference. In fact, I hope that those issues can be discussed constructively and in ways that can move them forward, as part of the full implementation of the Treaty. In terms of a forward-looking outcome, obviously that will depend on dialogue at the Conference itself. However, I think that there are several issues that should form a part of any consensus document. Let me mention some of those today.

First, a high-level reaffirmation of commitment to the Treaty and to all obligations undertaken as a party to it seems fitting at its half-century mark.

Secondly, there must be a recommitment to the norm against the use of nuclear weapons. The recent increase in rhetoric extolling the utility of nuclear weapons is dangerous and destabilizing. We should return to the logic of President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought.

Thirdly, the development of a package of risk-reduction measures that can help the world avoid the prospect of nuclear-weapon use and move it towards nuclear disarmament would be a significant confidence-building measure.

Fourthly, States should recognize that challenges to non-proliferation are not static and that, therefore, the regime cannot be either. At a minimum, I would hope that States parties are able to endorse the additional protocol as the safeguards standard.

Fifthly, as I noted earlier, we cannot hide from the fact that the world has changed. As the Secretary-General has said on several occasions, such an environment requires a new vision for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. I hope that the Review Conference can serve as a springboard for thinking on how to address the nuclear weapons challenges of our time.

The current Security Council includes many States that will be key players at the Review Conference. I believe, therefore, that a reaffirmation of Council members' support for the Treaty and an expression of commitment to securing success in May would provide a significant boost to the Review Conference's prospects. Given the stakes, I hope that they will work towards achieving that goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I now give the floor Mr. Zlauvinen.

Mr. Zlauvinen: We are few days away from the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and almost two months from the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. It is therefore timely and important for the Security Council to discuss and reaffirm its commitment to the international disarmament and non-proliferation system built on the basis of the NPT, as well as international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology for the development that it enables.

The Treaty and its Review Conference represent an almost universal forum to discuss issues that are central to international peace and security, and that gives the NPT a unique level of legitimacy that is recognized by the international community. It is also clear that issues concerning disarmament and arms control have been an important part of the United Nations since its inception. For example, Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations confers upon the Security Council the responsibility for disarmament and the "regulation of armaments".

For almost 50 years, the NPT has proven to be crucial to maintaining international security and providing access to peaceful nuclear applications. It is incumbent on all States parties to continue to work together and ensure that the international cooperation provided for by the Treaty continues into the future. As we near the moment when the international community will get together here in New York to review the implementation of the Treaty, discuss all related issues and, I hope, agree on an outcome document that provides for a way forward, we will take into account not just the immediate context, with its limitations and opportunities, but also the medium term and the future of peaceful cooperation on these issues that we hope to see.

The 2020 Review Conference is therefore coming at a time of growing concerns and uncertainties. National and regional expectations are growing. Tensions — both old and new — are converging on the NPT as a magnet. Nevertheless, when we look at the past 50 years, we can hardly say that we are living in the best or the worst of times, and we can clearly see that the Treaty has successfully seen us through many times of tension and

change in the past. We hope that it will continue do so at the Review Conference.

It may be true that much of the quantifiable progress made under the Treaty was achieved in the past, but we sometimes underplay its fundamental and unique achievement in establishing an efficient non-proliferation system and underpinning growing technical and scientific cooperation for the benefit of all humankind. Those achievements are now taken for granted, yet 50 or even 25 years ago they seemed to be unattainable dreams. That is something that we need to consider as we undertake our responsibility at the upcoming Review Conference — to sustain what we have achieved and move forward with our eyes set on the next 50 years.

In that challenging context, we need to be ambitious and aim to make progress in every possible area. To that end, it is of great importance to consider the three pillars of the NPT in a balanced manner so that we can reach our shared goal of a comprehensive and forward-looking outcome. I believe that the three pillars are, in and of themselves, equally important and mutually reinforcing. We know that we need to ramp up consideration of the peaceful uses of nuclear applications. That is a set of issues that is fundamentally relevant to the development of our societies and has been relegated in the debate for too long.

I believe that the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty calls on all of us to recommit to its full implementation and to strengthening it with a forward-looking perspective. The Review Conference is a conference of the parties, and therefore its outcome will depend on the resolve and commitments shown by all parties when the time comes for compromises to be made and agreements to be reached.

As President-designate of the Review Conference, I encourage all parties to come to the Conference with the ambition and resolve to engage in an open and frank exchange on the implementation of the Treaty and to strengthen our joint commitment to its legally binding provisions, which are the indispensable basis for all international cooperation and progress in the field of peaceful uses, nuclear science, technology and applications in all States parties.

In addition, I believe that the next Review Conference needs to widen its reach and open up to all voices and ideas. The NPT cannot be a closed club. We need to make sure that the next generation of leaders

and practitioners are included in the conversation; that the voices of women and the gender perspective are considered and included in our conclusions and that operators, regulators, practitioners, academics and scientists are also part of the discussions. It is important to use the political momentum of the fiftieth anniversary to get over false dichotomies. There is no reason for us not to make progress on every issue where progress is possible.

As I see it, the Review Conference is an opportunity for all of us not only to review the implementation of the Treaty, but to recommit to its objectives by strengthening its contribution to peace, security and development in all our countries. I will endeavour to provide the leadership needed to make sure that the discussions among the parties reflect their commitment and bring about a successful and shared outcome of the Review Conference on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Zlauvinen for his briefing.

I now give the floor to members of the Council who wish to make a statement.

I now call on the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Maas (Germany): Three months ago, I visited Hiroshima. I stood in the vast empty space that was created by the explosion 75 years ago. I saw the ruined buildings and talked to survivors. One of them said to me, “We have the means to destroy our own civilization” and “what happened once can happen again”.

The truth that lies in those words led our predecessors to create the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This year, we commemorate its fiftieth anniversary. But commemoration is not enough. Despite its valued achievements, the NPT faces serious setbacks. Nuclear disarmament has come to a standstill. New technologies are creating dangerous strategic imbalances and proliferation crises are demanding our fullest attention.

North Korea has acquired nuclear weapons, in complete disregard of the NPT and numerous Security Council resolutions. What message does that send about the credibility of our own decisions? The only realistic way forward is a two-track approach — pressure, on the one hand, and diplomatic engagement, on the other. We should stand united in supporting United States efforts

to conduct serious negotiations with North Korea. At the same time, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Germany will ensure that sanctions are fully and duly implemented.

The full implementation of its obligations is also what we expect from Iran. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains the best and only promising tool to keep Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Europe is playing its part to uphold it, but Iran needs to do the same and return to full compliance without further delay.

Yesterday, colleagues from 16 States, supporters of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, met in Berlin. Like the overwhelming majority of the international community, we are convinced that the time to revive disarmament diplomacy is now. In Berlin, we adopted a political declaration, underpinned by concrete stepping-stones. Some of those steps can be taken only by nuclear-weapon States; others concern all of us. They are a call to put our political differences aside and take our obligations seriously.

First, we propose a set of practical measures to avoid misperceptions, reduce nuclear risks and rebuild trust. They include greater transparency on nuclear arsenals, crisis-proof communication lines and an open dialogue on strategic stability and nuclear doctrines. That dialogue should involve non-nuclear weapon States.

Secondly, we are focusing on verification. In 2019, we conducted a comprehensive practical exercise together with France. It showed how non-nuclear weapon States can participate in verification without gaining knowledge about the nuclear device. More work on that should follow.

Thirdly, we are joining forces to protect and enhance our crumbling arms-control architecture. We call on Russia and the United States to show leadership by extending the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. That agreement remains crucial, as it underpins the commitment of the biggest nuclear Powers to article VI.

With regard to fissile material, it is high time that we start negotiations on a treaty that prohibits its production for use in nuclear weapons.

And, finally, all States that have not signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must do so. As one of the current coordinators, we will spare no effort towards that end.

When we signed the NPT, we all subscribed to its ultimate goal. We must attain a world without nuclear weapons. No place on Earth makes that clearer than Hiroshima, and no one bears greater responsibility than the members of the Council.

Ms. Marais (South Africa): We thank Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu and the President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, for their briefings.

As we look forward to the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), South Africa reaffirms its commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is undeniable that the NPT has played a critical role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The three broad objectives of the NPT — namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — are inextricably linked. Therefore, South Africa maintains its long-held view that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Progress in respect of both is therefore essential to realizing the objective and purpose of the NPT.

However, while non-proliferation measures have been strengthened, similar concrete progress has not yet been realized in the area of nuclear disarmament. We believe that efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons should be matched by a concurrent effort to eliminate all nuclear weapons, in a verifiable and irreversible manner. We likewise remain seriously concerned about the apparent lack of urgency and seriousness with which the solemn undertakings, particularly with respect to nuclear disarmament, continue to be approached. Still more concerning are the attempts to negate or reinterpret the nuclear disarmament undertakings made since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

That state of affairs places the NPT and its review process under increasing pressure. It falls far short of the commitments and obligations with respect to article VI and the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference constitutes the current nuclear disarmament benchmarks. Reneging on those commitments is not an

option. For that reason, it is our view that the success of the 2020 Review Conference will largely depend on the extent to which those undertakings are being honoured.

For South Africa, it is essential that the outcome of the forthcoming Review Conference reaffirm the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States. It is also especially important that while the Review Conference outcome need not be elaborate, it should not roll back or reinterpret the agreements reached at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

South Africa joins others in expressing its concerns about the current geopolitical tensions and the resulting impact on international peace and security. It is for that reason that we believe that this current security climate allows no room for further procrastination to achieve concrete nuclear disarmament results. We therefore urge all parties involved to exercise the utmost flexibility so as to de-escalate tensions. For South Africa, humanitarian imperatives continue to underpin our search for a world without the threat posed by the possession, use and proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those considerations are today a fundamental and global concern that should be at the core of our deliberations, actions and decisions on nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, South Africa remains convinced that the strength, credibility and vitality of the NPT rest on the grand bargain across its three pillars and that the success of review conferences going forward will be determined by the extent to which those undertakings are implemented. In that regard, we stand ready to play our part.

Ms. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I would like to thank High Representative Nakamitsu and Ambassador Zlauvinen for their informative briefings. We would also like to welcome to the Chamber the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Heiko Maas.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains committed to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the full and effective implementation of the three pillars on which it stands. We urge those countries that have not yet become parties to the Treaty to do so in our collective pursuit of achieving a world free from nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons have the capacity to decimate us and set us back decades in the achievement of our development goals. To that end, Saint Vincent and the

Grenadines has taken several positive steps to grapple with that existential threat. We are party to the 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — which established our region as the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area. Furthermore, we proudly became the 24th State party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in July 2019. We are committed to ensuring that our region remains a zone of peace, as declared by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in 2014.

While the global number of nuclear weapons has declined, complete disarmament has not yet been achieved and geopolitical tensions are made worse by the existence of those weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a significant step in the total elimination of that threat. It remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime.

We emphasize the need for multilateral cooperation in effectively addressing the threat of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm the continued need for nuclear-weapon States to engage in in-depth and open dialogue on their respective nuclear doctrines and policies. Doing so increases mutual trust and confidence among all relevant parties.

We maintain our respect for the sovereignty of all States, and in our pursuit of non-proliferation policies we reaffirm that they should not undermine the rights of States to peacefully use nuclear technologies. We continue to support the oversight that the International Atomic Energy Agency provides in that regard.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is committed to working with the international community to ensure that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is effectively implemented. We look forward to the 2020 Review Conference, and it is our hope that it will yield success. Indeed, nothing said in the Chamber today should operate so as to prejudice or pre-empt the outcome of the 2020 Review Conference. The most inclusive and representative organ of the United Nations — that is, the General Assembly — has the mandate to deal with that issue in the upcoming review.

In closing, we highlight that the total elimination of nuclear weapons should remain a top priority on the agenda of the international community. We must return to a common vision and path leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Let us work together to protect the future of humankind.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ms. Nakamitsu and Ambassador Zlauvinen for their briefings.

The Charter of the United Nations begins with the words “We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Just one and a half weeks after its signing came the first — and, we hope, the last — use of nuclear weapons, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That marked the beginning of the nuclear arms race, the consequences of which are still being felt. It took almost 25 years to address that challenge in the form of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), of which we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary this year, in just a few days from now.

In the half-century of its existence, the NPT has established itself as one of the cornerstones of the international world order and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The indefinite extension of the NPT, achieved back in 1995, is evidence of its profound importance and the fact that the Treaty meets the interests of all States parties, nuclear and non-nuclear States alike.

Recently, we have witnessed the breakdown of a number of internationally recognized mechanisms in the area of non-proliferation and arms control. The root cause, as we see it, are the attempts of one State to dominate the world and impose its rules on the world community, to the detriment of the interests of other States and international law. All multilateral agreements and mechanisms that prevent such domination are declared outdated and ineffective.

The starting point here can be considered Washington’s withdrawal in 2002 from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, one of the most important of those agreements. Last year, the United States, under a spurious pretext, tore up the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). Almost immediately thereafter, flight tests of previously banned United States systems began. Our proposals to impose a moratorium on the deployment of short- and medium-range ballistic missile systems, including the development of a mechanism for their verification, have not only been ignored by the United States and its allies, but even undermined. Such actions confirm that the real reasons for the collapse of the INF Treaty have nothing to do with Russia’s position and actions.

We are also very concerned about the lack of clarity with regard to the future of the New START Treaty. The extension of the Treaty would be a reasonable step that would make it possible to prevent the further deterioration of the situation in the area of strategic stability; avoid a full collapse of the monitoring and restrictive mechanisms in the nuclear and missile spheres; and gain time to discuss approaches to controlling new weapons and military technologies. Appeals to Russia to extend the New START Treaty are misguided. President Putin has proposed that the United States extend the Treaty without any preconditions. We are waiting for an answer.

At the time, the nuclear deal with Iran was a major success in the area of non-proliferation. Five years ago, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on resolving the Iranian nuclear issue was signed and unanimously endorsed in resolution 2231 (2015). That was an example of effectively overcoming a crisis that almost turned into a hot conflict. A breakthrough was achieved once the parties involved showed a genuine readiness to listen to each other and to take mutual interests into account. However, today we see the collapse of that singular achievement in multilateral diplomacy owing to the complete rejection by the United States of its international legal obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

Against the background of the United States officially refusing to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and deploying its nuclear weapons on the territory of some of its NATO allies, in its new doctrinal approaches Washington is significantly lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. At the same time, NATO member States continue the practice of so-called joint nuclear missions, which include elements of nuclear planning and training in using nuclear weapons involving representatives of non-nuclear States. That is a direct violation of article I of the NPT by NATO nuclear-weapon States and article II by non-nuclear-weapon States. The culmination of that series of targeted actions was when the United States and its European allies conducted exercises this month to simulate the use of nuclear weapons on the territory of the Russian Federation.

In the interests of reducing the unnecessarily heightened tension and preserving the possibility for further strategic dialogue, a year and a half ago we proposed that Washington at least affirm, or preferably strengthen, the Gorbachev-Reagan equation that there

can be no winners in a nuclear war and that such a war should never be started. We still have not received an answer.

We understand the concerns of a number of non-nuclear States that are increasing their demands to expedite the nuclear disarmament process. We have always considered the issue as one of the priorities of our foreign policy. However, all aspects of international security and strategic stability must clearly be taken into account. The military actions undertaken by the United States and NATO in recent years, as well as Washington's threats against a number of States, including Russia, only take us further from the goal of creating a world free of nuclear weapons.

Ongoing identification of the prerequisites that would further advance nuclear disarmament is needed. Above all, that involves improving the strategic situation in certain regions and in the world as a whole. That is possible only by taking into account the full range of factors that have an impact on strategic stability and international security. Those factors include, in particular, the unlimited deployment of the United States global missile defence system, the development of high-precision strategic non-nuclear weapons, the possibility of deploying strike weapons in outer space, undermining the body of international treaties and agreements on security, stability and arms control, and attempts to weaken the defence capabilities of other States through the illegal means of unilateral sanctions, circumventing the Security Council. It is unlikely that an international security environment conducive to progress towards nuclear disarmament can be achieved without addressing those issues.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, as provided for in the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution, has always been a crucial issue within the NPT. We trust that the conferences on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the first of which was held in November 2019, will ultimately lead to the desired result, namely, the development and signing by all Middle East countries of a legally binding agreement on the establishment of such a zone. For our part, we have fully cooperated and will continue to cooperate in that regard. It is important that the other members of the

Permanent Five and, most importantly, all countries in the Middle East join those efforts.

We view the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards as a key element of the non-proliferation regime. Their purpose is to prevent the diversion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to the creation of nuclear weapons. We are committed to continuing to assist the IAEA in strengthening the safeguards system. At the same time, it is crucial to preserve the impartial, depoliticized and technically sound nature of the NPT verification mechanism. An issue on which the States parties to the NPT appear to agree is the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

It is now necessary to bring together all States parties to the Treaty, both nuclear and non-nuclear, in order to reduce tensions. It is important that the holding of the 2020 Review Conference should contribute to strengthening, not weakening, the nuclear non-proliferation regime. That means it should be held in the most non-confrontational manner possible. At a minimum, States parties must emphasize their common commitment to the Treaty and reaffirm the obligations they undertook in the course of earlier review cycles. Russia is interested in preserving and improving the nuclear non-proliferation regime and is ready to cooperate closely with all participants to ensure the success of the 2020 Review Conference.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): We thank Belgium for organizing this very important briefing. We would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Heiko Maas, Foreign Minister of Germany, to the Council. I would also like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), for their insightful and comprehensive briefings.

Indonesia fully supports the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and an integral instrument to advance efforts for denuclearization and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The collapse of the arms control architecture, increased tensions between some States and the continued existence of nuclear weapons, with their doctrines, underscore the imperative for a successful 2020 Review Conference.

As a long-standing proponent for a world without nuclear weapons, Indonesia is participating actively in the preparations for the Review Conference. While

non-nuclear-weapon States must play an effective role, nuclear-weapon States must also step forward credibly to uphold the NPT in its entirety. In that context, allow me to underline three points.

First is the balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory implementation of the three pillars of the NPT. Those three pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — must be fully implemented in a mutually reinforcing manner. To single out any one pillar and relegate the other two not only dilutes the Treaty's aims and credibility but also undermines support for the Treaty, which is essential to sustain it. The NPT enjoyed wide support because it also provided a legal commitment regarding nuclear disarmament and enabled the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Secondly, nuclear disarmament must be complete, verifiable and irreversible. We urge nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments under article VI of the NPT. That is an explicit legal obligation of all parties and its implementation is not optional or conditional. Indonesia is seriously concerned about the increased prominence being given by some States to nuclear weapons in their security doctrines, including through modernization programmes. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the absence of nuclear weapons. Their total elimination remains the only guarantee to translate our common desire to maintain international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, into reality. The universalization of the NPT is of vital importance.

Thirdly, an effective non-proliferation regime is necessary for the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons. All nuclear-weapon States, as well as all States non-parties to the Treaty, should place all their nuclear facilities under the full scope of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Indonesia also underscores nuclear-weapon-free zones as critical mechanisms against nuclear weapons. In that regard, Indonesia welcomes the first conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. It must be underlined that the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East is an integral part of the indefinite extension of the Treaty. Furthermore, we call for the early accession of nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

Reiterating the responsibilities of States parties under the NPT, we urge everyone to work together to help attain a befitting Review Conference. The world cannot afford any backtracking from commitments that were agreed at previous Review Conferences. Council members have certain responsibilities to ensure that the Conference decidedly contributes to global peace and security. At the national level, Indonesia, as the coordinator of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries States parties to the NPT, will continue to play its role and contribute actively to a successful 2020 Review Conference.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank the Belgian presidency for organizing this very important briefing today. We warmly welcome the presence of and statement delivered by His Excellency Mr. Heiko Maas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, and appreciate the German initiatives to promote support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) ahead of the upcoming Review Conference of the States Parties in May. We also thank High Representative Nakamitsu and Ambassador Zlauvinen for their informative briefings.

After half a century and nine Review Conferences, the NPT remains the universal cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It provides a framework for preventing a nuclear war catastrophe, pursuing nuclear disarmament and promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses. Great achievements have been recorded in the field of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Many efforts have been undertaken to strengthen and universalize the non-proliferation regime. I would like to commend the role and contributions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in those two fields, and of the Security Council vis-à-vis non-proliferation.

Nuclear disarmament has seen some progress, but it still falls far short of the expectations of the international community. Today, nuclear arsenals remain capable of destroying humankind hundreds of times over. Any use of nuclear weapons — by intention, by accident or by miscalculation — would threaten international peace and security. Fifty years later, what remains undiminished is the insecurity of non-nuclear States, especially those that have seriously implemented their non-proliferation obligations in good faith.

Viet Nam reaffirms its strong support for the strict and balanced implementation of the NPT across all

three pillars: nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses. We have joined all international efforts on non-proliferation, including various universal and regional treaties; adhered to the IAEA's highest standards on safeguards; and continued to seriously implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, we would like to stress the following.

First, confidence-building measures should be actively pursued, both among nuclear-weapon States and between them and non-nuclear-weapon States. Good relations, genuine intentions and concrete steps towards disarmament — even if small — among nuclear-weapon States can lower the risk of nuclear war. Negative security assurances, support for nuclear-weapon-free zones and assistance in peaceful uses from nuclear-weapon States can encourage stronger adherence to non-proliferation by non-nuclear-weapon States.

Secondly, non-proliferation obligations under the NPT and the relevant Security Council resolutions should be implemented in a serious and consistent way. Stronger efforts should be made to ensure adherence to and the entry into force of all related international treaties, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Thirdly, nuclear disarmament efforts should be made by nuclear-weapon States, individually or collectively, as a tangible way to implement article VI of the NPT, including the possibility of joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the future.

Fourthly, the regime of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be strengthened through the effective implementation of related treaties and the adherence of nuclear-weapon States to existing ones, as well as the creation of new zones, including in the Middle East. Here, we call on the nuclear-weapon States to sign the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

Fifthly, dialogue and negotiations should continue in good faith to resolve difficult issues, including those related to North-East Asia and the Middle East.

To conclude, five out of the nine Review Conferences held so far have failed to reach consensus. On the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, the cause of peace and the spirit of humanity must prevail. Let us join hands and even the odds.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Belgium for scheduling this briefing on the important issue of nuclear non-proliferation — one of the crucial pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). My thanks also go to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Heiko Maas; the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu; and the President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, His Excellency Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, for their excellent and informative briefings on the state of preparations for the Review Conference in April.

Indeed, in April the 2020 NPT Review Conference will be held, following the previous Conference in 2015, which ended in disagreement. This year's Conference will allow us to take stock of the progress made over the past five years in the implementation of all objectives of the Treaty relating to its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

My delegation is therefore pleased to participate in a constructive spirit in this briefing on a subject that is of great concern to the international community. The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has been a contentious issue for decades in the light of its impact on global security. The Security Council has an enormous responsibility in that regard. That is another reason why the Niger, a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, welcomes this meeting.

It is important to note that, since its entry into force on 5 March 1970, the non-proliferation Treaty has made it possible to considerably reduce the proliferation of nuclear weapons and progress towards disarmament goals while promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Statistics on the gains made clearly demonstrate the strategic importance of the NPT as an essential instrument for international stability.

However, despite the positive results, there remain grey areas when it comes to the Treaty's implementation. The violations we have witnessed pose a serious threat to world peace and therefore demand the increased vigilance of the international community. My delegation strongly denounces and condemns those violations and is outraged by the growing efforts in recent years to update nuclear arsenals, which still pose a nuclear threat to the world, which aspires to greater

peace and justice. Cooperation among States parties is an important element of the implementation of the NPT and must be strengthened if we are to reach the critical consensus it requires.

The Niger was deeply concerned about the lack of consensus emerging from the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, which posed a real obstacle to the achievement of the NPT objectives. In that regard, my delegation calls for the strict compliance of States parties with their international obligations. These States stand to gain from this instrument of peace. My delegation calls on all States to work harder to consolidate and sustain the implementation of the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the international security architecture.

By ratifying the NPT on 9 October 1992, the Niger demonstrated its commitment to the Treaty's objectives. We welcome the fact that the African continent is today a nuclear-weapon-free zone thanks to the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which amply shows Africa's consensus to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Further, the Treaty insists on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

On the eve of the tenth NPT Review Conference, to be held this year, the Niger reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the NPT and to multilateral treaties aimed at eliminating or preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons at a time when the emergence of actors promoting terrorism is already threatening the peace and security of several States. That is why the Niger once again calls on the nuclear Powers to show greater responsibility in assuming their international commitments in the area of arms control and disarmament in order to spare humankind the anguish of a new nuclear disaster.

The Niger welcomes the eminently positive verification and control role of the IAEA within the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. All States must therefore support its efforts. We must do all we can to preserve the credibility, impartiality and neutrality of the Agency.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the work of the next NPT review conference will be crowned with the greatest success.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu and Ambassador Zlauvinen, President-designate of

the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for their briefings.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, an important component of the post-war international security system and a key institutional guarantee for advancing nuclear disarmament, preventing nuclear proliferation and promoting greater benefit from nuclear energy for humankind.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty and the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension. On the eve of the tenth NPT Review Conference, Council members must recall the historic role of the Treaty and to look forward to its continued significance for international peace, security and development, with a view to ensuring the success of the Conference.

At present, challenges in the field of international security are mounting and the competition among the major Powers is intensifying. That has had a serious impact on global strategic stability. Differences have intensified in the field of nuclear disarmament, unilateralism is running amok in the field of non-proliferation and the politicization of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy has become a prominent trend. In these new conditions, the ongoing strengthening of the NPT mechanisms and the balanced advancement of the Treaty's three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — are of the utmost importance to the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of human progress and development. To that end, China proposes the following.

First, we must adhere to multilateralism and safeguard the international order based on international law. We should maintain a common, integrated, cooperative and sustainable security concept, taking into account the legitimate security concerns of all parties and seeking common and universal security. We should safeguard the existing multilateral arms-control and disarmament mechanisms, including those of the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament, and oppose treaty withdrawals and violations. We must work together to set up rules and regulations in new areas, such as outer space, cyberspace and artificial intelligence, in order to meet the new challenges to strategic security.

Secondly, we must stay the course when it comes to progressive nuclear disarmament and effectively reduce nuclear risks. The nuclear-weapon States should take effective measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategies, reiterate the concept that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought, and exercise restraint in strategic capacity-building and deployment. Nuclear disarmament should be guided by the principles of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all. The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should extend their bilateral nuclear disarmament treaties and make further drastic and substantive reductions of their nuclear weapons so as to create conditions for other nuclear-weapon States to join the nuclear disarmament process.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and eliminate the risk of nuclear-weapons proliferation. The proliferation of nuclear weapons has complex root causes and requires an integrated approach to tackle the symptoms and the root causes. The authority and universality of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime must be strengthened. We must abandon double standards and selectivity. We must promote political solutions to regional nuclear hotspot issues and support the full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the dialogue process between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the implementation of the outcome documents of successive NPT Review Conference, and the decision to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Fourthly, we must fully tap the potential to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and related international cooperation. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is an inalienable right conferred upon the States parties by the Treaty. Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons should not undermine the legitimate right of all countries, particularly developing countries, to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The International Atomic Energy Agency should play an active role in promoting exchanges and cooperation among countries in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in promoting common development and prosperity.

China has earnestly implemented the provisions of the Treaty and the outcomes of previous Review Conferences. At the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the tenth NPT Review Conference,

we submitted a national compliance report that comprehensively expounds on our policy propositions and compliance achievements in connection with the Treaty's three pillars. We will update and improve the national compliance report and submit it to the tenth Review Conference.

China actively participates in cooperation among the nuclear quintet — the Council's five permanent members (P-5). At the annual P-5 conference in Beijing in 2018, we urged the parties to clearly define the future direction of cooperation. At this year's P-5 conference in London, China held in-depth discussions with the other four nuclear-weapon States, the NPT Bureau and other relevant parties on the issue of maintaining the Treaty mechanisms. The P-5 working group on nuclear Terminology, led by China, has made important progress and will submit a new version of the nuclear glossary to the tenth Review Conference. The P-5 reached a series of cooperative initiatives to help the tenth Review Conference achieve success.

As a party to the NPT, China has always firmly upheld the universality, validity and authority of the Treaty, remained committed to advancing the NPT review process and made unremitting efforts to push forward the process of nuclear disarmament, safeguard the nuclear non-proliferation regime and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and related international cooperation. China has always kept to the path of peaceful development and pursued an independent foreign policy of peace and a defensive national defence policy. China will continue to actively participate in and practice multilateralism, firmly safeguard the international arms-control and non-proliferation regime and contribute substantively to the noble cause of peace and security for humankind.

Ms. Luna (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the valuable briefings by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, and the President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen.

The Dominican Republic welcomes the initiative to convene this meeting, and we would like to begin by reiterating our unconditional commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation architecture and an essential tool in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We believe that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their prohibition and total elimination. That is why we support the adoption and endorse the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as we believe that it complements and reinforces the NPT.

We are concerned about the major challenges facing the NPT, including the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), the nuclear situation in North Korea and the standoff involving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. With the official termination of the INF, the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture is under the terrible threat of the possible resumption of the arms race that we thought had been left behind with the Cold War. We therefore urge the parties concerned to renew the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and begin negotiations on new arms control measures. Similarly, with regard to the nuclear issue in North Korea, we hope that greater efforts will be made to resume dialogue with a view to achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula under the safeguards and additional protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We also emphasize the importance of preserving the JCPOA, which was the successful result of diplomacy and multilateralism. We believe that Iran must continue to comply with its commitments in accordance with the Plan of Action and resolution 2231 (2015), while, at the same time, the other parties must ensure that Iran enjoys the previously agreed economic benefits.

On another note, we express our concern about the number of existing nuclear weapons and those on alert status and the inclusion of the policy of nuclear deterrence in security doctrines. It is therefore imperative that States honour their commitments without distinction.

Of the three fundamental pillars of the NPT, the disarmament pillar has seen the least progress. It is in a state of paralysis and requires that effective measures be taken in good faith with a view to general and complete disarmament, in accordance with the provisions outlined in article VI of the Treaty, which remains applicable despite its lack of implementation. It is also necessary to respect and implement the agreements reached at previous Review Conferences, including the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the

13 practical steps adopted in 2000 and the action plan adopted in 2010.

Moreover, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains a key component of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We therefore call on annex 2 States to accede to and ratify the Treaty to facilitate its entry into force. It is imperative to negotiate as soon as possible a legally binding, non-discriminatory and verifiable instrument banning the production of fissile material.

In conclusion, we hope that States will commit to reducing strategic risks and ensuring the establishment of credible verification mechanisms to promote confidence-building and transparency and facilitate cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We reaffirm our support for the NPT and its Review Conference, and we hope that, when it next convenes, concrete and proactive measures will be agreed.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Ambassador Zlauvinen for their briefings.

Over the past 50 years, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has minimized the proliferation of nuclear weapons, provided the framework to enable significant levels of nuclear disarmament and allowed States to develop secure, safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It has played a crucial role in providing the basis for our discussions on Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United Kingdom is committed to the NPT review process and will work with all partners for a positive outcome.

We want to ensure that the upcoming 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT allows us to hold full and frank discussions with the greatest number of States parties on all pillars of the NPT, reflects on the successes made so far, and sets a collective direction for the future. Our ambition is that the State parties agree a consensus outcome. Let me highlight four of the United Kingdom's contributions to a successful Review Conference.

First, we will submit a final national report, setting out how we have implemented the NPT across all three pillars during this cycle. We submitted a draft version during the 2019 NPT Preparatory Committee and have hosted a series of feedback sessions with a wide range of State and civil society representatives and academics.

Secondly, we have coordinated the process involving the Council's five permanent members (P-5) since the Preparatory Committee, continuing the excellent work that took place under the Chinese leadership. The United Kingdom hosted a P-5 Directors General conference in London from 12 to 13 February and welcomed there Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen and other members of the Bureau for a fruitful exchange of views. P-5 discussions at that conference covered all three pillars of the NPT and included improving transparency and P-5 cooperation on a range of initiatives.

Thirdly, in the light of our focus on transparency, the conference included a day for civil society and think tanks to engage with P-5 officials and discuss those important issues.

Fourthly, with regard to peaceful uses, P-5 States have been working together to enhance the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We all fully support the Technical Cooperation Programme of the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure that the benefits of nuclear technology are accessible to those who need them most.

Nevertheless, we do not underestimate the challenges surrounding the Review Conference. We know that some States feel that progress on nuclear disarmament has been slow. The United Kingdom continuously engages with a wide range of States and takes those concerns seriously. The United Kingdom's view is that any meaningful discussion on disarmament must take into account the wider security environment, which is increasingly difficult. We all have a responsibility to work towards a safer, more stable world in which States with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

Concerning the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which others have raised, the United Kingdom has been clear that we will not sign or ratify the Treaty. Instead, the United Kingdom will continue to promote the step-by-step approach, work for the universalization of the NPT and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and promote the early commencement and conclusions of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

We must also ensure that the NPT Review Conference gives proper regard to the achievements that it has made possible under its second and third pillars. With regard to its second pillar, the NPT has

played an unparalleled role in curtailing the nuclear arms race. Historic predictions were made of 10 or even 20 nuclear-armed States. Today, there remain fewer than 10. Concerning the third pillar, the global peaceful use of nuclear energy allows us to address some of the biggest challenges, from climate change to economic growth.

As a direct result of the NPT, we have been able to harness nuclear power to improve the lives of our citizens, for example, in the areas of food, agriculture, health care and, as I mentioned, climate change. For those and other reasons, the United Kingdom continues to believe that the non-proliferation Treaty, approaching its fiftieth anniversary, remains essential to the maintenance of a safe and secure world. We look forward to engaging with all Security Council members and all States parties to achieve a successful outcome at this year's Review Conference and help ensure that the non-proliferation Treaty remains effective and central to ensuring our collective security for many years to come.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I welcome Mr. Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany. I also thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, as well as Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for their valuable briefings.

Tunisia reiterates its full support for the NPT as the cornerstone of the entire non-proliferation regime. We are committed to contributing to the success of the upcoming NPT Review Conference. We also stress that the credibility of the NPT is underpinned by the balanced implementation of its three pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, we express our concern that the continued lack of any concrete progress in the area of nuclear non-proliferation could weaken the entire non-proliferation regime.

In addition, certain States still prioritize nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. They permit their use against non-nuclear-weapon States. The announcement of modernizing nuclear arsenals is also a source of concern, as it portends a dangerous and qualitative nuclear arms race.

Tunisia is following with concern the difficulties, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, that confront some conventions on the non-proliferation or reduction of nuclear weapons. We hope that all parties concerned will resume dialogue to maintain the existing conventions and push for their complete and effective implementation, thereby contributing to support for the non-proliferation and disarmament regime on the basis of international law.

Tunisia stresses the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT through the accession of non-party States as non-nuclear-weapon States. We also stress the dire need for all States parties to honour the pledges made at previous review conferences.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference must not dampen our efforts. Instead, we should redouble our efforts to maintain the credibility and sustainability of the regime established by the Treaty. That requires us to work for the success of the 2020 Review Conference by adopting a clear outcome on the implementation of all previous commitments and promoting the effectiveness of the Treaty. In that regard, we recall that the decision to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was and remains integral to the indefinite extension of the Treaty during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

Tunisia believes that the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is of great importance since that would lead to realizing objectives relating to the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and non-proliferation, thereby promoting peace and security at both the regional and international levels.

In line with our policy and principled positions on disarmament and non-proliferation, Tunisia acceded to the NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. Tunisia also supported the adoption by the General Assembly of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, based on our belief that the Treaty is in line with the NPT and supports its objectives.

We believe that the conference on the establishment of a middle east zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction represents the proper framework in which to bring together all parties concerned and establish a constructive dialogue to

address disarmament and non-proliferation challenges in the region. Following that track, with the concerted effort of all, will lead to the establishment of a regional mechanism that contributes to consolidating the pillars of sustained peace and security in the region and promoting cooperation in that field, on the basis of decisions and recommendations reached by consensus.

We consider that the conference is also a step in the right direction that deserves support from the depositary States of the NPT and the sponsors of the 1995 decision on the Middle East. We would like to reiterate that the responsibility to free the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction is a collective international responsibility. We call upon all parties concerned to participate in future sessions of the Conference.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): At the outset, I would like to commend the initiative of Germany in convening today's important meeting on the issue of non-proliferation. The fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) presents the Council with an opportunity to express support for the Treaty and to assume collective responsibility for its future.

I would also like to thank Mrs. Nakamitsu and Mr. Zlauvinen for their informative briefings.

For 50 years, the NPT has been a key multilateral instrument of the global effort to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. With 190 member States, the NPT is the agreement of greatest adherence in the field of arms control. The Treaty has significantly helped to contain the spread of nuclear weapons and reduce the number of stockpiled nuclear weapons from their Cold War peak. It has also provided a framework for the safe sharing of civil nuclear technology, such as for energy, medical and agricultural uses. We can all agree the NPT has made, and continues to make, the world safer and more stable. There is no credible alternative to the Treaty.

However, we should not assume that the Treaty will maintain its accomplishments and positive role without active support for its implementation and compliance. The tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons this year is being convened in a complicated security environment, with increasing international strain on the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Further progress of the implementation of the Treaty

remains a challenge. Non-compliance and the risk of proliferation are causing the most serious concerns.

The flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot be tolerated. Our objective must remain to ensure that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea returns to full and verifiable compliance with all its NPT obligations. Until then, sanctions must be enforced by all States.

Estonia is deeply concerned that Iran has taken steps that are inconsistent with its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We urge Iran to continue to abide strictly by all its nuclear-related commitments and return without delay to full compliance with the JCPOA. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor and verify Iran's commitments.

Estonia shares the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and continues to advocate for a progressive approach to be pursued in a realistic and responsible way, in accordance with article VI of the NPT. That approach takes account of the international security environment, without ignoring the concerns of the risks posed by nuclear weapons. In that connection, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains crucial for constraining new weapons development and the improvement of existing ones. We urge all States, in particular the annex 2 countries, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Equally important practical measures include the immediate commencement of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; work on risk reduction; dialogue on nuclear doctrines; and the reaffirmation of existing negative security assurances.

While we are conscious of the difficult and unpredictable security environment, we need to move forward on building trust and strengthening nuclear disarmament verification mechanisms and transparency on nuclear arsenals with a view to providing a pathway to further reductions of nuclear-weapon stockpiles. To that end, we encourage the NPT nuclear-weapon States to continue their work on all the issues mentioned above and increase their efforts to deliver outcomes.

Finally, the value of the third pillar of the NPT and the role of the IAEA's system in promoting the

responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology should not be underestimated. To ensure the safe use of nuclear energy, it is important for all NPT States parties to follow the highest safety and security standards. Estonia is committed to support the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund and its Technical Cooperation Programme.

The NPT is the foundation of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We have to do our utmost to uphold and strengthen that major multilateral Treaty of international security and stability. We hope that all States Parties will engage constructively and in good faith in identifying common ground that will enable us to achieve a successful outcome at the 2020 Review Conference and to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT. There is more that unites than divides us. We have a collective responsibility to find that common ground.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence here today of the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Heiko Maas. I would also like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu and Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen for their briefings on the challenges ahead for the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The Treaty is one of the cornerstones of our collective security system. It is an irreplaceable bulwark against the risk of nuclear proliferation. It is, indeed, the only instrument that makes it possible to prevent nuclear war, as stated in the preamble to the Treaty, while also permitting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Its preservation is essential, because the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery has not disappeared, and because our world today is more uncertain and volatile than ever.

We are witnessing a troubling degradation of our strategic environment, the instability of which is nourished by asymmetries and escalations. The Security Council is regularly convened to address all these crisis situations, which are multiplying, from the Levant to North-East Asia, while the management of proliferation crises unfortunately remains a major priority that continues to require us to take action. In that context, what should be our common road map and how can we ensure the preservation of the NPT and the balance of its three pillars?

It is above all important to maintain a robust and united response to nuclear proliferation, whether by addressing the North Korean crisis or ensuring that Iran never acquires nuclear weapons. Beyond crises, we must lend our full support to international bodies, first and foremost to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which must continue to have the means necessary for their activities. We hope that all States that have not yet done so will accede to the additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards system. I would add that we must also strengthen all measures to combat the real threat of nuclear or radiological terrorism, beginning with resolution 1540 (2004), which the Council will review this year.

We must also promote a pragmatic and realistic approach to disarmament, the ultimate objective of which is set out in article VI of the NPT. Disarmament is not in itself sufficient as an objective. We must first improve the conditions of international security. To achieve that, we must also see the world as it is. The expectations for nuclear disarmament are high. However, in the reality of today's world, decreeing nuclear disarmament will not contribute to improving our security and ensuring strategic stability, but to the contrary. Let me reiterate here that France will not join a treaty banning nuclear weapons, which will create no new obligations but will weaken the NPT standards and the non-proliferation regime.

France has taken robust, concrete measures in the area of disarmament, which contribute to unique achievement in the world, in line with our responsibilities and interests. We are committed to progressive nuclear disarmament, in which all States commit to creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons, with undiminished security for all. That obviously requires the United States and Russia to pursue the reduction of their nuclear arsenals; the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and the launching of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in weapons in the Conference on Disarmament.

Lastly, work on the verification of nuclear disarmament is crucial and must continue — but it is not enough. We must step up our efforts to reduce strategic risks and France will take part fully in those efforts. As President Macron said in a statement dated 7 February, France is also prepared to participate in discussions that would bring together the five nuclear-weapon States, in the context of the NPT, to discuss their

priorities for nuclear disarmament, confidence-building and the transparency of each State's arsenal and nuclear strategies.

With regard to civilian nuclear cooperation, France, which harnesses the full ranges of nuclear technologies for energy production and many other applications, will continue to support countries wishing to embark on that path or develop their capacity in that area. We will continue to support the IAEA by maintaining appropriate contributions, including in the area of nuclear safety and security, which are indispensable conditions for the responsible development of nuclear energy.

The NPT, given its robust nature, permanence and universality, embodies the goal of strong and effective multilateralism based on the law, towards which we must collectively work. As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force, I renew here our call for members to move forward together towards the strengthening of the multilateral security framework, of which the NPT is one of the pillars. They should rest assured of France's resolute commitment in that regard, alongside all those who wish to embark on that path in good faith.

Ms. Norman-Chalet (United States of America): I want to join other colleagues in thanking Germany for calling this meeting today in crucial support of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I also thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The Security Council tackles some of the greatest challenges to international peace and security, including the prevention of the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, we look forward to celebrating that historic occasion together here at the United Nations on 5 March. Over nearly five decades, the NPT has proven to be critical to the maintenance of international peace and security. It has made us all the more secure by constraining the spread of nuclear weapons, and it has thereby both enabled the global peaceful use of nuclear energy and helped to create conditions conducive to progress on nuclear disarmament.

Fifty years ago, few would have dared to predict that we would be here today, celebrating the success of the Treaty. Prior to the NPT, the United States expressed dire concerns over a possible snowball effect of cascading proliferation, which would increase the

world's nuclear-weapon stockpiles and undermine confidence in the ability of non-proliferation policies to prevent such a dangerous sequence. Yet in a demonstration of remarkable diplomatic resolve, the international community joined together against that collective threat, reflecting a rare consensus during a time of Cold War polarization. Our efforts culminated in the successful negotiation of that vital Treaty and its subsequent entry into force. There has been unwavering international consensus about the indispensable role of the Treaty in maintaining collective peace and security. The NPT has succeeded for half a century precisely because it serves the fundamental and widely recognized common interest of curbing the proliferation of the world's most dangerous weapons.

We have also seen enormous progress on disarmament, in part because the NPT helped to curtail the emergence of new nuclear Powers. With the easing of Cold War tensions and the success of the NPT-based proliferation regime in impeding the spread of nuclear weapons, it has been possible to reduce the nuclear arsenals of both the United States and Russia to levels not seen since the 1950s. The stockpile of the United States today has been reduced to less than one eighth of its Cold War peak.

We must also recognize that advancing towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons must take into account the global security environment. We cannot overlook the fact that the actions of those States that are expanding and modernizing their nuclear stockpiles, threatening their neighbours and violating their arms-control obligations have contributed to a deterioration in global security conditions.

To address the security challenges that impede progress on disarmament, the United States, together with more than 40 international partners, has launched a path-breaking new initiative, entitled "Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament", or CEND. The CEND Working Group has already met twice and will meet again in April. The Working Group seeks to foster constructive dialogue on identifying the challenges to disarmament and on exploring ways to improve the underlying conditions in the global security environment so as to make further progress towards and ultimately achieve nuclear disarmament.

In that regard, in addition to its emphasis on dialogue and diplomatic engagement with all relevant parties, the CEND initiative stands in stark contrast to

the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which fails to address the security challenges that continue to make nuclear deterrence necessary. It will not eliminate a single nuclear warhead or make any nation more secure. In fact, when reviewing the text of the Treaty, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that its drafters sought to give greater legal weight to their document at the expense of the NPT, which is unfortunate.

As we turn towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference, the United States seeks a positive outcome of that meeting that reflects consensus on the broadest basis possible. We believe that consensus is possible if the parties to the NPT focus on the big picture, emphasize their common interests and avoid insisting on divisive positions that cannot lead to consensus.

To strengthen the NPT and the non-proliferation regime, States must support the universalization of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) additional protocol, which is an important tool that provides the IAEA the ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements. Those agreements, in combination with the additional protocol, have become the de facto international standard in nuclear safeguards. Moreover, nuclear supplier States should make the adoption of the additional protocol by recipient States a requirement for nuclear exports.

States must also be united in the goal of the final fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. We must remain committed to a secure, peaceful and bright future for North Korea if it fulfils its obligations. We must remain united in our determination that Iran must never acquire a path to nuclear weapons.

The 2020 NPT Review Conference will also be an opportunity to highlight how the NPT and the broader nuclear non-proliferation regime have made possible thriving international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology. We aim to build on that success. We are optimistic that the NPT will remain at the centre of international security. Yet that outcome is far from guaranteed. We must continue to preserve and strengthen the NPT so that 50 years from now our successors may mark the one hundredth anniversary of the Treaty as an enduring accomplishment that continues to promote international security and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Belgium.

All members have underlined that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a significant achievement. It is particularly important to reaffirm the gains of the NPT and to strengthen them in the current international context, where mistrust prevails over collective action and where the red lines of the past are likely to be crossed. Indeed, our multilateral system, based on international law and carefully built through consensus, is being increasingly undermined, particularly in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament. The lack of progress towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea and the threats to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concerning Iran, as well as the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the still uncertain extension of the New START Treaty, are not encouraging signs.

Admittedly, the current security environment brings specific constraints that should not be underestimated. But the current challenges cannot be an excuse for inaction or, worse still, a step backwards where the interests of some prevail over those of others.

Belgium therefore reaffirms its strong support for the three pillars of the NPT and urges all signatory States to spare no effort to achieve a positive outcome at the upcoming Review Conference. Our ultimate goal is a world free of nuclear weapons and there is only one way to achieve it: the full implementation of the NPT. The Security Council has its part to play by addressing non-proliferation issues, such as North Korea and Iran, as well as by improving the overall security situation through its role in conflict resolution.

Moreover, a specific responsibility falls to the five permanent members of the Council, the only nuclear-weapon States recognized by the NPT. As States that possess approximately 90 per cent of the world's nuclear arsenal, the United States and the Russian Federation have the duty to avoid unlimited military and nuclear competition. The fate of the New START Treaty, the only

treaty limiting the deployment of strategic weapons, is of great importance in that context. We welcome the recent actions taken by the United Kingdom and France to reduce their stockpiles and means of delivery. We hope that China will follow the same path, including a complete and irreversible halt to the production of fissile material for military purposes.

An international system based on the rule of law can succeed only if the rules are respected by all. Even if some States have a specific responsibility, the cooperation of all States remains necessary for the success of the NPT. That is why we call for the universalization of the Treaty.

Belgium also recalls that a world without nuclear weapons means a world without nuclear tests. Belgium regrets that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was signed more than 20 years ago, has still not entered into force due to the non-accession of eight annex 2 States.

The implementation of the NPT also requires support for its institutional actors, in particular the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, to which an appropriate platform must be given at the Review Conference.

Finally, we wish to underscore that, as the next Chair of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Belgium will be particularly attentive to recent technological developments that are likely to shorten the path towards the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, Belgium strongly reaffirms its commitment to the NPT and calls on the members of the Council to look beyond their differences and work together to advance non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.