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First Committee

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Official Records

The Chairperson: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

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

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): Today, we shall first continue our discussion on the theme of other disarmament measures and international security. We shall then resume our discussion on the theme of regional disarmament and security, along with an informal panel discussion on that theme. We shall then resume our thematic discussion on conventional weapons.

Ms. Neo (Singapore): The dismantling of the cold war security architecture has led to new challenges and uncertainties. Our concern with regard to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) used to be focused on the possession by States of such weapons. Today, the situation is more complex: we now also have to contend with non-State actors acquiring and possibly using WMDs. The threat of WMD proliferation has therefore become linked to terrorism. It is the possible use of WMDs by such non-State actors that poses one of the most serious threats to international security today.

As the complexity of the security environment has increased, so has the need for multilateral cooperation. One area where we need to work together is in advancing nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation. Gains on one front need not be seen as a loss for the other. These are mutually reinforcing concepts.

Another area is support for multilateral non-proliferation regimes like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Universal adherence to those regimes is a goal that we should strive for. National efforts by individual States are also crucial for countering proliferation. One example is adherence to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which calls on all States Members of the United Nations to implement effective domestic controls against the trafficking of WMD items.

Singapore is an aviation hub and port located along one of the world's most important shipping lanes. We do not wish to be used by proliferators in their illicit activities. We rely on robust export control systems and active counter-proliferation efforts. While there may be some impact in terms of additional procedures, these measures enhance our physical security and therefore strengthen our long-term economic vitality.

Allow me now to elaborate on our export control system and our participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). In January 2003, Singapore enacted its Strategic Goods (Control) Act to strengthen our control of the export, transshipment and transit of strategic goods and technology. The act includes brokering controls, controls on intangible transfers of technology and a catch-all provision that allows us to

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control items that are intended for WMD end-use but are not included on our list of controlled items. With effect from January 2008, we will also expand our strategic goods export control lists to include all items controlled by the four multilateral non-proliferation regimes: the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. This will help ensure that Singapore continues to keep pace with international efforts to limit the proliferation of WMDs.

Singapore is also an active participant in the Proliferation Security Initiative. The PSI aims to deepen international cooperation to stop the movement of WMDs and related items from flowing to State and non-State actors. PSI members are committed to the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles, which ensures that all actions taken under the PSI are consistent with relevant international law and national legislation. The PSI is not a stand-alone initiative. Instead, it complements international efforts such as Security Council resolutions, existing treaties and control lists.

Singapore hosted a PSI maritime interdiction exercise in August 2005, the first PSI exercise held in South-East Asia. We also hosted a two-day Operational Experts Group (OEG) meeting in July 2006, which involved over 200 operational experts from the defence, foreign affairs, law enforcement, transport and other agencies of OEG countries. Most recently, the Singapore Armed Forces participated in a Japan-hosted counter-proliferation maritime interdiction exercise from 13 to 15 October 2007. We congratulate Japan on having organized a successful exercise.

In the final analysis, multilateral non-proliferation regimes are empty constructs if they are not accompanied by effective national implementation. In tandem, national efforts cannot succeed without comprehensive implementation and cooperation from other States. Effective counter-proliferation can succeed only if we work together.

Mr. Kennedy (United States of America): The United States delegation takes the floor today to underscore the contributions of effective verification and of full compliance with international agreements to the maintenance of international peace and security. We welcome the report of the Panel of Government Experts on verification in all its aspects (see A/61/1028) and commend the Chair and the

members of the Panel for tackling such a complex subject so well. It is especially noteworthy that such a diverse panel was able to achieve a forward-looking consensus report that identifies and examines the opportunities, challenges and constraints related to verification in all its aspects.

The Panel's report on the role of verification makes clear that Governments must consider many factors in determining whether verification means and methods can contribute to enhancing confidence and compliance with international obligations. Our delegation wishes to focus its remarks today on the question that most aptly is described as, "After detection of non-compliance, what then?"

In the matter of compliance, as the Panel's report underscores, there is growing international emphasis on full compliance by all States with their obligations, as well as a growing realization of the importance of responding to non-compliance resolutely and in a timely fashion. Indeed, perhaps no issue is more important today than compliance, since, if parties to an agreement do not comply with its terms, the international security benefits of that agreement cannot be realized and the very purpose of that agreement is placed into question.

Sadly, the international community faces a tremendous challenge today in achieving and maintaining full compliance with international agreements. As we know all too well, too often there is a penchant in some corners to find excuses not to act in a timely and sufficiently forceful manner. Or, regrettably, not to act at all when a State chooses not to comply with its freely undertaken obligations to the international community. The implications of such a disinclination to act are not lost — not on the violator, not on others who may be contemplating whether there are such compelling consequences to non-compliance that non-compliance is not an option, and not on States whose fundamental security depends on the compliance of their neighbours or partners.

Today, Iran's continued refusal to comply with its international non-proliferation obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Agreement and numerous Security Council resolutions makes clear in stark terms the difficulty of ensuring compliance. It also poses the question of what we can and should do about failure to comply.

The United States welcomes the various decisions taken by the IAEA Board of Governors and the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006) and 1747 (2007), imposing Chapter VII sanctions on Iran. These demonstrate the unity of the international community on this issue.

Our Government supports ongoing diplomatic efforts to encourage Iran to come into full compliance with its various international obligations. Should Iran continue to refuse to comply with its international obligations, however, the Security Council must move forward as soon as possible to adopt a third resolution under Chapter VII imposing additional sanctions.

The United States views verification, compliance assessment and compliance enforcement as critically interrelated. They are the three legs of a stool that cannot stand if one leg is removed. To put it simply, verification is designed to strengthen national and international security by providing the means and methods for the detection and deterrence of non-compliance. However, if detection has no consequences for the violator, then verification has no meaning and deterrence is unachievable.

If arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and commitments are to support the security of all nations, then all nations must respond on the national, regional and international levels when confronted with non-compliance. Action by one State or by a group of States to encourage compliance, while highly welcome, may very well not be enough to induce a return to compliance.

Detecting a violation is not an end in itself; it is the call to action by all. Without strict compliance, and without the concerted action of all parties to an agreement to insist upon strict compliance with it and to hold violators accountable for their actions, the national security of all nations will erode and global stability will be undermined.

Much of our diplomacy is focused on convincing States to take seriously their essential role in this effort. The international community must not acquiesce quietly in violations of fundamental obligations. To do so opens the door to rogue States, perhaps working in conjunction with non-State actors, to try to alter the strategic landscape to our collective detriment. Indeed, robust compliance enforcement by the international community is essential to ensuring both the viability and the integrity of existing agreements and to

maintaining and strengthening international peace and security.

Given that this discussion is devoted to other disarmament measures, our delegation wishes also to briefly call the attention of delegations to the activities of the United States Nuclear Risk Reduction Center. As we noted during the general debate, on 9 October (see A/C.1/62/PV.3), the United States and Russia, just last month, marked the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of our respective Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers. The underlying premise of those Centers was simple: confidence-building through information exchange to avoid the risk of accidental nuclear war.

For 20 years, the two Centers have helped make peace work. They have evolved from supporting a bilateral agreement in two languages to supporting almost 20 treaties and agreements in six languages with over 50 countries. We believe that the proven, two-decade-long record of the two Centers make them an attractive tool for future requirements in transparency and confidence-building and a model for other nations seeking improved communications and exchange of information.

Mr. Tarui (Japan): As is well known, Japan, as one of the Members that participated in the 2002 United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (see A/57/124), places great importance on this issue. Bearing in mind that recommendation 33 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/124) encourages Member States to include in their remarks to the First Committee information on the results of the implementation of the recommendations of the study, today I would like to highlight some of our prominent activities that we have been engaged in to date.

Under the United Nations Disarmament Fellowships Programme, the Government of Japan has been inviting 25 to 30 young diplomats to Japan each year since 1983. The objective of this initiative is to provide promising diplomats from around the world with a briefing on Japan's disarmament and non-proliferation policy, as well as tours of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the commencement of this initiative. In that period, we have hosted over 650 diplomats. We consider the visits to Japan by United Nations Disarmament Fellows to be

an extremely meaningful way to offer insight into the reality of atomic weapons.

Every year since 1989, the Government of Japan has co-sponsored, with the United Nations, a United Nations conference on disarmament issues in a different city in Japan. These conferences provide a valuable opportunity for distinguished disarmament experts from around the world to engage in useful discussions and to exchange ideas.

This year, the conference took place in Sapporo from 27 to 29 August, under the theme, "New Vision and Required Leadership Towards a World Free from Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction". The focus of the discussions was on multinational efforts for nuclear disarmament, addressing challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), regional proliferation risks and nuclear terrorism. This conference also provides Japanese citizens with an excellent opportunity to learn about disarmament.

Based on the recommendations of the United Nations study, since 2002 the Government of Japan has been inviting prominent educators on disarmament and non-proliferation to Japan. In March of this year Japan hosted Mr. Owen Greene, Director of the Centre for International Cooperation and Security at Bradford University, who delivered a public lecture on small arms and light weapons. It is hoped that intellectuals and citizens in Japan will further deepen their understanding on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation through these lectures.

In addition to the ongoing efforts I have just mentioned, during the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, convened in Vienna in April and May this year, the Government of Japan announced its decision to launch new initiatives on disarmament and non-proliferation education. These new initiatives are focused on disseminating knowledge among the younger generation and encouraging their greater participation in disarmament activities, since it will be they who will continue and build on our efforts.

The first of the new initiatives is the Student Debating Cup on Disarmament and Non-proliferation. Developing critical thinking abilities in the young is just as important as teaching them the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. From this perspective,

the Government of Japan intends to invite students from several countries, including nuclear-weapon States, to debate with Japanese university students on disarmament issues.

In this connection, as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, held in Sapporo on 29 August, we held a forum on disarmament and non-proliferation issues for local university students. This is the first time that we have run a forum such as this, and even though the students had had limited opportunities to touch upon these issues, they engaged in a free and lively exchange of opinions, which was beneficial for increasing their interest in and knowledge of disarmament.

Second is the use of manga comics and animation, which are parts of Japanese pop culture. Japan believes that employing tools that are familiar to young people is an effective means of promoting understanding of disarmament and non-proliferation. During the NPT Preparatory Committee session this year, the delegation of Japan distributed English copies of manga and showed a film presenting a computer-generated recreation of city streetscapes before the atomic blasts, both of which portrayed the devastating effects of the atomic bomb.

Allow me to conclude by saying that the Government of Japan will continue to make its positive contributions to ongoing efforts at the national, regional and international levels to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education. Raising awareness is an important part of those efforts. As civil society is often at the forefront of such activities, we will continue to cooperate with civil society groups in this area to develop concrete measures for the implementation of the recommendations set out in the United Nations study. In that vein, we would like to welcome the launching of the disarmament section of the United Nations Cyberschoolbus. That project has immense potential as an educational tool for many children and young people around the globe, and we highly commend the work of those who created the Web portal.

Mr. Edwards (Canada): The role of verification, compliance and non-compliance with regard to States' treaty obligations in the field of arms control and disarmament is an important dimension of our collective endeavour. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/60, the Secretary-General

established a Panel of Government Experts to prepare a study on verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations. Building on two previous United Nations reports, issued in 1990 and 1995 (see A/45/372 and A/50/379), the Panel examined the changes over the past decade, discerning new trends and developments. The Panel held three sessions in 2006. Under the leadership of a Canadian, Mr. John Barrett, consensus was achieved on the report — a rare accomplishment in recent years. The report upholds the need for verification of arms agreements, treaties and other commitments, and highlights the responsibility of States to comply with those commitments.

(spoke in French)

During the 1990s, the world witnessed important progress related to the multilateral disarmament and arms control regime: the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Anti-personnel Mine-ban Convention and the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Not only are these great achievements in themselves; they also have made verification an integral tool for strengthening disarmament agreements and thus national and international peace and security.

(spoke in English)

Unfortunately, the gains made in the 1990s have not been built upon. The international security environment has stagnated, and progress on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament has effectively ground to a halt. The report notes that experts do not propose specific solutions for the verification of international arms norms, but are optimistic that solutions can be found. Such solutions could generate greater levels of confidence among States.

The report also observes that technical means of verification have continued to evolve. The extraordinary development of information and communications technology has broadened the availability of relevant information, not only to States and international organizations, but also to civil society. That provides a genuine opportunity for global progress in verification and in the monitoring of compliance.

By having submitted draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.47, Canada urges States to actively consider how the report could be further developed and

implemented. Effective verification, compliance and monitoring are core ingredients in the development of trust among States. Let us seize this opportunity to renew our commitment to strengthening non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament norms.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Indonesia, who will introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/62/L.16, A/C.1/62/L.14, A/C.1/62/L.13, A/C.1/62/L.50 and A/C.1/62/L.18, as well as draft decision A/C.1/62/L.51.

Mr. Ruddyard (Indonesia): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), several draft resolutions and a draft decision for the consideration of the Committee. These texts reflect our efforts to tackle very important and relevant issues, as well as the need to seek the political will required to advance the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

Under the cluster “Other disarmament measures and international security”, NAM has submitted the following five draft resolutions and one draft decision.

First is the draft resolution, under agenda item 89, entitled “Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace”, contained in document A/C.1/62/L.16. Since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, in 1971, the situation in the world, particularly in the Indian Ocean, has undergone major changes. In that region, a number of initiatives have been taken to bring about the socio-economic development of the countries concerned, on the basis of economic, technical and scientific cooperation. In that context, there is still ample room for the development of measures to attain the objectives of the 1971 Declaration.

Second is the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/62/L.14, entitled “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control”, under sub-item (i) of agenda item 98. NAM considers that continued sustainability of the global environment is an issue of the utmost importance, especially for future generations. We should collectively endeavour to ensure that the necessary measures are taken to preserve and protect the environment, especially in the formulation and implementation of agreements concerning disarmament and arms control. We call upon all Member States to

ensure the application of scientific and technological processes within the framework of international security, disarmament and other related fields, without detriment to the environment or to its effective contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.

Third is draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.13, entitled “Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation”, under sub-item (h) of agenda item 98. NAM strongly believes in multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues. NAM also believes that it is critical for the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution in order to reflect our continued conviction as to the role of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. NAM underscores multilateralism as the core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope.

Fourthly, with regard to the draft resolution that will appear shortly as document A/C.1/62/L.50, entitled “Relationship between disarmament and development”, under sub-item (j) of agenda item 98, NAM believes that the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development, and the important role of security in that connection, cannot be denied. NAM is concerned at the increasing global military expenditures, which could otherwise be allocated to development, poverty eradication and the elimination of disease, in particular in developing countries. NAM reiterates the importance of exercising restraint with regard to military expenditures, so that the human and financial resources saved can be used for the ongoing efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In that connection, NAM welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the relationship between disarmament and development (A/59/119) and its reappraisal of this significant issue in the current international context. We consider that it is important to follow up on the implementation of the Action Programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. In that regard, we invite Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information regarding measures and efforts to devote

part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries.

Fifthly, under agenda item 98, NAM is introducing a new draft resolution, entitled “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium”, contained in document A/C.1/62/L.18. Depleted uranium is a chemically toxic and radioactive compound that is used in armour-piercing munitions because of its very high density. There is not yet a clear understanding of the full impact of fine-particle depleted uranium on the human body. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have all stated that more research is needed with respect to the immediate and/or long-term health or environmental effects of depleted uranium munitions.

In that connection, the draft resolution reflects the legitimate concern of the international community with regard to the possible impact of the use of armaments and ammunition containing depleted uranium. It excludes controversial issues that were introduced in a previous First Committee draft resolution on this issue. Paragraph 1 basically requests information on the issue, including from relevant international organizations such as the IAEA, WHO and UNEP, which have conducted some studies and have stated that more research is needed. Paragraph 2 is fully consistent with the precautionary principles and the factual information available at the present time on the use of armaments and ammunition containing depleted uranium.

Lastly, under agenda item 92, I would like to introduce draft decision A/C.1/62/L.51, entitled “Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security”. NAM reaffirms the importance of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1970 as resolution 2734 (XXV) and which, among other things, emphasizes the need for the United Nations to exert continuous efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement hopes that all delegations will be able to join us in supporting

the five draft resolutions and the draft decision that my delegation has just introduced.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.45.

Mr. Litavrin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor at this session, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairperson, on your election to your post. I assure you of the full support of my delegation.

International information security is a priority issue that genuinely requires a detailed multilateral review, primarily within the United Nations, because it concerns such international problems of current importance for the entire global community as the use of information and telecommunications technologies for criminal, terrorist and military-political purposes.

In an effort to seek a better understanding of the challenges and threats posed to international information security and to find collective ways and means to address them, Russia raised this issue at the General Assembly as early as 1998. Since then the General Assembly has regularly considered and adopted by consensus resolutions entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security".

The Russian initiative aims at eliminating the serious concerns that hamper the establishment of a global information society, thereby promoting the development of information telecommunications technologies and the dissemination of information.

We note with satisfaction the growing understanding by the world community of the importance, urgency and complexity of the issue of international information security, which is being discussed at the international and regional levels, including at such representative forums as the World Summit on the Information Society — which was held under the auspices of the United Nations in 2003 and 2005 — and the International Telecommunication Union.

Russia proposes to take specific measures within the United Nations in order to review the challenges and threats to international information security. During the sixtieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/45, which authorized the

establishment, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, of a group of governmental experts in 2009 that would carry out that work and prepare a relevant report for the General Assembly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.45, entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", reaffirms the intention to continue research on the issue of international information security. As the draft resolution is in the interest of the world community, we hope that it will receive broad support at the sixty-second session.

The draft resolution remains open to additional sponsorship. We invite all States willing to do so to become sponsors.

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

We shall now begin our thematic discussion on regional disarmament and security. I shall now suspend the meeting in order that we may hold an informal panel discussion on that subject, to be followed by a question and answer period.

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We shall now continue our thematic discussion on regional disarmament and security.

Mr. Ismayil-Zada (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan joins other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee for this session. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved election.

Regional disarmament and security play a vital role in establishing peace in all conflict areas. Unfortunately, there are still many unresolved conflicts in the world, and especially in our region. Areas of unresolved conflict have become epicentres of uncontrolled arms concentration. An example of such an epicentre is located in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and the territories surrounding it, which are still under Armenian occupation and which constitute almost 20 per cent of our territory. This territory has become a key transit point for the illegal trade in arms, which has acquired proportions that are threatening to the security of my country.

During the last five years, Armenia has been intensively arming its military forces in the territory of the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Analysis of the data indicates that, during this time, the number of unaccounted for and uncontrolled arms in the occupied territories has been consistently increasing.

Recently, the Secretary-General submitted his annual report on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (A/62/170 and addenda). In this report, Armenia is included on the list of countries which did not disclose the importation of arms for its army, but kept that information confidential. This fact proves that Armenia does not observe the United Nations principles on transparency in the military sector and thus remains a threat to our entire region.

The experts who prepare annual reports on cooperation in the military-technical field stressed that Armenia concealed its importation of 35 X-25 ML and X-29 L combat aircraft from Slovakia. Officials in Bratislava stated that missile launchers were exported to Armenia in 2005, but Yerevan still has refused to disclose the importation of missiles. Armenia also imported 10 missile launchers from Slovakia late in 2005. The imported launchers are SU-25 and SU-27 combat aircraft and Mi-24 military transport helicopters. But officials in Yerevan refused to release details on the importation of those aircraft at that time. Moreover, there is a large body of evidence that Armenia bought military technology and weapons in order to strengthen its army unofficially.

From 1993 to 1996, Armenia imported armaments from Russia: 9,500 missile launchers, 72 battle tanks and 600 military supply wagons. Armenia also imported 21,314 tons of military equipment, 64,000 tons of fuel, 15,977 combat vehicles and 41,000 metres of cable. It is a fact that 660 flights were carried out by IL-76 and An-12 aircraft in order to deliver 130,000 tons of military supplies to Yerevan through Mozdok airport. That information was not included in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The International Institute for Strategic Studies reports that Armenia also did not disclose buying eight P-17 missile launchers from Russia in 2006 as well as mortars and 32 missiles. It is a little known fact that Armenia recently received a new type of military equipment from Russia: special blankets for battle tanks. These blankets reflect radio waves and make tanks invisible to the opposing side's radar.

Armenia also concealed the fact that it imported 273-mm WM-80 reactive attack systems and Taifun missile launchers from China. Only after Azerbaijan's statement on this issue did the Government of China apply penalties and sanctions against the company that was involved in this illegal trade.

In early 2007, the Serbian defence industry company Zastava concluded a \$1.75 million contract with Armenia for the sale of weapons. This company is currently negotiating with Armenia to conclude a new \$900,000 agreement. In September 2007, a military enterprise, DG Arms Corporation, was commissioned in the Armenian city of Abovyan. It will produce 100 million bullets a year, and it plans to sell its products to Serbia.

I would like also to draw attention to recent reports on weapon and armaments sales by Albania to Armenia. My country considers any supply of arms or military equipment to Armenia as an act against Azerbaijan and as an action which could aggravate the current situation and provoke the resumption of hostilities.

The fact that Armenia is carrying out illegal military projects for supplying its armed forces continues to be a threat to the stability and security of our region.

Today, Azerbaijan is in a situation of war. Yet, despite this fact, it continues to fulfil its commitments under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Given Armenia's undeclared war, Azerbaijan has had and still has every reason to cease the implementation of the CFE treaty on its territory. However, we have refused and still refuse to take this step. Indeed, even in this difficult situation, we are doing our best to implement all of our CFE commitments.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Nepal to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.35.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): Since I am taking the floor for the first time in this Committee, I wish to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that the Committee will benefit from your expertise and experience in its deliberations.

The importance of regional initiatives to achieve the goals of disarmament, peace and security cannot be

overemphasized. In this context, the regional centres for peace and disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, in Africa and in Latin America deserve appreciation for the significant work they have accomplished in the field of disarmament in their respective regions. They have enhanced regular and closer interactions among countries within their regions, promoting confidence-building among the stakeholders. We believe that this process can be a building block of comprehensive disarmament, which otherwise has been moving at a rather slow pace in recent years.

My delegation wishes to put on record its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/62/153. I would also like to commend the initiatives of the new High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, and his Office for making substantive progress in relation to the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific, especially in matters related to its relocation from New York to Kathmandu. I also especially thank Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, for her presence this morning and for her statement during the informal part of our meeting.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the delegation of Nepal to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.35, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific".

We are pleased to inform the Committee that in July of this year Nepal and the United Nations Secretariat signed the host country agreement and the memorandum of understanding with regard to the physical relocation to Kathmandu of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. May I also take this opportunity to inform the Committee that the Government of Nepal has released the necessary budget for the installation of the Centre in accordance with the provisions of the memorandum of understanding.

My delegation also wishes to inform the Committee that the relocation of the Centre to Kathmandu does not entail additional financial obligations for Member States. Certainly, no financial obligations are incurred on account of relocation, although it was explained earlier that projects are conducted on the basis of voluntary contributions; that will continue to be so. I would like to encourage

delegations that would like to make further contributions and support the Centre to do so.

The Secretariat, as is customary, will inform us of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution in due course. It is our understanding that the Office for Disarmament Affairs is undertaking the necessary preparatory work in this connection. We are optimistic that the Centre will soon be able to start its operations from Kathmandu.

We are grateful to the international community for the assistance provided to the Centre and urge its members to increase support to it for its effective functioning in the days ahead as it performs its mandated duties of providing substantive support for initiatives and other activities mutually agreed upon by the Member States of the Asia-Pacific region.

The draft resolution has been revised this year to reflect the requisite technical updates and the new developments in the context of the conclusion of the agreements to which I referred a moment ago.

I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the sponsors of the draft resolution and to other delegations for their kind support in the consensus adoption of resolutions on this subject every year. In the same vein, I would like to appeal to the Committee to adopt the draft resolution without a vote, in keeping with past tradition.

Mr. Kennedy (United States of America): The United States delegation takes the floor again this morning to highlight the important work being done by the United Nations to strengthen international security and fight the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. One such effort is the work of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to increase outreach to regions around the world, promoting the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). This work is being conducted in cooperation with the Council Committee established pursuant to that resolution.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is an excellent example of how the international community can work together to create effective tools to combat proliferation. There are substantial benefits to be gained through full and effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and a firm commitment to its objectives. Not only is national security enhanced, but capacities applicable to other national priorities are

built, from augmenting trade and export controls through putting in place demonstrated good practices and improving the capacity to mitigate threats to public health and security.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) also promotes increased transparency and cooperation within regions and with other United Nations Member States. The Secretariat and international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the many non-governmental organizations often provide important background material and venues for this unique and across-the-board effort to reduce our collective risk from weapons of mass destruction.

I would like to bring the Committee's attention to a regional seminar organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, along with the 1540 Committee, on 4 and 5 September in Amman, Jordan, on implementing Council resolution 1540 (2004) for Arab States. This workshop was carried out within a framework similar to that of outreach activities that took place in Ghana, China and Peru in 2006. The focus of the workshop was on furthering implementation and encouraging the Arab region to increase its commitment to the obligations of Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The workshop was the first forum in the Arab region to focus on implementation, as called for in Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006). It provided important assistance to participating countries from that region to improve understanding of the practical challenges and tools necessary to implement the resolutions. We encourage the Office for Disarmament Affairs and other regions to continue similar work in the future and note that another workshop is being planned for late November in Gaborone, Botswana.

The United States will continue to support multilateral efforts towards implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Mr. Al-Samhan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation firmly believes that the possession of weapons of mass destruction does not achieve security for any country in any region. In fact, the proliferation of these deadly weapons only increases tensions and conflicts among the peoples and countries of the region. My delegation is gravely concerned about the prevailing international situation, in particular in the

Middle East region, which continues to face security threats and risks emanating from the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction.

Although 12 years have elapsed since the adoption in 1995 of General Assembly resolution 50/66, which urges the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, the region is a flagrant example of the inability of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to effectively achieve security for its States parties. The Middle East region will not achieve its objectives of attaining stability, security and development as long as Israel — the only country in the region to do — refuses to accede to the NPT.

True peace among States should be built on compliance with the rules of international legitimacy, the fulfilment of commitments and the implementation of the international resolutions of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Review Conference of the NPT. True peace will be achieved by keeping the region free of an arms race and by eliminating all weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East. In this regard, we appreciate the decision taken by IAEA last September to apply international norms in the Middle East region.

We look forward to redoubled international efforts aiming to pressure Israel to join the NPT and immediately dismantle its nuclear facilities or subject them to the safeguards regime of the IAEA, as well as to compel all other parties concerned to halt all scientific, technological and financial assistance aimed at further developing Israel's nuclear facilities.

We also call for the implementation of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the Middle East. That would be an important step forward to build confidence among all the States in the region, to strengthen international peace and security and to enhance global non-proliferation.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.4.

Mr. Morote (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to preside over the

work of the Committee. I also welcome the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Today, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.4, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean", under sub-item (b) of agenda item 99.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean congratulate the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, headquartered in Lima, Peru, on its 20 years of existence and express our gratitude for its support for countless subregional and regional initiatives on regional disarmament, with a clear vision of development. All of those experiences and activities have been very positive in reaffirming the commitment of States in the region to peace and regional security.

It should be recalled that the Regional Centre is the only one of the three regional centres of the Office for Disarmament Affairs whose mandate includes not only the implementation of peace and disarmament measures, but also the promotion of economic and social development. That additional task has enabled the Regional Centre to put into practice State initiatives that transcend the specific area of disarmament. Thus, we have carried out activities with a broad approach, to ensure that peace and disarmament issues are closely linked to development and the security of member countries.

In that endeavour, the Regional Centre has established close relations of cooperation with a number of United Nations agencies and other regional and subregional organizations, such as the Common Market of the South and its associated States, the Andean Community, the Caribbean Community, the Central American Integration System, the Organization of American States, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Likewise, I wish to highlight the cooperation agreement aimed at creating synergies among the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Interpol and the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in combating illicit arms trafficking.

Under that agreement, signed in February 2006, training courses and databases on compliance with the law, created by the Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean and its associated States, will be made available to the African continent. In addition, a series of training materials is being prepared to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and best practices to the Regional Centre in Africa in order to assist it in organizing courses.

Over the past 20 years, our Regional Centre has provided States in the region with specific assistance through, inter alia, disarmament initiatives, which are integrating the issue of disarmament into development more effectively every day; the promotion and implementation of multilateral instruments for disarmament and non-proliferation related to weapons of mass destruction and small arms; the establishment of standards for confidence- and security-building measures; assistance to States with regard to firearms, ammunition and explosives, promoting ways to improve existing controls over their legal trade and to prevent their illicit trafficking; and the creation of a culture of peace. In addition, the Regional Centre has provided a venue for debate among States in the region so that they can adopt common positions on disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

None of those achievements would have been possible without the basic funding for the Regional Centre's operations and the voluntary contributions for specific activities to ensure the continuation of the Centre's innovative activity programmes, which in turn will ensure uninterrupted progress in the implementation of its agenda in the areas of peace, disarmament and development. Thus, in this draft resolution, which has merely been updated, the Secretary-General is requested to provide additional funds so that the Regional Centre can carry out its mandate.

In previous years, draft resolutions on this topic have been adopted without a vote. We hope that, once again, we can count on the valuable support of all delegations.

Mr. Abbas (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to apologize to the Committee on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Iraq, who unfortunately is unable to attend today's meeting.

The initiative to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the

Middle East is, of course, intended to free the region from instability, tension and war, which have been on the increase in recent years. We have seen corresponding increases in military spending in the region because of the quantitative and qualitative arms race engendered by conflicts among States in the region, in particular the Arab-Israeli conflict, the longest-running conflict in the region.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction enjoys the support of most members of the international community. International and regional positions on such a zone differ, given the various political interests and security concerns and the nature of the relations between countries in the region and external actors.

Although the call to establish a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone was made long before ideas for other similar zones around the world, no progress has been made. That is due to the complexity of the situation in the Middle East, which is characterized by the particular political relations among States in the region, the conflict that the region has witnessed, external interference, instability and a lack of peaceful, just and comprehensive solutions guaranteeing respect for the rights of the peoples of the region, as well as by Israeli policies aimed at the possession of weapons of mass destruction, in clear defiance of the relevant international resolutions. All of that has prevented us from establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The fact that we have not been able to do so has been a major source of instability in the region.

Today, the Middle East is being subjected to military and political pressures. That has created an atmosphere that could be described as that of a large-scale military confrontation. The introduction of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction into the region, which is already an area of tension and instability, could further jeopardize peace and security both in the region and throughout the world.

That is why it is absolutely imperative to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, to ensure that we do not fall into further conflict, with its international repercussions. Thanks to the political will and good intentions of countries of the region that have the sincere desire to move forward, we have taken a series of measures to ensure regional and international peace

and security, put an end to the arms race and settle all pending issues in all of their aspects.

The main practical measures necessary to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is for Israel to accede to the NPT and to subject its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction and to implement the relevant international resolutions. All of those measures need to be taken prior to establishing such a zone; otherwise the idea will remain a dead letter.

Israel knows that the Arab States have not attained its level of armament. Moreover, the Arab States respect their international commitments. That gives Israel the guarantees it needs to sign the NPT. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone would not mean that the international community should renounce its responsibilities or reject relevant international instruments. The Security Council must shoulder its responsibility to maintain international peace and security, implement its resolutions and ensure that they are implemented by others in order to bring about a region free of weapons of mass destruction and ensure regional and international peace and security. Here, I refer in particular, to Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which calls on Israel to submit its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA, and to paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991). The international community and the IAEA have the legal and political responsibility to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

Iraq, as always, attaches great importance to the idea of establishing such a zone in the Middle East. Our approach has been to carry out practical advocacy, as can be seen in our support for the successive resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and our support for the relevant resolutions of other international and regional organizations and conferences. Iraq has also sought to rid the region of the threat of nuclear weapons through adopting agreements on banning weapons of mass destruction. The Security Council affirmed that in its resolution 1762 (2007), stating in it that Iraq was free of weapons of mass destruction. This is also confirmed in article 9 of the Iraqi constitution, which commits Iraq to the non-proliferation and the destruction of chemical and biological weapons.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to make a brief statement on the work of the Consultative Mechanism for the Reorganization of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. The Centre was created in 1986, in implementation of resolution 40/151 G. Since its establishment, it has played an important role in promoting peace, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Bearing in mind the financial difficulties faced by the Centre for some years now and the need to rationalize its activities, the Secretary-General established, pursuant to resolution 60/86 of 8 December 2005, a Consultative Mechanism to identify the best way in which to reorganize the Centre.

The Consultative Mechanism began its work in 2006 and held three meetings under the chairmanship of Nigeria. In 2007, Senegal chaired three further meetings of the Consultative Mechanism, at the conclusion of which it reached an agreement on recommendations and adopted the Chairman's paper with a view to submitting it to the General Assembly. The detailed conclusions of the Mechanism are set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the Centre, contained in document A/62/140.

The Mechanism was of the view that the mandate of the Centre, which was established in resolution 40/151 G, remained valid, but it recommended that the Centre give priority to the aspects of its mandate that are priorities for African States and for the international community, including small arms and light weapons; peacebuilding through concrete disarmament measures; capacity-building in African States in terms of respecting international legal instruments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations; and the prevention of the dumping of nuclear, chemical, radioactive and other dangerous waste in Africa. With regard to the structure of the Centre, the Mechanism recommended that it be strengthened to allow the Director to receive better support in carrying out its tasks.

Finally, the Consultative Mechanism requested the Secretary-General to appeal to Member States and other donors to contribute to the special fund, which will be set up as soon as possible. The African Union was also called upon to create a similar fund. The Mechanism also requested the Government of Togo to

continue its efforts with a view to supporting the Centre.

In conclusion, I wish to appeal to all States to support draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24, on the Centre, introduced yesterday by Nigeria and to thank the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs for its valuable support in carrying out the mandate entrusted to the Consultative Mechanism.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/62/L.2 and A/C.1/62/L.1.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to introduce, on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States, draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

The draft resolution reflects the concern of the countries of the Middle East and the international community as a whole regarding the serious risk posed by the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and the fact that there are still nuclear facilities in the region that are not subject to the full-scope safeguard regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Such concerns have been expressed at the successive conferences held to review the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference. The draft resolution emphasizes the need for of all concerned States to take practical and urgent steps towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in particular, the adherence of all States in the region to the NPT and to all of its provisions.

It calls upon Israel, as the only State in the region that has not thus far acceded to the NPT, to accede to that regime without delay and to subject its nuclear facilities to the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA. It requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, at its sixty-third session, on progress made in that connection.

I would also like to submit draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.1, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East". Egypt has submitted draft resolutions on this subject for more than 25 years. It is a priority that the parties

concerned take the practical and urgent steps required to remove all nuclear weapons from the Middle East and to subject all nuclear activities in the region to the full-scope safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The draft resolution invites the countries of the region not to develop, test, otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit the stationing of such weapons on their territory, pending the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.48.

Mr. El Hadj Ali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a pleasure for the Algerian delegation to, once again, introduce to the First Committee, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", contained this year in document A/C.1/62/L.48.

By regularly and consistently introducing draft resolutions on this item, the sponsors demonstrate their unswerving commitment to making the Euro-Mediterranean region an area of peace and stability and reiterate their resolve to actively participate in the maintenance of international peace and security. Furthermore, they express their willingness to promote cooperation and solidarity in that region and take note of the increasing awareness of the close link between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

The draft resolution is based on the content of resolution 61/101, adopted at the previous session, and covers a wide range of subjects concerning the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. It recognizes the indivisible character of security in the Mediterranean and bears in mind all the initiatives undertaken by Mediterranean countries aimed at strengthening peace, security and cooperation.

It also reaffirms the responsibility of all States to contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region and their commitment to respecting the principles of the United Nations Charter and the provisions of the Declaration on the Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States.

The draft resolution also emphasizes the fundamental principles underlying the efforts of Mediterranean countries to eliminate all causes of tension in the region and to resolve in a peaceful, just and lasting manner, the problems which prevail there. It calls for the elimination of economic and social disparities and for the promotion of mutual respect and greater understanding among Euro-Mediterranean peoples and cultures, with a view to strengthening peace, security and cooperation.

The text calls upon the States of the region which have not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Additionally, it encourages all States to favour confidence-building measures and to promote openness and transparency.

The draft resolution encourages Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating organized crime, illicit arms transfers and drug production and trafficking, which pose a threat to peace and stability.

As at previous sessions, the sponsors are confident that the draft resolution will receive the valuable consensus and support of all members of the Committee.

Mr. Al Ketbi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Despite the confidence-building measures adopted by the Group of Arab States, including the United Arab Emirates, and despite all efforts to rid our region of weapons of mass destruction, the security situation in the Middle East still poses a serious threat to international peace, security and stability. This is because the Israeli Government still retains its nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.

The United Arab Emirates expresses its concern that one country in the Middle East, Israel, has not yet acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We are also concerned that Israel's nuclear activities are not subject to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We believe that the international community's failure to correct this security imbalance in the region is due to the policy of double standards which, has

applied to date in the general disarmament regime, encouraging Israel irresponsibly to continue to develop its nuclear arsenal. This has encouraged other States to attempt to acquire dangerous nuclear weapons as a deterrent on security grounds.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the international community has the moral, legal and political obligation to establish peace and security in the Middle East; we therefore reassert the following points.

First, it is necessary to call upon Israel to cooperate with the IAEA and, above all, to disclose its nuclear activities and facilities, disclose its stockpiles and abide by the principle of verification through the IAEA safeguards regime.

Secondly, we call upon Israel to bring to an immediate end the manufacturing and stockpiling of fissile materials and all other material and equipment used to produce weapons of mass destruction and to put an end to its nuclear testing and dismantle its current nuclear arsenal, converting it to peaceful civilian uses.

Thirdly, the international community must exert meaningful and effective pressure on the Israeli Government, including economic pressure, so that Israel is made to respect unconditionally the call to accede to the NPT and to the IAEA safeguards agreement and its additional protocol, with a view to buttressing the Agency's mandate.

Fourthly, we call upon all States, and above all nuclear-weapon States, to respect their commitments under the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, which prohibit financial, technical or scientific assistance in the context of the development and improvement of the Israeli nuclear programme.

The implementation of these important measures would build confidence among interested States, create a positive atmosphere conducive to the revitalization of the peace process in the region, increase control over violence and prevent irresponsible terrorist groups from acquiring dangerous nuclear materials.

In this context, we welcome last month's agreement between the IAEA and the Government of Iran, on setting a timetable for finding a solution to all pending issues related to the Iranian nuclear programme. We look forward to the forthcoming resumption of serious negotiations among all interested

parties to find a peaceful, sustainable and speedy solution that would lead the region away from the brink of new tension and confrontation and would reassure those countries that they would face no security or environmental threat.

Finally, we call on all delegations to support draft resolutions A/C.1/62/L.1 and A/C.1/62/L.2, respectively entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East" and "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", especially since there is a serious consensus among the States of the region that are parties to the NPT regarding the need for a Middle East free from all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and the means of their delivery.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): We have nearly completed our thematic discussion on regional disarmament and security. We shall resume the discussion tomorrow morning.

Before turning to the next theme, I now call on the representative of Armenia, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind delegations that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second. I ask delegations to kindly respect that rule, because we are running a bit late in our work.

Mr. Tashchian (Armenia): The Armenian delegation must exercise its right of reply to make a few comments regarding the statement made by the representative of Azerbaijan.

We found it strange, if not ridiculous, that the Azerbaijani representative spoke about an arms race in the region of the South Caucasus. In that regard, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to some figures. According to the information that we have gathered from official sources and official statements made by the country's leadership, Azerbaijan's military budget totalled approximately \$1 billion in 2007, while in 2006 it totalled some \$700 million and back in 1999 it came to only about \$120 million. Thus, Azerbaijan's military expenditures have increased approximately eightfold over the past eight years. Azerbaijan unleashed the real arms race in the region of the South Caucasus.

As far as the information regarding Armenia's armed forces is concerned, I would like to say that the

information presented by the representative of Azerbaijan was distorted. He cited only misleading figures, using false, baseless information unsupported by facts.

Armenia is committed to its international obligations in the area of arms control and disarmament. As a member country of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, Armenia has strictly followed the ceilings established for the countries of the South Caucasus. In that regard, I can only invite the members of the Committee to explore the relevant reports and documents of the United Nations and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on arms control, where they can find sufficient information to gain a detailed picture of the Armenian armed forces.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I should now like to indicate that document A/C.1/62/CRP.4 has been distributed to delegations. I invite them to kindly take a look at that document, which lists all the draft resolutions prepared by delegations under the various clusters on our agenda. It is intended to help us address the next stage of our work: action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions. That is an important stage that proves that our work is achieving results. I should also like to indicate that a draft resolution that has not yet been finalized could be added to the list. Delegations will be informed in that regard in due course.

Finally, I should like to inform members that an information note will probably be issued on Monday regarding our work plan for next week. Next week will be a decisive one, since we shall be taking decisions on all draft resolutions.

We have about 25 minutes left. I intend to chip away at the lengthy list of speakers on conventional weapons, so that we do not waste any time. We shall thus resume our discussion on that theme.

Mr. Tarui (Japan): It is to be acknowledged that the issue of small arms and light weapons is one of the most critical problems being faced by the international community. In that connection, Japan attaches great importance to the continuing efforts by the United Nations to tackle the severe problems related to such weapons.

Although last year's United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was unable to reach agreement on further efforts at the global level, the Programme of Action remains the most important international framework for tackling illicit small arms. Bearing in mind that 500,000 people lose their lives to small arms every year, we must continue to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels.

From that perspective, in March this year Japan held the Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was entitled "SALW Issues from the Perspective of the Protection and Empowerment of the Peaceful Community". In addition to sharing best practices concerning efforts on the issue of small arms and light weapons, understanding was deepened regarding demand factors and transfer controls. Japan also actively participated in the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering and made efforts to formulate a report that included the most concrete and action-oriented model national regulations and recommendations possible. Japan strongly hopes that many countries will implement the contents of that report (see A/62/163).

A biennial meeting of States is scheduled to be held next year. It will be the first official meeting since the 2006 Conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action, and we will have to strengthen our endeavours on the issue of small arms and light weapons at that meeting. By last year's resolution on small arms and light weapons (resolution 61/66) the General Assembly decided that the meeting of States to consider the implementation of the International Instrument on tracing should be held within the framework of the biennial meeting of States. Moreover, the aforementioned report of the Group of Governmental Experts recommended that each country's report on brokering be considered at the biennial meeting of States. Japan believes that steadily implementing these actions will lead to strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and that bolstering international cooperation is vital to that end.

With this in mind, Japan, along with Colombia and South Africa, have once again submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/62/L.49) that includes those elements. We believe that the draft resolution lays out a concrete road map for the implementation of the

Programme of Action, and we call for the support of United Nations Member States with a view to its consensus adoption.

I would like to state once more at this stage that Japan, in accordance with its Three Principles on Arms Exports, does not export weapons. This policy is executed with the broad support of the citizens of Japan, who sincerely desire international peace and security. Against this backdrop, Japan also places immense value on projects on the ground to reduce the actual harm caused by small arms and light weapons. We assist countries, especially in Asia and Africa; this year we provided support to the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo.

The group of governmental experts on an arms trade treaty is due to convene next year. Japan believes that the arms trade treaty effort is a valuable and history-making initiative. There is a pressing need for the international community to overcome the problems of uncontrolled and irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons and thus prevent harm caused by such transfers.

In order for an arms trade treaty to materialize, it is essential not only to combine technical and expert knowledge, but also to fuel the momentum of discussions through involvement by the greatest number of countries. With this in mind, Japan is prepared to contribute to the full extent of its ability.

Furthermore, since Japan is one of the original sponsors of resolution 61/89, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty", we will be energetically taking part in the discussions of the group of governmental experts and aim to establish an effective treaty through the participation of as many countries as possible.

This year, China expressed its willingness to return to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and participate in the United Nations military expenditures reporting instrument, and it submitted annual reports for both. Japan values China's efforts as a first step towards confidence-building in the international community through the improvement of transparency in armaments and the arms trade.

With regard to cluster munitions, Japan is fully aware of the humanitarian concerns caused by them. In order to respond effectively and practically to this problem, it is necessary to develop a process that addresses this issue with the participation of the major

producers and possessors, while allowing for a balance between humanitarian and security aspects. Japan is actively involved in the international discussions taking place in various forums. From the standpoint of effectiveness, we support the negotiation of an international agreement on cluster munitions within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), in which the major countries that produce and possess these munitions participate.

Taking into consideration the June recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts of the States parties to the CCW Convention, Japan intends to make its utmost efforts to ensure that a negotiating mandate for cluster munitions is adopted by consensus at the November 2007 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the CCW.

Ms. Mtshali (South Africa): As members know, just last month the 155 States parties to the Mine Ban Treaty marked the tenth anniversary of its adoption, in Oslo, Norway. South Africa is particularly proud of this milestone, as many here will recall that the final negotiations on the Convention were chaired by South Africa's former Permanent Representative to the United Nations at Geneva, Jackie Selebi.

While vast tracts of land have been cleared of anti-personnel mines over these last 10 years and returned to productive use, and while 80 States parties have met their treaty obligations to destroy their anti-personnel mine stockpiles, leading to the destruction of an estimated 40 million mines or more, the greatest humanitarian concern remains that of assisting the rising number of mine survivors. Caring for mine survivors is a life-long obligation for all affected States, not only in terms of health care, but also in terms of finding meaningful and, very often, alternative forms of employment for victims of mines. It is no coincidence that those States with the most significant victim problem also rank among the world's poorest, where infrastructure hampers immediate post-trauma assistance and where communication among key health, disability, rehabilitation and financial sectors is sub-optimal. The poorest among these nations often lack specific, measurable and achievable time-bound objectives, and some of these States parties have yet to ascertain what is known or not known about the status of victim assistance in their countries.

Civil society has contributed in no small measure to the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty. Indeed,

as many know, the success story behind the negotiations on the treaty was the close cooperation among Governments and between Governments and civil society. In this spirit of cooperation, my delegation today appeals to those States and relevant organizations in a position to do so to work more closely with these highly affected States to assist them in the development and concrete implementation of their national survivor assistance plans.

South Africa views the 2007 Meeting of the States Parties, to be held later this year, as an opportunity to further highlight the importance of the Mine Ban Treaty and to accelerate its implementation and universalization in order to achieve the vision of a world free from anti-personnel mines.

The conflict in Lebanon last year not only caused numerous civilian casualties, but in its aftermath, the numerous unexploded cluster munitions resulted in a humanitarian crisis of vast and tragic proportions. This crisis requires the international community to address the issue urgently in order to prevent the threat of a similar catastrophe occurring in the future.

In this context, South Africa fully shares the view of most States that an international instrument to prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of those cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilian populations is needed. As already stated in a different context, my delegation has closely followed international developments in this field and will remain flexible as to whether negotiations on such an instrument should take place within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons or as part of a separate process.

Turning now to small arms and light weapons, South Africa remains of the view that our efforts to fully implement the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons are paying off. This is particularly so regarding the attention focused on the illicit trade in these weapons and their ammunition at the global and regional levels.

However, my delegation believes that much remains to be done at the respective national levels, especially in developing countries. For instance, it is one thing to try and develop regional or even global principles or criteria on arms transfers, but such measures are quite meaningless when a State that participates in initiatives such as workshops does not follow up by incorporating the recommended

principles in their national legislation, policies and arms transfer control structures and systems.

South Africa continues to believe that one of the most important undertakings that we made in the Programme of Action are the elements contained in its section III, namely, implementation, international cooperation and assistance.

Without serious efforts to assist those among us that are still experiencing capacity, financial and other concrete needs in key areas such as effective stockpile management and national arms control systems, theft, corruption and diversion will continue to fuel the illicit trade in these weapons and their ammunition.

My delegation is also of the view that much of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons would not take place were it not for the role played by corrupt arms brokers. We therefore believe that the recently concluded report of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering (see A/62/163) gives us some practical and constructive ideas on what States could do to prevent illicit brokering activities. It is our hope that the General Assembly will endorse the recommendations of the Group during this session.

Mr. Perazza (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation will speak on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and its associated States. We will make two successive statements, the first on small arms and the second on anti-personnel landmines.

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

Just as small arms and light weapons know no borders, violence from these weapons has become in recent decades a global problem that takes hundreds of thousands of lives every year. The twentieth century came to an end with the dubious honour of having been the most violent period in human history, and the conflicts that persist at the beginning of the twenty-first century are still based upon a worrisome common denominator: the use of small arms and light weapons. The countries on behalf of which I am speaking therefore consider that we must continue and strengthen every effort aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in such arms.

The experience of MERCOSUR and its associated States in the fight against this problem has been positive, and we wish to bring this experience to the attention of other subregions with similar problems. Our efforts have focused both on the register of buyers and sellers of firearms, ammunition, explosives and related materials, as well as in the harmonization of national legislation on the issue. Thanks to our countries' high degree of convergence in their legislation on this topic, it was possible for MERCOSUR and its associated States to create its Working Group on Firearms and Munitions, which has been meeting at least once a year since 2000.

The twelfth meeting of the Working Group on Firearms and Munitions of MERCOSUR and associated States took place in Asunción, Paraguay, on 19 and 20 March 2007. At that meeting, the countries on behalf of which I am speaking highlighted national efforts to carry out campaigns to raise awareness of the risk arising from firearms, and they evaluated the status of implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

Six years after the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the countries of MERCOSUR and associated States reiterate the importance of encouraging full implementation. In spite of the lack of results obtained at the first Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held last year, MERCOSUR and associated States remain convinced of the need to strengthen the follow-up mechanism for its implementation.

On this occasion, we reaffirm the statement made by MERCOSUR and associated States at that time, regarding which we highlighted the following issues. Cooperation and assistance are essential tools for achieving the implementation of the recommended measures. Also of importance is the commitment to the full implementation of the recommendations set out in the International Instrument on marking and tracing, including efforts to broaden the Instrument's scope through the inclusion of ammunition and to give it a legally binding character.

On the issue of illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons we deem it to be of paramount

importance that progress be made towards the conclusion of a legally binding international regulatory instrument. In that regard, we take note of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (see A/62/163), and we encourage States to consider its recommendations.

While respecting the premise that no regulation shall undermine the sovereign right of States to acquire arms for their security and for the exercise of self-defence as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, we take note of the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. At the same time, we encourage States to keep in mind that the standards to be discussed must be non-discriminatory, objective, balanced and transparent, taking account of each region's specific characteristics and the principles of international law.

With regard to possession of weapons by civilians, we reiterate our appeal to States to strengthen regulations on the acquisition and possession of arms to prevent the diversion of legally acquired arms to the illicit market. We think that that is important for the effective implementation of other controls at the national level. For this reason, we consider it important to exchange information on national regulatory systems. The States on whose behalf I am speaking will participate actively at the third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in New York in July 2008.

Finally, while we welcome the outcome of the programmes and measures carried out by the respective national authorities in our subregion, we also consider that initiatives by non-governmental organizations to promote a culture of peace remain very valuable since they unite the chorus of voices coming from the civilian population condemning the problem we are discussing in today's debate. We are convinced that joint efforts by States and civil society will enable us to continue the search for strategies to achieve our common goal: the complete eradication of this scourge.

I shall now make a statement on anti-personnel mines on behalf of MERCOSUR and associated States. I promise to be brief.

The Declaration of Lima of 2003, entitled “Support for the Americas as an Antipersonnel-Land-Mine-Free Zone”, reaffirms the importance of observing the principles and complying with the obligations under international law with regard to action against anti-personnel mines by means of the elimination of these weapons throughout the world and the conversion of the Americas to a zone free of anti-personnel mines.

MERCOSUR and associated States note with satisfaction that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, adopted in Oslo on 18 September 1997 and opened for signature in Ottawa in December of that year, constitutes clear evidence of what the international community can achieve when we join together to confront a serious humanitarian and development challenge.

Ten years after the adoption of the Ottawa Convention, such devices have largely been eliminated throughout the world, and we have seen encouraging progress with regard to the constant decrease in the number of victims, the recovery of former mine fields for civilian use and the destruction of millions of anti-personnel mines. Some four million stockpiled landmines have been destroyed, and the number of victims caused by these explosives has decreased, from approximately 26,000 deaths in 2002 to 10,000 at present.

However, we remain concerned that, according to recent figures, there are still about 78 countries with mines littered in parts of their territory, and that at least 10 States continue to manufacture these devices.

MERCOSUR and associated States believe that universalization of the Ottawa Convention is essential. We welcome the fact that Indonesia, Iraq, Kuwait and Montenegro recently became States parties of the Convention, which now number 155. We recall that at the seventh Meeting of States Parties, held in Geneva in September 2006, the progress made in implementing the Nairobi Action Plan was assessed and priorities were established with a view to continued progress towards the objective of ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

The most recent meeting of the Convention’s Standing Committee on Mine Clearance and Related Technologies revealed delegations’ keen interest in

updating information on the progress made in fulfilling the obligations set out in article 5 of the Convention. Notwithstanding the progress made, we must be mindful that much remains to be done. We are aware that there are limitations, particularly with regard to resources. That is why we are calling for international support.

This is a year of particular importance for the process of requesting deadline extensions for compliance with article 5 obligations. The challenge now is to carry out that process. Our attention must not be diverted from the ultimate objective: to implement article 5. The possibility of requesting an extension must be seen not as an end in itself, but as a step towards attaining that objective.

It is essential that at the eighth Meeting, to be held in late November 2007 in Amman, Jordan, States parties that feel obliged to submit extension requests be urged to do so by March 2008, since it is likely that many States parties will not be able to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in the mined areas under their jurisdiction or control before that time.

MERCOSUR and associated States regard humanitarian demining as an effective confidence-building measure between neighbouring countries that strengthens relationships of peace and friendship. I should now like to describe national experiences of the countries of MERCOSUR and associated States in the area of demining.

Argentina and Chile have put into practice their joint initiative on the implementation of article 3 of the Ottawa Convention, which refers to the retention of anti-personnel mines for training and technological development purposes. In that connection, Action No. 54 of the Nairobi Action Plan was adopted in December 2004, and the amendment to Form D, which requests States to submit relevant information, was agreed upon at the sixth Meeting of States Parties, held in December 2005.

For its part, Bolivia is considering, as a preventive measure, conducting awareness-raising campaigns directed at populations living in mined areas near its border with Chile — placing special emphasis on educational centres for school-age children — given that climatic factors, earthquakes or floods could shift these devices to its territory.

Brazil plays an important role in demining cooperation activities by participating in assistance missions conducted by the Organization of American States (OAS) in Central America and on the Ecuador-Peru border. Likewise, Brazil has stated its intention to step up its cooperation activities with countries that are deactivating their arsenals, by sending health professionals and providing technical training for local professionals. In addition, Brazil completed the destruction of its landmine stockpiles in 2003, before the deadline, and has never used mines to protect its territory, despite its long borders.

For its part, Chile has established, within the framework of its national demining plan, criteria for the certification of minefields through the use of mechanized equipment. In the area of humanitarian demining operations, it has carried out the following activities: clearing two minefields on its border with Peru; clearing one minefield and beginning to clear a second on its border with Bolivia; and clearing two minefields on its border with Argentina. In late November, it will begin to clear the Cape Horn Island minefield.

Ecuador and Peru, in fulfilment of the commitments set out in the Ottawa Convention, have engaged in anti-personnel-mine clearance in a parallel and coordinated fashion, developing mechanisms for joint efforts and information exchange. In that connection, humanitarian demining is becoming a prerequisite for sustainable development in a region contaminated with anti-personnel mines. Only after mined areas have been cleared can nearby populations again feel safe and confident enough to work in places that were once off-limits because of the danger of mines.

Because my country, Uruguay, has had an active presence in United Nations peacekeeping operations, our national contingents have participated in humanitarian demining activities in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, Uruguay has contributed

instructors and military technical personnel to the demining programme coordinated by the OAS, whose objective is to eliminate thousands of anti-personnel mines that threaten the civilian populations of countries affected by armed conflict.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which in 1997 possessed more than 50,000 anti-personnel mines, has destroyed 89 per cent of them and remains committed to effective compliance with its commitments pursuant to the Ottawa Convention to completely eliminate those weapons and to continue to cooperate with demining activities in other regions.

MERCOSUR and associated States welcome the establishment of the Regional Support Centre for Humanitarian Demining in Santiago, Chile. Its principal task will be to administer the Information Management System for Mine Action, a tool designed for operational support and planning regarding efforts in this area.

Finally, we wish to report that Chile, as Co-Chair of the Ottawa Convention's Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, organized, together with Norway, a seminar in Santiago on 16 and 17 August 2007 in compliance with article 5 of the Convention. Participants included all the countries affected by this scourge in the Latin American region, in addition to relevant international organizations and representatives of civil society. They renewed their moral and political commitment to the Convention's objectives — taking into account, inter alia, the major economic and climatic difficulties that often make it difficult to comply with obligations by the deadlines set out in the Convention — and they welcomed the deadline extension process as an opportunity to redirect efforts towards compliance.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I congratulate the interpreters on having kept up with the unusually rapid pace towards the end of the meeting, and I thank them for having granted us an additional 10 minutes beyond 1 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.